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**Significant Relationships between EFL Teachers'  
Practice and Knowledge in the Teaching of  
Grammar in Libyan Secondary Schools**

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the University of Sunderland for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy

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## **ABSTRACT**

Studies of teacher cognition and the teaching of grammar have attracted increasing research attention in recent years, yet relatively little has been published about how EFL teachers working in secondary schools teach grammar compared to what they know about their teaching. The present study considers this relationship by looking at eight teachers and investigating if their knowledge is consistent with their instructional practice. The value of this study is that it examines the current situation in grammar teaching by exploring how knowledge may influence performance in secondary school, teaching in the Libyan context.

Observation and semi-structured interviews were employed to collect the necessary data. A factual questionnaire was used to collect background information and then to choose the most appropriate participants in a sample of eight who were more and less experienced teachers and both male and female. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. Data were transcribed and encoded for analysis according to grounded theory principles, and a framework was designed to analyse the coded data in order to triangulate the findings gathered from observation and interviews.

The findings revealed that grammar was taught using different approaches and techniques, but there was no single way of teaching that worked perfectly with all classes. What did not work for one teacher worked for another in certain cases. The teachers had different levels of knowledge which was not always reflected in their classroom practice. The more experienced teachers had better practical knowledge, although all had similar levels of theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning English grammar.

This study offers a more profound understanding of the complex relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about teaching grammar. Different patterns of incongruence and congruence between practice and knowledge are acknowledged, such as 'teachers knew but did not do'; 'teachers did but were not aware that they did'; and 'teachers did and they knew'. Some of the most interesting findings in this study have not been reported before, and it is clear that not all relationships of congruence between practice and knowledge have positive pedagogical value, and not all incongruent relationships have negative value. The rationales behind of all of these relationships between practice and knowledge were related to the complex relationship between teachers' practice and knowledge and contextual factors. Thus, the implications of this research should benefit future EFL teachers of grammar and open doors to further research.

## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

The material contained in this thesis is all my own work. When the work of others has been adopted or paraphrased, it has been acknowledged according to appropriate academic convention.

Signature.....

Date: .....

**DEDICATION**

***To My Parents***

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>L1</b>	.....	First Language
<b>L2</b>	.....	Second Language
<b>EFL</b>	.....	English as a Foreign Language
<b>ESL</b>	.....	English as a Second Language
<b>ESP</b>	.....	English for Academic Purposes
<b>TESOL</b>	.....	Teaching English to Speakers of Others Languages
<b>CLT</b>	.....	Communicative Language Teaching
<b>EEE</b>	.....	Exploration, Explanation and Expression Model
<b>SLA</b>	.....	Second Language Acquisition
<b>GPK</b>	.....	General Pedagogical Knowledge
<b>PCK</b>	.....	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
<b>SMK</b>	.....	Subject Matter Knowledge
<b>BAK</b>	.....	Beliefs, Attitudes, Knowledge
<b>KAL</b>	.....	Knowledge About Language
<b>TLA</b>	.....	Teacher Language Awareness
<b>SSC</b>	.....	Senior Secondary Certificate
<b>SFL</b>	.....	Systemic Functional Linguistics
<b>NNS</b>	.....	Non-native Speakers
<b>NS</b>	.....	Native Speaking

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the rationale for conducting this study. It starts with an exploration of classroom practice and its relationship to the teacher's cognition and knowledge regarding the teaching and learning of English grammar as a foreign language (EFL). Then the aims and research questions of the study are stated as well as its significance and the research design used. An overview of the thesis and a summary of this chapter are then presented.

### **1.2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Teaching English as a foreign language communicatively as a learner-centred process was introduced in Libyan secondary schools from 2000 onwards (see section 2.4), where the aim of the new textbook was to “develop students’ oral communication skills” (Orafi & Borg, 2009:251). However, different studies, such as Ahmed (2004), Ali (2008) and Orafi & Borg (2009), have found that Libyan students often finish their secondary education with undeveloped speaking skills which may affect their English learning at universities. This issue was also noticed by the present researcher when he was a teacher at Zawia University in Libya where most of the students who joined the English language department had difficulties in using their knowledge of grammar in language production. It may be that this was due to their practical experience of the approach that had been used when they were learning English grammar. The researcher had the same problem when he was student, in that he encountered difficulties communicating in English even though he was armed with an adequate knowledge of grammar.

The traditional approaches to teaching grammar were not found by the present researcher to be beneficial. They helped in learning a list of grammatical forms, but when it came to using these forms in producing the language, knowledge of grammar alone did not help in achieving fluency. The problem here is how to



integrate knowledge of grammar and vocabulary in the development of communicative competence. Hence, it was clear that there should be a connection between form and meaning in teaching grammar. Furthermore, knowledge of grammar without practicing the use of language is unhelpful in terms of communication. Thus, the present researcher became completely convinced that the way he was taught L2 grammar was ineffective. Consequently, this study focuses on the teacher's role and their knowledge of teaching grammar as part of the problem. Exploring in-depth teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge about teaching English grammar is highlighted in this study because the researcher assumes that no changes in a teacher's practice can take place without being preceded by changes in the teacher's knowledge.

The literature also reveals that there have been a number of research projects into teacher cognition since the mid-1990s (Freeman, 2002) and, broadly speaking, although various studies have investigated how the beliefs of teachers affect their classroom practice, none of them has yet investigated their practice and knowledge in particular regarding the teaching of grammar (see section 4.6). This was evidenced by Borg (2003:81), who stated that "there are several major issues in language teaching which have yet to be explored from the perspective of teacher cognition". The teacher's knowledge about the teaching of grammar was chosen for investigation in this study (Johnston & Goettsch, 2000:45). The teacher's knowledge can be theoretical or/and practical, and both are necessary for successful teaching.

Despite the fact that research on the role of cognition in teaching grammar has increased as an international phenomenon, "the relationships among teacher cognition, classroom practice and learning have not been studied" (Borg, 2006:133). Borg also highlights that "further studies into the full range of teacher knowledge that informs grammar teaching practices are thus also required" (ibid: 133). The points highlighted above reveal the need for continuing research to address the gaps in the literature by exploring the teacher's knowledge from

different angles related to the teaching and learning of English grammar, in order to understand the relationship between what teachers actually do and what they know. Further discussion of previous studies of teacher cognition and classroom practice can be found in section 4.6.

### **1.3. AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

With specific reference to teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge related to the teaching and learning of English grammar, the aims of the current study are threefold: firstly, it aimed to explore teachers' classroom practice when they teach English grammar. Secondly, it also aimed to investigate teachers' knowledge about the teaching and learning of English grammar. Finally, it aimed to identify the relationship between what Libyan teachers actually do in the classroom and what they state that they know regarding the teaching and learning of grammar in secondary school EFL classes. All of these aims are explored in-depth in order to contribute to on-going debates about the teaching and learning of grammar in EFL programmes. The research questions in this study are presented below.

### **1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions to be answered in this study are:

1. What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do in their classrooms in relation to the teaching and learning of grammar?
2. What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar?
3. What is the relationship between what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do and what they state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar?

### **1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The rationale for conducting this study was based on significant gaps in the literature (see section 4.6), and the personal motivations of the present

researcher. The main area of significance of this study was its aim to develop teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge about teaching grammar. Grammar itself was a concern for investigation in this study because "grammar is what makes communication possible. Having knowledge of grammar gives the ability to express an infinite number of messages without having encountered them in exactly the same form previously" (Lärkefjord, 2006:1). Therefore, EFL students and teachers firmly believe that a knowledge of grammar is essential to their being able to acquire a new language. People not only need to know what grammar is, but also how it works. Widdowson (1997) indicated that the main role of grammar is to provide a link between words and contexts, and that it is vital for learners to understand how grammar works together with words and contexts to achieve meaningful communication. Therefore, "grammar is concerned with how sentences and utterances are formed" (Carter & McCarthy, 2006: 2).

According to Harmer (2003), possessing grammatical competence helps students distinguish proper sentences from improper ones. He explains that we are all happy to say 'It is a big red car', but find that saying 'It is a red big car' is rather uncomfortable. This is because there is a rule which says that, when a number of different adjectives precede a noun, the adjective which describes size is usually placed before the one which describes colour, and not the other way round. Harmer also adds that when a speaker says, for example, "She was elected by a thumping majority", this shows that they know how to change the word "elect" into "elected" by adding the morpheme "ed" to the base form of the verb. According to Harmer (2003), "competent speakers know how to use these smallest units of grammar (morphemes) to combine grammatically with words to create new meanings". Harmer goes on to add that speakers know, consciously or subconsciously, that adding the "ing" to "thump" turns it into a participle form and that such forms can be used as adjectives as in "thumping majority". Harmer concludes that such knowledge of grammar is essential for successful communication, whether in writing or in speech.

Regarding the teacher's practice, EFL students need both to have grammatical knowledge and to know how to use that knowledge in order to communicate. Without these types of knowledge no effective communication will occur. It is known that native speakers pick up this knowledge while they are growing up in their natural social environment, whereas second language learners usually acquire this knowledge through formal instruction. Moreover, Littlewood (1999) argues that even native speakers of English frequently use explicit knowledge of grammar when they plan, monitor or edit more formal kinds of written and spoken discourse. In addition, people can also do this implicitly. This means that EFL students' knowledge of grammar is not enough for them to use the language, unless they know how to use that knowledge when they communicate with others.

In addition, the study was conducted due to an interest in identifying what happens in the classroom, and to discover to what extent teachers of grammar transfer their knowledge into practice. This is based on the assumption that what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe, and that a teacher's knowledge and thoughts provide the underlying framework of schemata which guides the teacher's classroom actions (Richards & Lockhart, 1996:29). Logically, knowledge of grammatical rules and knowledge about teaching these rules are very important, and are needed by teachers because they complement each other.

Furthermore, the teacher's knowledge was considered in this study because "such knowledge provides part of the very basis of planning, monitoring and editing, and partly because the communicative effectiveness of planned discourse depends to a high degree on its formal correctness" (Odlin, 1994: 104). This argument is also supported by Freeman and Johnson (1998) when they stated that teachers' knowledge should be rooted in their actual practices. The teacher's knowledge informs the different principled choices applied when teaching.

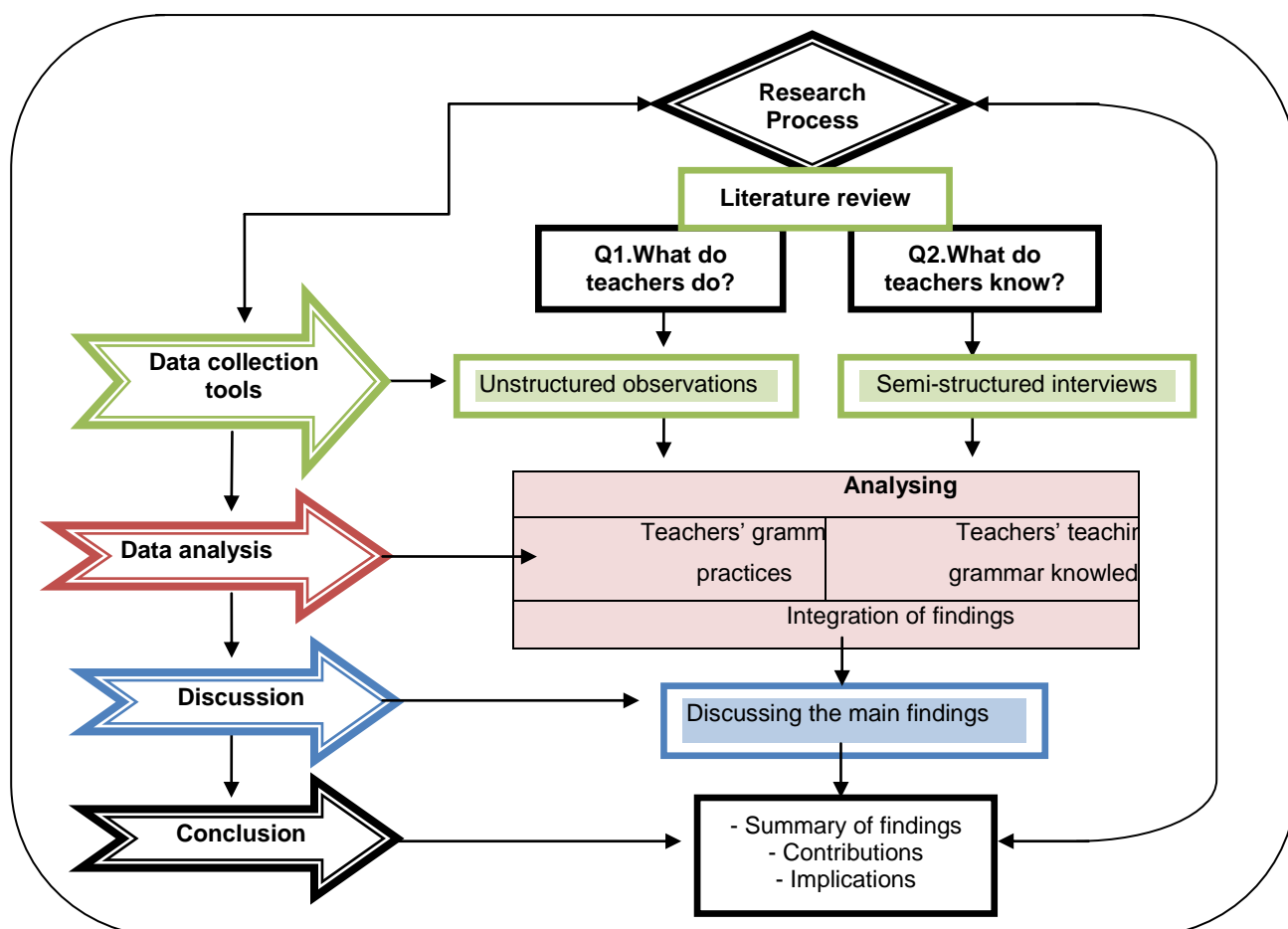
In summary, the whole impetus behind this study was to reassess Libyan teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge about the teaching and learning of English grammar in the interests of professional development. Such development can be used to assist students to use their knowledge of grammar in language use. Students will not benefit from their knowledge of grammar unless they know how to apply that knowledge in language use. This study is significant for five main reasons.

- To provide insight into teachers' classroom practice, which could be used to develop their knowledge about learning and teaching English grammar and in particular addressing significant implications for EFL teachers. This may lead to positive changes for both teachers and students in English grammar classrooms.
- To reveal the extent of teachers' knowledge and how they put it into practice when they teach English grammar.
- To identify the sources of teachers' knowledge, which will help in understanding how such knowledge is constructed and which types of English grammar knowledge teachers and students should acquire.
- To use the findings of this study to identify the relationship between teachers' knowledge concerning grammar teaching and their instructional practices. Teachers' knowledge is a very important aspect in influencing classroom practice (Borg, 2003, 2006; Arioğul, 2007). Understanding this relationship can assist teachers in finding solutions for their teaching of grammar so as to help students to transfer their knowledge of grammar into language use.
- To provide suggestions for other researchers in exploring the field of teaching and learning English as a second language, in Libya and elsewhere.

## **1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The process of research design in this study started by selecting a research topic, deciding on an approach to follow, formulating the problem and drawing up a proposal. As a result of the investigation of the literature on the teaching and

learning of English grammar and teacher cognition, as stated in section 5.3, this study was conducted according to an interpretive research paradigm. Therefore, suitable data collection methods and types of data needed to be chosen. The research process followed during this study is as shown in figure 1.1.



**Figure: 1.1. The Research Process of This Study**

Figure 1.1 shows that a qualitative methodology was used in this research. The data required to answer the research questions was collected by conducting observation sessions and semi-structured interviews. In this multi-method approach, data collection tools were chosen which have been used in previous studies of teacher cognition in teaching grammar (Borg, 2006). A purposive sampling strategy was used to select representative participants via a factual questionnaire. The participants were eight in number, working in eight different

secondary schools. They varied in age, sex and teaching and learning experience. The data collection process started by observing the participants conduct their classes, followed by interviews. Then, the data collected were transcribed, managed, coded and analysed (see section 5.11.3). The principles of grounded theory were used to analyse the data. The findings of the study were then compared with those in the literature. All the processes involved in the methodology used are presented and justified in detail in chapter 5.

### **1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE STUDY**

It is important to define and explain the basic terms in any study, especially when some terms carry more than one meaning. Thus the terms grammar, knowledge, practice, deductive methods, inductive methods, metalanguage, experience, and methodological triangulation are defined below:

***Grammar*** is a set of rules where “the goal is to explore and to formulate the relations between the formal events of grammar (words, phrases, sentences, and their categories and structures) and the conditions of their meaning and use” (Leech, 1994: 19).

***Practice*** is used as an umbrella term which covers many aspects of language activities in teaching English grammar. Practice here does not mean only whether students can do something or not, it means all that teachers do in the classroom when they teach English grammar. Teachers apply different kinds of practice in the same grammar lesson, and may change these practices when they teach a different class. For example, if the level of students’ knowledge is different they may need more or less attention from the teacher if they are to understand the lesson.

***The deductive method*** means teaching grammar traditionally, where the teacher gives the rules before any examples and then asks the students

to remember them. This method was defined as “a process from theory to practice” (Zhen, 2008: 36).

**The inductive method** means teaching grammar communicatively, where the rules are inferred from examples. With this method students are required to discover the grammatical rules by themselves.

**Metalanguage** means a form of language which teachers use when teaching language rules.

**Teachers’ knowledge** means the theoretical and practical knowledge which is held by teachers to teach English grammar. This knowledge could include beliefs, thoughts, understanding, awareness, insights, views, and values.

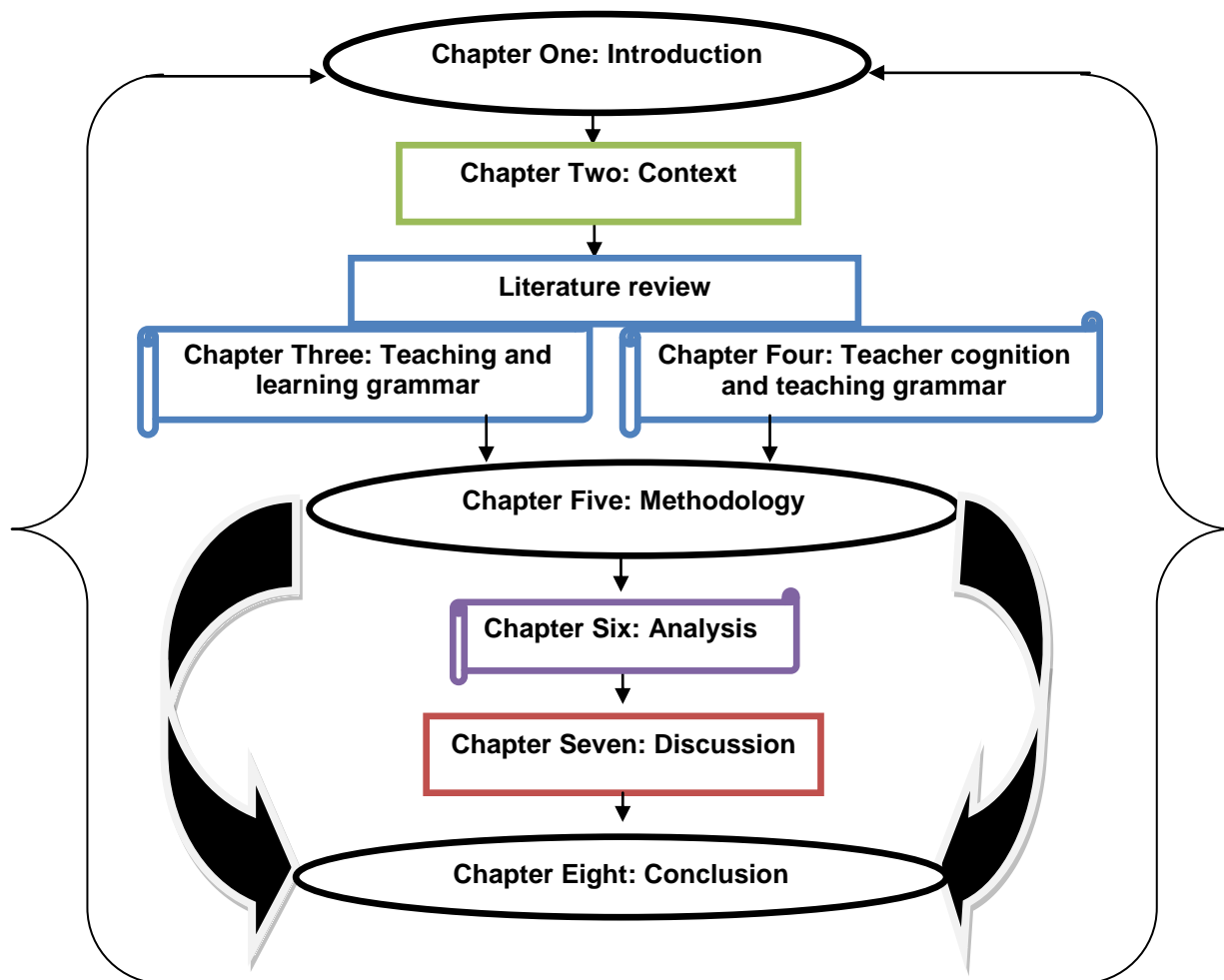
**The teacher’s experience** in the context of this study can be classified into two categories: more and less experienced. The teachers who had taught English for more than nine years were considered more experienced because they had used different textbooks in the context investigated. Whereas the teachers who had taught English for less than nine years were considered less experienced because they had used only one textbook. However, in previous studies conducted by Westerman (1991) and Gage and Berliner (1998) five years’ experience was considered to be the minimum period of time within which expertise may develop.

**Methodological triangulation** here means “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 233), and it was used in this research because using more than one source of data enables a more comprehensive understanding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).



## **1.8. THESIS ORGNANISATION**

The thesis consists of eight chapters: Chapter one introduces the study and describes its broad rationale. Chapter two explains the context of the study, which considers Libyan secondary schools and teachers of English Language grammar. Chapter three is the first part of the literature review. It reviews theories of learning, motivation, and the teachers and learners roles in teaching and learning English grammar. It also reviews the different methods and strategies used for teaching grammar. Chapter four is the second part of the literature review, which identifies and reviews what types of knowledge teachers of grammar should have along with the factors that might affect it in the context of the study. This chapter also addresses the relationship between teacher cognition and the teaching of grammar in making connections between the two domains of the literature. Chapter five gives a detailed description of the methodology used in this study, explaining the research design and the methods that were used, and giving a broad outline of the processes of data collection and analysis. All aspects of the methodology are justified. Chapter six displays the results of the analysis of data obtained from observation and semi-structured interviews. Chapter seven is discusses the findings and compares them to those of other studies in order to expand on the contribution made by this study. Chapter eight gives the study's conclusions and main findings, highlights its contributions and pedagogical implications and outlines the limitations of the study.



**Figure: 1.2. Structure of the Thesis**

### **1.9. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter has highlighted the need for the present study. It has introduced the research aims and questions to be investigated. It has also outlined the significance of the study and the research design, along with the potential contribution to its field of study. An overview of the whole thesis is also presented. However, in order to fully understand teachers' knowledge and their classroom practice in teaching English grammar, it is necessary to understand the educational context in which they work. This is the subject of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the context of the country in which this study was conducted. The educational system in Libya is also addressed, and a historical review is given of the teaching of English in Libya followed by discussion of the current English syllabus and course book used are discussed. The characteristics of teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools and their duties and experience are then discussed, after which the educational policy in the country is explained.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the context of this study, which deals with Libyan secondary schools teachers' knowledge and their classroom practice in the teaching and learning of English grammar. Therefore, it is essential to provide a comprehensive background to and detailed account of the context of the study. This sheds light on various challenges faced in teaching the English language in Libya, including the changes made in the education system over the years.

### **2.2. THE SETTING FOR THE STUDY**

The current study took place in Libya, which is a country boarding the Mediterranean Sea and the fourth largest in Africa, with Tripoli as its capital. The population is about 6.5 million and the currency is the Libyan Dinar. It is bordered by Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Niger, and Chad, and is a low-lying country, much of it being desert and with mountainous regions in the North West, North East and South. It is a major oil producer, with the oil sector contributing practically all export earnings. This study was conducted in the city of Zawia, located in western Libya, 40 kilometers from Tripoli. This also was chosen because it has a large university from which teachers graduate to become teachers of English, and also because access in the secondary schools was available. The study was undertaken in specialized secondary schools where students learn to be teachers of English. Other secondary schools were excluded

because teachers in these schools teach only general English along with other subjects such as history and Arabic.

### 2.3. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN LIBYA

The educational authorities in Libya emphasize that the future of the Libyan nation depends entirely on the quality of its educational system (Libyan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, 2001). Education in Libya exists in two forms: private and public. Private schooling was excluded from the present study because there were no private secondary schools in Libya. In the public education system, Libyan students start studying English as a school subject during grade seven. English is a compulsory subject in which students are examined (GPCE, 2008). Figure 2.1 summarises the stages of the public education system in Libya:

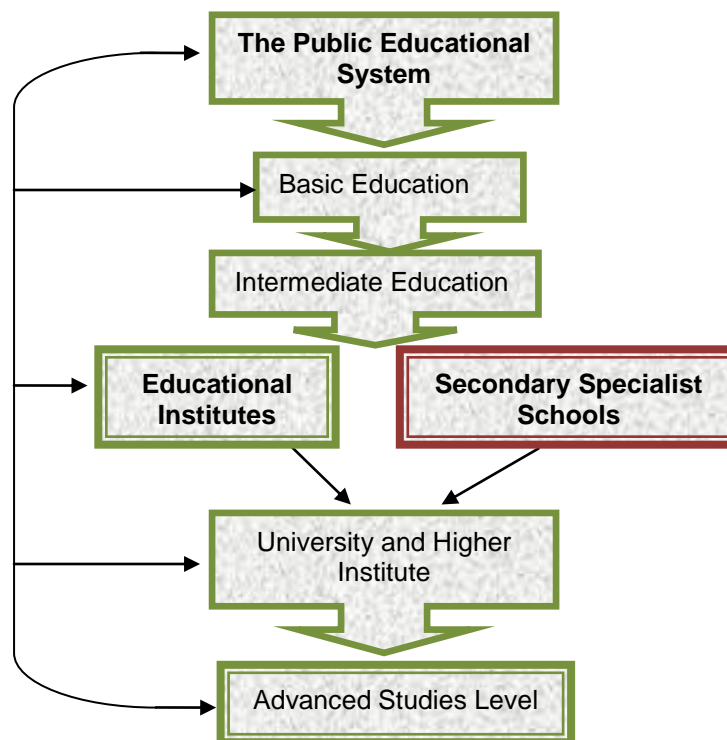


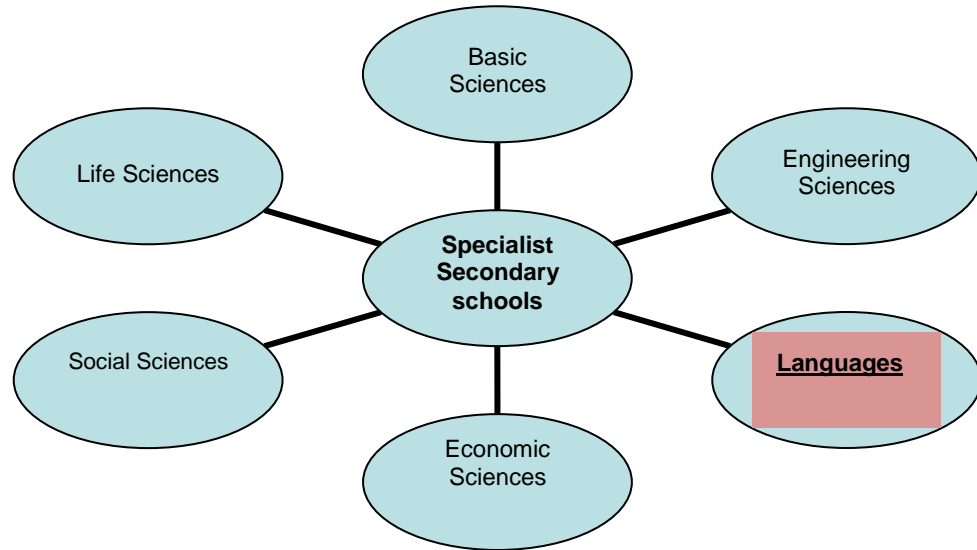
Figure: 2.1. The Public Education System in Libya

### ***Basic level***

The current public education system in Libya is made up of many stages. The first stage, basic education, lasts for nine years and is divided into two sections of six years, and three years. Literacy is introduced in the first three years of the first section, and while students are not required to take exams, they are required to achieve a certain level in both Arabic reading and writing. In the remaining three years other subjects such as history, geography, mathematics, and science, as well as subsidiary subjects such as music and gardening, are all introduced. Students need to pass exams in each of these subjects before they can transfer to the next level; otherwise they must remain at the same level for a further year until managing to pass. In the second section of preparatory school, the same subjects are studied at a more advanced level, while further subjects such as English are introduced.

### ***Intermediate level***

The second stage is secondary education, undertaken in secondary schools and technical institutions. In the first year of secondary school students study general subjects. Then during the second and third years they follow either arts or science routes (Libyan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science Report 2004). Depending on their results in the final exams of their last year, students either enter university or remain for another year of study. Technical institutions offer various specializations such as electrical engineering and carpentry, which either qualify the students to commence a working life or to continue higher-level study at university. Figure 2.2 explains the specialization in Libyan secondary schools:



**Figure: 2.2. Classification of Specialist Secondary Schools in Libya**

This study focuses on languages secondary schools rather than mid-institutions or other specialisations schools, because all of the students who graduate from the language secondary schools become teachers of English. These schools were provided with good facilities (GPCE, 2008). Students in these schools “spend most of their school day studying English through lessons of grammar, phonetics, listening, reading, writing and lab work. These students are prepared to join English departments at university” (Shihiba, 201:14). The English classes scales in secondary schools, for students of the English language discipline range between nineteen classes of forty-five minutes classes, whereas four classes of forty-five minutes per week for non-English disciplines whereas in language schools (see GPCE, 2009).

***University and higher institute level***

The next stage is university, where there are a range of arts and science departments. Study in the first section lasts for four years, while the second may extend from four to seven years, depending on the subject. These stages of education aim to provide “society with experts and specialists in different felids of life, i.e. teachers, lawyers, researchers and experimenters” (Ali, 2008:6).

### ***Advanced studies level***

Students pursue their higher education study after they finish university. Study for masters and doctoral degrees in Libya is a recent phenomena. The authority encouraged the students to study for postgraduate degrees abroad, thinking that such students would be better qualified than those graduating from the Libyan universities.

## **2.4. HISTORICAL REVIEW OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN LIBYA**

At the start of the British administration in 1944, the English language began to take its place in the Libyan school curriculum in a different way to that employed during the time of Italian canalization. English language was introduced as a school subject only during the British administration (Ali, 2008). In the late 1960s, in collaboration with John, Gusbi produced a new syllabus was used for three decades in Libyan secondary schools and was considered to be reliable local material. Gusbi's material (Further English for Libya, Revised edition, 1974) was based on the audio-lingual method characterised by concentration on structure and form rather than on meaning as an objective of teaching. It concentrates mainly on grammar issues where there was no opportunity for group work. This approach relied on introducing a topic familiar in the learner's culture, followed by drills and exercises, and its structure was almost the same as those used in other Arab countries. However, at that time, the communicative approach was being introduced into the curriculum in Europe and the USA.

A subbasement textbook was also introduced by Gusdi (Living English for Libya, 1982). This book was criticised for focusing on memorization of isolated vocabulary, application of grammatical structures and translating and understanding reading texts (Orafi & Borg, 2009). In this book, the teacher's role by using this textbook was passive because it based on traditional methods of teaching such as Grammar-Translation Method and Audio-lingual Method.

Accordingly, the opportunity to involve the whole class in group work or pair work was still not provided. This book was based on the grammar translation method where the teacher is central in the classroom.

This remained the case until 1987, when the Libyan Education authorities took the decision to remove English from all curricula in Libya. This policy lasted until 1994, when the teaching and learning the English language was once again encouraged. It was only in 1999-2000, when new English language series was designed for Libyan secondary school students by the Garnet Research Centre for Culture and Education at Reading University in the UK.

Learning the English language has now become very important in Libya. It is the language of science and technology, and these fields have developed rapidly in recent years. These changes have had an impact on the teaching and learning of English, as people have become interested in learning the language to meet their particular needs. For example, business people need to learn business English, and doctors need medical English. This is called ESP, English for Specific Purposes. Orafi and Borg (2009) stated that the communicative language teaching was introduced to Libyan secondary school textbooks in 1999-2000, which is considered relatively late, it can be said that these textbooks are an improvement for the following reasons:

- They can be described as comprehensive multi-strand textbooks, which introduce vocabulary, grammar and the four language skills listening, speaking, reading and writing in each unit.
- The content of the textbooks in terms of vocabulary, grammar and the four language skills are employed in the themes of each unit in a communicative way.
- The various topics included in the course book support the learner's command of the language and can help him to use English in real life situations.



Hutchinson and Waters (1987:19) broadly define ESP as ‘an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner’s reason for learning’. Thus ESP aims to meet the learners’ specific requirements. To cope with this innovation in English language teaching and learning, Libya has recently started to focus on the importance of ESP programmes. The proliferation of specialised secondary schools such as those for the life sciences, social sciences, and engineering, is a sign of that innovation. The syllabus prescribed in Libyan secondary schools is relatively new.

This syllabus consists of two levels for elementary schools, three levels for preparatory schools, and three levels for secondary schools. In the secondary schools, this syllabus is specialised for each science, including life sciences, basic sciences, social sciences, and engineering. The materials for each level consist of a course book, a workbook, a teacher’s book and a tape cassette. Every course book pays attention to the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and includes linguistic issues such as vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar, and employs techniques based on the communicative approach. This syllabus aims to develop the students’ learning skills in order that they can practise the English language communicatively (Orafi & Borg, 2009); it also seeks to prepare students to continue their education at a high level in universities and institutes that offer different specialisations.

This situation held until academic year 2007-2008, and then the national education authority revised and reorganised the textbooks. They designed English for Libya textbooks which include a subject book “whilst students are learning about a particular subject in the Subject Book, they will also be practicing their English in various ways” (Phillips et al, 2008: 2). This can be achieved when students learn vocabulary for the presentation of information, covering the four language skills, and grammar (see Appendix K). The English specialization textbook has been written with the specific needs of Libyan students. The ways the language is presented were chosen so as to draw upon

their knowledge and experience of the world, and their current interests and topics they will study at their university.

Furthermore, most of the activities in the text book help the students use the language in a practical manner: such as in writing letters, arranging events, and telling stories. Moreover all the materials are closely related, and these in the specialist section are all related to the students' specialism. The main aim of introducing this curriculum was to "develop students' oral communication skills" (Orafi & Borg, 2009:251). Therefore, all of the activities are supported by descriptions and illustrations designed to facilitate the students' understanding and to help them to use the language more communicatively. These activities are designed to consolidate and further develop understanding of the grammatical system, to increase the students' range of active vocabulary and to extend their ability in the four language skills.

## **2.5. TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

Teachers of the English language in Libya still need more effort to be as committed as the other parts of the Libyan educational system. One of the obstacles since formal education began in Libya the educational system has faced is that there has been an extreme lack of qualified Libyan teachers (Libyan National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, 2004). The Libyan government, hence, recruited non-Libyan teachers from neighboring countries such as Egypt and a number of teacher education institutions were established to replace non-Libyan teachers with Libyan citizens. However, Orafi and Borg (2009) pointed out that "English language teachers in Libya typically graduate from university with undeveloped spoken communication skills in English" (Orafi & Borg, 2009: 251). English teachers at secondary schools have a typical teaching load of three classes; each class comprising an average 25-30 students.

The universities and teacher training institutions now provide English Language teachers. However, there are some differences in the qualifications of English teachers graduating from different institutions in Libya. In particular, some teachers of English graduating from colleges had no teaching methodology unit in their syllabus, and therefore know little about how to teach English. Conversely, teaching methods are included subject in their syllabuses of some universities and their graduates therefore know how to base their teaching methodology.

Richards and Rogers (2001: 91) argue that EFL teachers "found the new materials difficult to teach because they required a high level of oral fluency in English and an English-only methodology that was difficult to implement in large classes". The problem in Libya is that the education authorities did not take into consideration the fact that differences in teachers qualifications will have an affect on student achievements in schools. Part of the reason for this is that the acute shortage of qualified teachers in Libya. As a result, a large percentage of teachers employed in schools are untrained and/or temporary.

### **2.5.1. Teachers' Duties**

Teachers in Libyan secondary schools must carry out certain general duties which are required by the policies of the education authority as stated below: First, teachers distribute a subject syllabus for each day of the year from its beginning to the end, and they have a preparation book for each class in which the method of teaching is explained. They should always bring those books with them during working hours. The second important requirement is that secondary school teachers will teach for twenty-four periods. The final important duty is that teachers should keep a record of their students' marks for coursework and homework, their practice in class and their examination results as part of their assessment. Naturally, they will attend school committee meetings to discuss any internal school issues.

These duties are all aimed at improving student achievement, while the education authority ignores the importance of improving the performance of teachers. Teachers need additional training regularly, and they should attend such sessions in order to improve their knowledge of teaching English. Libya is a good area for investigation, because little research has been undertaken so far about teachers in schools or universities. One possible reason for this was mentioned by Tantani (2005) that people in Libya assume that teachers will not make mistakes, or at least not often; and when failure arises they will always blame the students.

### **2.5.2. Teachers' Experiences**

Researchers in education consider experience to be important in developing the teaching skill because it helps teachers to master the subject matter they teach. Tsui (2003) argues that this type of experience involves the techniques used in teaching such as in planning lessons and managing classrooms. Wiseman et al. (2002: 17) stated that experienced teachers "refine and perfect teaching strategies and may become 'experts' in a particular strategy, approach, or philosophy". Furthermore, it can be argued that teachers' experience is developed over years of practice which reinforces their teaching style over time. Munro (2001) claims that experience is a valuable aspect which guides successive teaching actions. Teaching experience is used to refer to the period of time teachers engaged in actual teaching (Gray et al., 2000). It can also be argued that experience in teaching can be gained by teaching different levels in different times.

Correspondingly, experience teaching knowledge helps teachers to take decisions in situations which are similar to the ones they have worked in the past. Turner (2001) stated that the understanding of the classroom context promotes the best possible learning. Burgess (2001: 335) contends that "professional learning experience this teacher gains, comes from dealing with the situation in practice and thinking through afterwards what happened". In other words, teachers learn from their experience and develop their methods of teaching.

Crookes (2003) claims that experienced teachers often know their role better than newly trained teachers do. The reason for this is that because experienced teachers transfer parts of their experience such as problems or difficulties which they faced before (Ben-Peretz, 2002). In general, teachers learn a lot about teaching through their prior teaching and learning experiences (Borg, 2003).

Regarding the distinction between more or less experienced teachers, it can be argued that teachers who are exposed to different situations and have taught different textbooks should be considered more experienced teachers. Such teachers may be more aware of their students' needs and requirements. Moreover, Harkin et al. (2001: 81) argue that “teachers with less experience (under 10 years) are often less strong on leadership and more uncertain and dissatisfied than their more experienced colleagues”.

The meaning of the term “experienced” as used in the Libyan context is similar. The education authority considers teachers who have taught using different textbooks over the years to be as more experienced, whereas recent graduates who have only used the current textbook are seen less experienced. More experienced teachers are more appreciated and respected among their colleagues and students who consider this kind of teacher to be more professional.

## **2.6. NEED FOR CHANGE THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN LIBYA**

Educational policy in Libya is the main cornerstone of the education system. Policy is used to direct educational plans, curricula, teacher training, and the evaluation system. It covers the general principles of education, its purposes and general objectives, the objectives of the various stages, planning for each stage of education; special provisions such as for private schools, education facilities, and the growth and financing of education.

Although the English language is now introduced in Libyan schools from the first stage of basic education in level five, when students are about eleven years old, and continues to university level, but teachers seem to be more familiar with traditional teaching methods, and continue to focus on teaching grammar in deductive way rather more than other aspects of the language. These methods were described by GPCE report as not being effective in teaching English where Libyan students “need a teacher that uses the methods of thinking, analysis and building of a full logical model for application” (GPCE, 2008: 26).

One of the important aspects needed to be changed is the course book because it seems to be not suitable for all the students’ levels, although it was designed to extend the students’ ability in using the language communicatively through the listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students who have studied with this course book are supposed to achieve a good standard at university level when it comes to their performance in the English language. But in spite of this improvement in the new English Language textbook in Libya, it does not take into account other elements of the learning and teaching process such as the pupil, the EFL teacher, the method of teaching applied in Libyan schools, the teaching materials used, and the classroom environment.

These changes have put constraints on the basic process of learning the English language, because although there are many students who have become interested in learning English in Libya, the schools cannot find enough teachers to teach them. Consequently, the headmasters of schools put many students in small classes where each class contains students at different levels which makes it very difficult to teach effectively. “A multilevel class may influence the teacher’s selection of materials or activities” (Breet, 2004:108), and it is therefore difficult for students in Libya to learn English well.

In addition, the urgent change was required by GPCE report, is the teacher’s role while teaching English in Libyan secondary schools. The teacher should be work

as an “assistant and a director to create the scene for the student and the active learner and even train students on the skills of thinking and analysis, installation, conclusion and practice” (underlined in GPCE, 2008:28). The need for this change was also confirmed by Orafi and Borg (2009) who investigated the implementation of the new English secondary school curriculum. They observed and interviewed three Libyan EFL experienced teachers for two weeks. Their study evidenced that the failure of these teachers to implement the changes embodied within the new curriculum. However, this study was involved only three teachers but its results offered valuable insights about Libyan EFL secondary school teachers. This confirms that investigating teacher’s role in teaching English in Libyan secondary schools is still need for development.

## **2.7. SUMARRY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter has highlighted the need to understand the background and context of the study. It began with the Libyan educational system which was highly centralised and characterised by a complex hierarchical structure. The historical review of the teaching of English in Libya is given. Moreover, teachers’ duties and experiences are discussed. The need for change of the educational policy in Libya is presented. The literature review in the next chapter discusses the teaching and learning of English grammar.

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW I**

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

The value of reviewing the existing literature is “to get a sense of what we already know about a particular question or problem, to understand how it has been addressed methodologically, and to figure out where we need to go next with our research” (Norris & Ortega, 2006: 5). In order to understand more about the topic under investigation, the teaching and learning of English grammar is first reviewed in this chapter, and the teacher’s knowledge in general is explored in chapter four. The final section of chapter four reviews studies of the relationship between teachers’ classroom practice and their cognition and knowledge concerning teaching English grammar, in order to identify gaps in the literature.

In reviewing previous research on the teaching and learning of English grammar, this chapter situates the present study in its broader field. Teaching English grammar as a second language remains a controversial issue (Thornbury, 1999; Hedge, 2000; Ur, 2009 & Savage et al., 2010), and researchers in the TESOL field still do not agree on the best way to teach grammar which is appropriate for all contexts. Therefore, different theories of learning and their implications for strategy and for L2 learners' motivation to learn grammar are reviewed and evaluated. Moreover, the roles of teachers and learners are discussed.

Different methods of teaching grammar are also reviewed, such as teaching deductively, inductively and eclectically. Then different strategies used in conducting grammar practice activities are discussed, such as using grammatical terms, error correction, providing feedback, using students’ L1 and checking that students understand the task.



### **3.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNING THEORY**

Despite numerous developments in the development of theories of learning, the literature shows that there is still no agreement on a “comprehensive” theory of learning. Language learning theories are considered one of the most important factors which influence the learning and teaching of grammar. This section examines those learning theories which are most relevant to learning and teaching grammar in terms of practice. Three prominent theories are behaviourism, constructivism, and social constructivism.

#### **3.2.1. Behaviourism and Learning Grammar**

Behaviourism is essentially a psychological theory based on the notions of stimulus and response. It was supported by researchers such as B.F. Skinner, who considered all learning to be the result of habit formation through imitation, positive reinforcement and practice, which would mean that grammar is usually learnt in the classroom through repeated practice. Learning, according to this theory, "took place when learners had the opportunity to practise making the correct response to a given stimulus" (Ellis, 1997:31). In other words, behaviourists considered that learning occurs by imitating and repeating structures regularly. Xiangui (2005) argues that this theory focuses on observable behaviour which is reinforced positively or sometimes negatively.

Furthermore, Rivers (1968: 73) argued that, to behaviourists, learning occurs "through a trial-and-error process, in which acceptable utterances are reinforced by comprehension and approval, and unacceptable utterances are inhibited by the lack of reward". Critically, it is clear that in learning according to behaviourist theory, learners could not develop knowledge of grammar by themselves, but could only improve their learning according to the knowledge of and input from teachers.

One of the most important criticisms of this theory, particularly when applied to language, is that teaching and learning grammatical forms does little to provide to

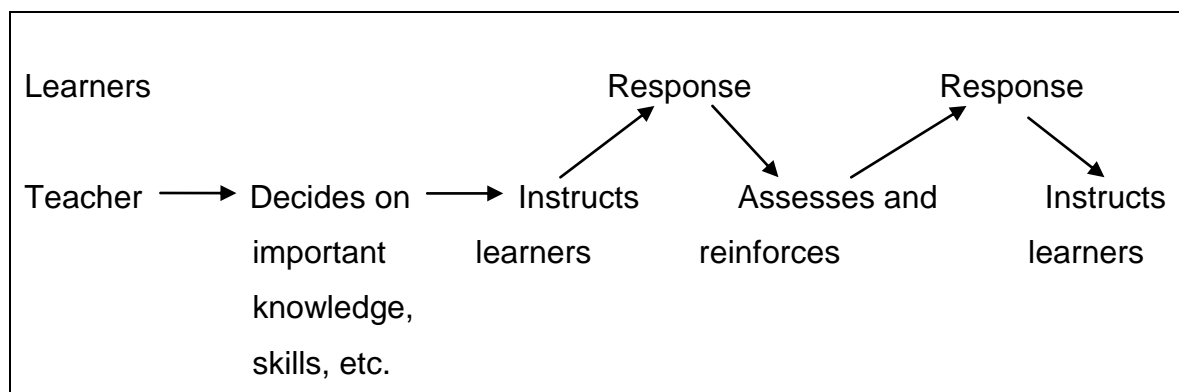
functional, interactive understanding of foreign language learning. Brown (2000) found that learners learn well when the nature of the interaction determines the language used. However, some psychologists such as Derbyshire (1999) still advocate the learning benefits of behaviourism and believe it still has validity. Derbyshire's argument may be supported partly because, in this theory, learners could build their knowledge of grammar but they could not learn and reproduce a large set of sentences. Learners may routinely create some sentences that they have never learnt before. This can only occur because they have internalized rules rather than strings of words.

Behaviourist learning theory is linked to the contrastive analysis hypothesis which would apply particularly to second language learners, because they already have a set of relevant habits. In this regard, Lado (1957) argued that transferring L1 habits can either facilitate or inhibit the process of L2 habit formation. It is difficult for learners to transfer habits concerning the differences whereas they can acquire the L2 more easily when the two languages are similar. Thus, advocates of behaviourist theory believed that "when a new habit was learned, old (already learned) habits would have some effect on the learning process" (Jonhson, 2008: 66).

The implications of this theory are summarised by Mitchell and Myles (2004), who stated that learning takes place by the imitation and repetition of the same structure time after time. Behaviourists believe that grammar should be taught through drills and memorization, from which students are expected to establish the correct grammatical behaviour (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). However, practice is very important, but it only promotes the learning and memorization of the rules but not how to use them.

Pollard et al. (2005) found that the learner is cast in a relatively passive role in behaviourism, which is considered to be a weakness of the theory. In this case the teaching and learning of grammar will be less effective because it guides

teachers to fill students' minds with the rules of grammar, which may be useful but it does not help to show how learners use these rules when they engage in communication. Figure 3.1 shows the roles of teachers and learners according to the learning theory of behaviourism:



**Figure: 3.1. A Behaviourist Model of Roles in the Teaching-Learning Process, adapted from Pollard et al. (2005:145)**

As shown in figure 3.1, behaviourist theory leads to the deductive teaching of English grammar in classrooms where teachers are assumed to be responsible for creating an active environment for students. The teacher's role during the teaching of grammar should be to correct the learner's behaviour instantly, address the situation, and focus the learner on appropriate behaviour. Positive reinforcements might be used by the EFL teacher, saying, for example, 'well done', or 'I am proud of you' to guide learners toward the desired behaviour.

In this theory, the teacher is considered as an enforcer and modifier of behaviour through the drawing up of a plan with a set of rules and goals. "When the behaviour to be learned was complex, it was developed by a process called shaping. To shape a behaviour, you break it down into small parts, and teach each one at a time, until eventually the whole complex behaviour is built up" (Johnson, 2008:48). It is worth noting that this theory is familiar to many teachers and learners in Libya, because for a long time the curriculum was based on it and teachers still use it in their classes (for more details, see section 2.4).

In summary, it is obvious from the literature that language learning and development according to behaviourism is a matter of conditioning by means of imitation, practice, reinforcement, and habituation, which leads to the deductive learning of grammar. Learners receive knowledge of grammar from their teachers but cannot use that knowledge in practical activities.

### **3.2.2. Constructivism and Learning Grammar**

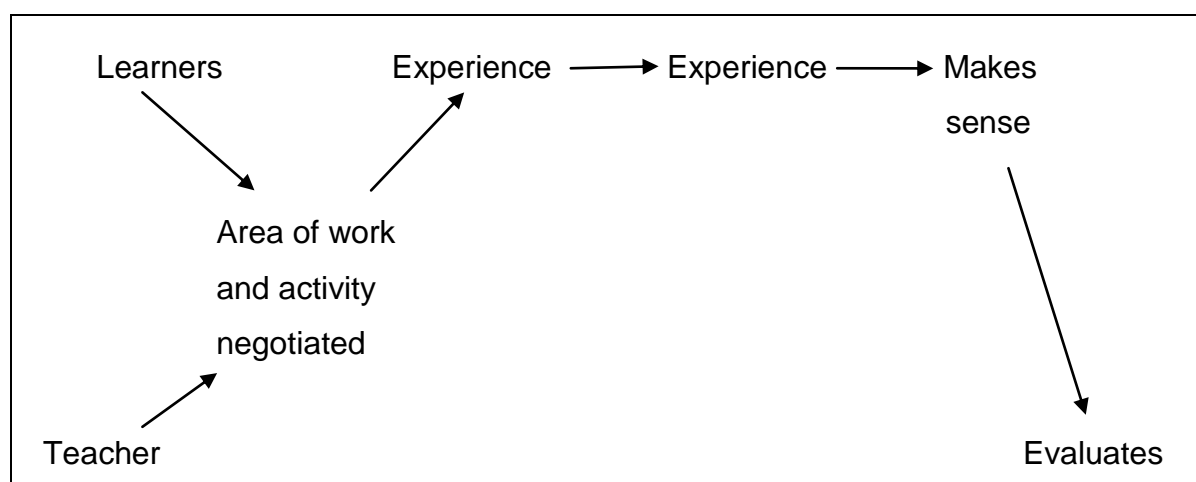
Constructivism is largely based the idea of building new information upon previous experience and knowledge. It is a theory of inductive learning. Pollard (2005:145) found that “this theory suggests that people learn through an interaction between thinking and experience and through the sequential development of more complex cognitive structures”. The “constructivist stance maintains that learning is a process of constructing meaning; it is how people make sense of their experience” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999: 260). More to the point, constructivist theory considers learning to be an essentially personal process whereby “meaning is made by the individual and is dependent upon the individual’s previous and current knowledge structure” (ibid, 261).

According to Cameron (2001), learners deal with what surrounds them and the impact of this on their mental development. Cameron also stated that learners learn to solve problems through taking action. Researchers such as Piaget paid very little attention to the role of language in cognitive development compared with action which is for him fundamental. It seems that Piaget considered learners as isolated human beings who learn everything through their own actions. This might not apply in a context such as in Libya where students are used to depending on their teachers and where they usually like to be passive.

The constructivist theory of learning has been recently adopted in teaching practice, with one of its implications suggesting that learning environments should focus directly on students. This theory focuses on the importance of the student’s prior knowledge and context in learning a foreign language (Hoover,

1996). However, adopting a constructivist theory of learning does not exclude teacher-centred approaches to the teaching and learning of grammar, because both knowledge and learning are the result of construction regardless of the teaching approach. Therefore, according to this theory, teachers should be encouraged to become more student-centred.

Researchers such as Xiangui (2005: 122) have found that the learner “is viewed as an active participant in the knowledge acquisition process”. He stated that learning happens as a result of brain processes. In this case, the learner’s brain must then process, store, locate, and produce responses to information. According to this theory, learners can store information in their memory for later recall. This process facilitates learning best when the learner is immersed within a challenging environment.



**Figure: 3.2. A Constructivist Model of Roles in the Teaching-Learning Process, adapted from Pollard et al. (2005:147)**

According to constructivist theory, learners and teacher adopt different roles in the classroom (see figure 3.2). The teacher’s role is assumed to be as a guide, organizer, and connector, whereas the learners’ role is to work by themselves as independent learners. Pollard et al. (2005) stated that the learner in this theory is very active and independent. Furthermore, Piaget claimed that learners learn and

gain experience from the opportunities for taking action offered by their environment. Based on this, classroom grammar activities in the Libyan context should involve doing or performing tasks that provide opportunities to learn grammar.

Some of Piaget's ideas can be applied to the language classroom by teachers aware that sense-making among learners is restricted by their experience. Thus it could be argued that Libyan learners of grammar should have some background information about the topics of lessons and the kinds of tasks and activities to be used in the classroom. In other words, EFL teachers should not teach things in the L2 that the learners could not understand in the L1. Learners do not come to the language classroom empty-handed, and already have a set of instincts, skills, and characteristics which will help them to learn another language (Halliwell, 1992). Therefore, Libyan teachers can better scaffold their learners' learning of grammar in various ways according to their students' level, intelligence, and the background information they already have about the topics taught.

However, as Schimdt (1992:377) observed, "there is little theoretical support from psychology for the common belief that the development of fluency in a second language is almost exclusively a matter of the increasingly skillful application of rules". Thus, EFL teachers of grammar should provide learners with suitable activities such as games that encourage them to construct language. In so doing, learners use language as a tool to solve problems while performing grammar tasks.

In summary, constructivist theory leads to the inductive learning of English grammar, which occurs when a learner actively constructs meaning from elements in the environment. This means that learners build new knowledge upon the foundations of previous learning (Hoover, 1996). Such a process might not work effectively in all contexts, although this theory has attracted the attention of Libyan educational authorities, and they revised the old curriculum accordingly

in order to help learners to become more active during the learning of English grammar (see section 2.4).

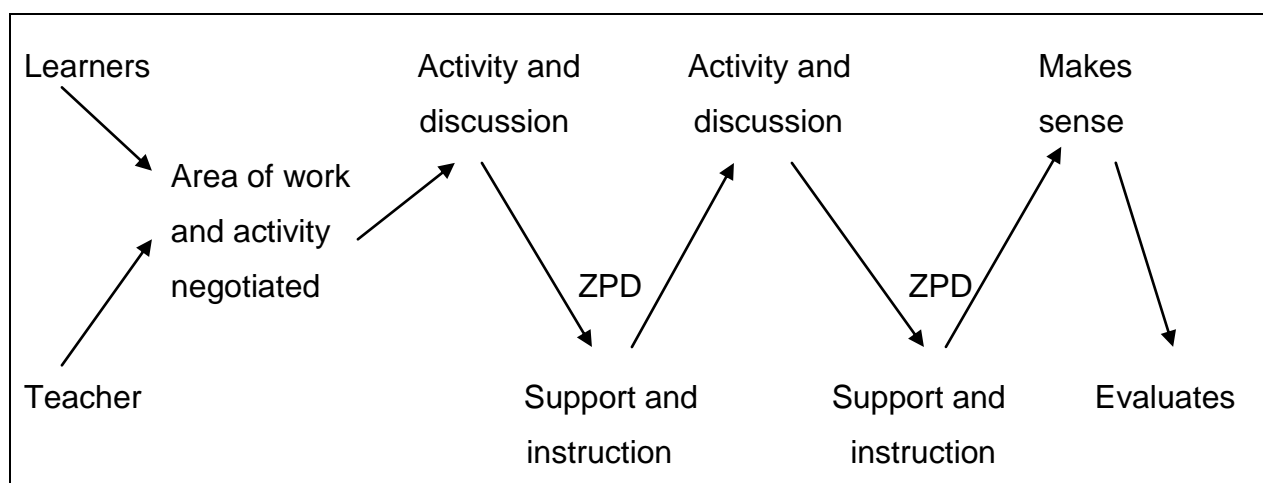
### **3.2.3. Social Constructivism and Learning Grammar**

According to Driscoll (2000: 241), social constructivism involves “social processes, and mental processes can be understood only if we understand the tools and signs that mediate them”. Psychologists have different opinions about the way in which learners learn languages. For example, Bruner emphasized the role of the teacher as a leader who encourages learners to focus on the key concepts in what they learn. Vygotsky, in contrast, argued that the key factor in learning lies in the social environment of the learner. He believed that a social environment is essential in human cognitive development.

Vygotsky's view is that "language opens up new opportunities for doing things and for organizing information through the use of words and symbols" (Cameron, 2001: 5). Furthermore, to Vygotsky, the learner is active in a world full of people, whereas Piaget sees the learner is also as active but in a world full of objects. In other words, development and learning, for Vygotsky, take place in a social context. This means that the environment and social interaction have an important role in stimulating students to learn more effectively. However, Libyan learners do not have the opportunity to interact with other speakers of English outside the classroom. Introducing grammatical rules within an inductive framework could help learners to achieve understanding. Helping learners is useful in adding to what Vygotsky called their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Cameron, 2001).

Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD can help teachers with lesson planning in teaching English grammar, so that they can create appropriate tasks. However, if tasks are too easy, they will present no challenge, which would make lessons boring and consequently learners' attention is likely to be distracted. Similarly, if tasks are too difficult, learners will be discouraged from learning the target language. Therefore, classroom grammar activities should be demanding, but not too

demanding, and the goals must be achievable. Brewster et al. (1992) suggest that there should be balance between support and challenge in activities. In other words, learning tasks should not be over-guided to be very easy, nor too challenging to be too difficult and threatening. Scaffolding concerns the learner's needs, and so the better the teacher understands these, the better scaffolding they can provide. Scaffolding can be adjusted depending on how competent the learner becomes (Cameron, 2001). Routines refer to what teachers and learners are used to doing frequently in the classroom. This may include the teacher giving instructions about grammar, or conducting activities such as revising previous lessons or recycling language items that learners are used to hearing in class. These routines may contribute to language development because learners become familiar with what is coming next and can participate in classroom activities (ibid). Figure 3.3 shows the operation of learning processes according to social constructivist theory.



**Figure: 3.3. Social Constructivist Model of Roles in the Teaching-Learning Process, adapted from Pollard et al. (2005:145)**

This reveals that active interaction between teacher and learners occurs. In other words, both deductive and inductive learning happen inside the classroom, which confirms that the application of eclectic approach leads to learning and teaching grammar. The teacher has a crucially important role in helping students develop, providing them with tasks which are relevant to their daily life experience or tasks



which they should clearly be familiar with. This form of experience helps students to understand, remember and learn more effectively.

A study of in-service teachers conducted by Collinson (1996) found that, although teachers may implement different principles of behaviourism and constructivism, one of these paradigms was always more central. The teachers' reasons for adopting theories of learning differed; some wanted to follow their textbook and others wanted to take into consideration the learners' level of English. It can be said that, in social constructivism, the role of the teacher is not simply to teach, but also to encourage students to gain self-esteem, self-confidence and personal satisfaction.

In summary, the applications of this theory in Libya may lead teachers to make some changes in their teaching methodology, adopting new strategies and modern styles to enable them to help their students to be more motivated, and encouraging them to participate and be involved in classroom discussion. Correspondingly, teachers of grammar should be aware of the needs, feelings, desires, and abilities of the learners. In addition, teachers should try to understand their psychological or educational problems. All of these considerations promote the development of the teaching and learning of grammar.

In order to understand the importance of learning theory, the question of motivation must be explored as this is the main core of learning in general. Its relationship to learning English grammar, in particular, is reviewed next because without it effectively learning may not occur.

### **3.3. MOTIVATION AND LEARNING GRAMMAR**

Motivation can be considered to be like an internal power source that drives EFL teachers and learners to achieve their aims, and they cannot do their work effectively if it is missing (Dornyei, 2001). Success or failure is partly the result of

the teacher's interest and motivation. If students are interested in what they are doing it will not only give them motivation to learn more efficiently, but they will enjoy the process and want to continue and to practice. Ur (1988) stated that a well-designed practice or procedure may fail to produce successful learning if it is boring.

Psychological research pays particular attention to motivation as a crucial factor in learning language. Motivation can be divided into two types; intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation concerns inner motives that encourage students to learn in order to achieve desired goals (Ellis, 1997; Cook, 2001 & Yule, 2006). Internal motivation refers to doing something without any intention of obtaining rewards or praise. According to Ryan and Deci (2000: 54), intrinsic motivation refers to "doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable".

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is viewed as arising from objects external to ourselves which act as a force pulling from outside as opposed to internal drives pushing from within and which are self-generated (Child, 1997). Therefore, extrinsic motivation refers to things we do for some reward (Yule, 2006). Learners who learn English as a foreign language at school, for example, will attempt to perform better for a reward such as praise or obtaining higher marks in recognition of their progress or achieving a high level of prestige in their community (Ellis, 1997; Macaro, 1997). In contrast, students might be demotivated if they lose those incentives.

Chambers (1999: 52) argued that "intrinsically motivated learning leads to higher quality and more sustained performance than extrinsically motivated learning". The reason for this might be that extrinsic motivation leads to material rewards and social approval, whereas intrinsically motivated behaviour is considered by researchers to occur as a result of feelings of pride and satisfaction.

To sum up, it can be said that both extrinsic and intrinsic types of motivation are important and can lead to successful learning. This conclusion is confirmed by Cook (2001), who stated that the teacher's motivation of the students and the way he/she treats them are important elements in successfully teaching a language and are strongly related to students' achievements in learning language. Thus, EFL teachers should have the ability to manage all the circumstances inside the classroom to facilitate the learning of grammar and consequently motivate learners to learn the target language.

Due to the importance of motivation in the teaching and learning process, a number of implications of the importance of motivation in learning theories are discussed below.

### **3.3.1. Implications and Strategies for the Motivation of EFL Learners**

No doubt the motivation of EFL teachers to teach has a direct relationship to the effectiveness of their teaching and to their motivation of students. In fact, the EFL teacher's skills and ability to motivate students are regarded as crucial factors for the effectiveness of teaching. Therefore, in this study, Libyan secondary school teachers in the city of Zawia were examined to identify their ability to choose the appropriate methods or strategies to stimulate and motivate their students in the language classroom. In this respect, Dornyei (2001:117) suggested that "for classroom practitioners the real area of interest is not so much the nature of 'motivation' itself, as the various techniques or strategies that can be employed to motivate students". He added that "such strategies are used to increase student involvement and to 'save' the action when ongoing monitoring reveals that progress is slowing, halting, or backsliding" (ibid, 2001: 117).

Researchers have suggested different motivational strategies to stimulate learning in appropriate classroom conditions. In categorising motivational strategies, Dornyei and Otto (1998) aimed to demonstrate the variety of different methods by which human behaviour can be encouraged and promoted. This

categorisation is based on a process-oriented model which assumes the following organization.

One of the processes involved is creating the central motivational conditions. The EFL teacher should be concerned with the composition and internal structure of the group of learners and the norm system that governs group behaviour in general. Having established the learner group's goal orientation, Hadfield claims that it is essential to "have a sense of direction and a common purpose" (Hadfield, 1992: 134). He also states that "defining and agreeing aims is one of the hardest tasks that the group has to undertake together" (ibid, 134).

From the literature it is recommended that the teacher of a foreign language should support his/her students, and provide a very interesting environment in the classroom. Discussing the classroom environment and teacher, Good and Brophy stated that:

to be motivated to learn, students need both ample opportunities to learn and steady encouragement and support of their learning efforts. Such motivation is unlikely to develop in a chaotic classroom, as an effective learning environment. Moreover, because anxious or alienated students are unlikely to develop motivation to learn, it is important that learning occurs within a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. The teacher should be a patient, encouraging person who supports students' learning efforts. Students should feel comfortable taking intellectual risks because they know that they will not be embarrassed or criticised if they make a mistake" (Good & Brophy, 1994: 215).

In addition, the teacher of grammar should establish a relationship with his/her students and make them feel that they are important by listening to their opinions and ideas, whether inside or outside the classroom. He/she should also show them that he/she appreciates them and encourage them in their subjects and to enjoy their lessons. Deci et al. (1997) argued that the interactive relationship between the motivation of students and teachers could be positively or negatively synergistic. However, it is important to keep in mind that part of the task of teaching is to stimulate in students the enthusiasm that facilitates a positive rather than a negative cycle. Deci et al. (1997: 68) added that "for teachers to

recognise that students' lack of enthusiasm affects them negatively can be important and useful information for their own self regulation, but it does not absolve them of responsibility for not devoting themselves to teaching".

Furthermore, another process which generates students' motivation is that teachers should stimulate their students' positive attitudes towards the learning process, and this is the main motivational challenge for teachers. Dornyei (2001) suggested some elements of a strategy that can be used to achieve this goal. These include enhancing the learners' language-related values and attitudes, increasing the learner's goal orientation and making the curriculum relevant to the learners.

Creating self belief among learners in their own abilities is considered to be another process which motivates students. In this regard, Brophy (1998: 18) believed that "the motivational challenge facing teachers is to find ways to encourage their students to accept the goals of classroom activities and seek to develop the intended knowledge and skills that these activities were designed to develop, regardless of whether or not the students enjoy the activity or would choose to engage in them if other alternatives were available".

Authors such as Williams and Burden (1997: 141) have listed a number of important suggestions for teachers to motivate their students. Teachers should recognise the complexity of motivation, initiate and sustain it, discuss with learners why they are carrying out activities and involve learners in making decisions. They also cite recognising people as individuals, building self confidence, helping students to move towards a mastery-oriented style, enhancing intrinsic motivation, designing a supportive learning environment and giving informative feedback.

In summary, all of the above points are assumed to be dependent on both teachers and learners in the teaching and learning context. Therefore, the roles of teacher and learners are discussed in more detail in the next section.

### **3.4. THE ASYMMETRIC ROLES OF TEACHERS AND LEARNERS**

The purpose of this section is to consider the duties of both the teacher and learners in the classroom in order to understand how learning occurs. Zion and Slezak (2005) argued that teaching and learning involve complex role changes for teachers and students. In teaching and learning grammar, learning occurs through different techniques used by the teachers with the support of their learners (see section 3.6 for more details). This means that the roles of teacher, and learners complement each other, and deficiencies in either will lead to ineffective learning.

In language learning the teacher is crucially important in helping his/her students to develop their language skills. One of the most important responsibilities of teachers is to encourage learners to discover how to use their knowledge of grammar in appropriate situations. Teachers use different techniques to try to make their grammar teaching more effective and more useful, such as asking learners to act out a dialogue in front of the class (Koerner, 1992; Malderez & Bodoczky, 1999).

Mentoring activities can help to lower any emotional or cognitive load by suggesting what the teachers should or should not focus on. This is supported by Cooper's (2004) survey of 341 FL teachers, from which one of the strongest recommendations for teacher education was for better mentoring in class. Furthermore, Rivers (1981: 227) argues that:

In view of the emotional and personality factors which are involved in a verbal exchange, expression or personal meaning in a new language can be developed only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other.

Therefore, teachers should pay more attention to cognitive and emotional factors because most theories of emotion, for example, infer a relationship between students' emotions and classroom behaviour (Fredrickson, 1998; Cooper, 2006).

In addition, teachers who are aware of their learners' psychological state find great success in developing better learning. Doff (1997: 283) asserted that the teacher can improve the students' chance of learning a language successfully by creating a productive working atmosphere in the classroom and a good relationship with the class as well as recognising that students have different needs and problems. This means that, in order to teach grammar well, teachers should create a positive atmosphere, greet and encourage students, smile, make jokes and appreciate when someone produces correct sentences in the classroom.

The learner's role in the operation of learning should never be ignored. The learner is at the centre of the teaching and learning process. McDonough (2002) pointed out that learners are seen as an important component of the teaching process. Learners have different personalities and modes of learning, understanding, emotion and motivation. These differences mean that the duties of teachers are complex, and especially so when teaching grammar which requires a higher level of concentration. Learners may also use different learning techniques in dealing with the errors they make. Students with high self-esteem do not care too much about committing grammatical errors, so they will accept correction for the sake of success since their major aim is to communicate (Ali, 2008).

In contrast, learners with lower self-esteem fear both speaking and committing errors; and the result in this case will be the production of the wrong forms, since the students do not reveal to the teacher where their weaknesses lie so that s/he can improve them. Therefore, a learner's attitude towards grammatical errors

plays a crucial role in the techniques of teaching grammar. Learners who lack confidence in their ability to participate successfully in classroom grammar activities often listen in silence without any enthusiasm (Koerner, 1992).

In summary, the role of the teacher is fundamental in the EFL teaching and learning process. EFL teachers should leave behind the traditional notion of teacher-centred classes and work to help their students to become more confident, responsible and consequently independent in their learning task (Brown, 2007).

In order to understand more about the teacher's and learner's roles, the methods of English grammar teaching and their relevance to the context of this study are reviewed next.

### **3.5. METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

This section reviews the main methods of teaching grammar. As discussed above, behaviourist learning theory leads to the deductive learning of grammar, constructivism leads to inductive learning, and social constructivism leads to the learning of grammar through the integration of both types of learning (see section 3.2). This section focuses on the practical aspects of teaching grammar, and the different strategies grammar teachers might use in their classes. Grammar can be taught in many different ways, and three main methods are applied in the Libyan context, which are teaching grammar deductively, inductively and using a mixed-method eclectic approach.

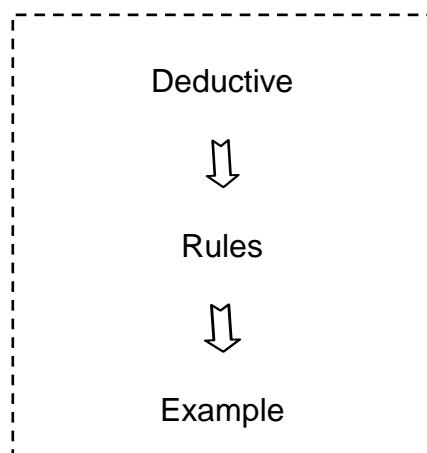
#### **3.5.1. Teaching Grammar Deductively**

The traditional approach to grammar teaching using the deductive method is one of the most important methods of teaching grammar. It characterizes many EFL classrooms, and the present author is familiar with this approach as a student and from using it to teach English in Libyan secondary schools. From both the



literature and experience, this approach can be said to be less effective in L2 learning than are the alternatives to it.

In this system the teacher takes the main role, teaching students in intensive lessons designed according to a certain design of the curriculum. The task of the EFL teacher is to explain and give full details about the subject; and he/she has merely to provide large volumes of information. Students are not supposed to discuss or disagree with any of this information. They are expected to accept what their teachers tell them. They are not encouraged to think about the information that is given to them. The teacher's role in this case starts with presenting a rule of grammar first, as in figure 3.4.



**Figure: 3.4. Teaching Grammar Deductively**

Traditional instruction in teaching grammar using this approach focuses on the product, which can be argued to not work very well. This is true with Libyan students, especially those who want to learn grammar so as to use the language in the future. It might work with students who are aiming only to learn grammar in order to pass exams. In this approach, only the output is manipulated (Van Patten & Cadierno, 1993). To some extent it is like teaching maths, where the teacher starts by explaining the grammatical rule and then learners are asked to reproduce this rule. Teachers concentrate on describing the different

grammatical rules of a foreign language, along with requiring the memorization of much vocabulary and various declensions and conjugations, as well as translating whole texts into the learners' native language. To teach learners how to form the present perfect tense, for example, the following example shows how it is explained according to the traditional approach. The EFL teacher writes on the blackboard:

Subject + verb to have + past participle + object

He            has            bought            a car

Then students are asked either to read the examples given or to find other examples using this rule. The concentration is heavily on the form and learners are rarely encouraged to make form-meaning connections. The traditional approach to presenting and explaining grammar considers only how students produce the correct grammatical features. The activities involved in the traditional teaching of grammar focus on giving learners opportunities to form grammatically correct sentences. In other words, the focus is on the output, and has nothing to do with the input. Traditional EFL grammar teachers assume that learners learn structures through repeatedly producing them.

According to Krashen (1982), the traditional approach to teaching grammar seems to be less effective because it does not take into consideration other ways that help students acquire grammatical structures. It only considers how learners produce specific grammatical features. This means that teachers who apply this method do not provide learners with the knowledge which will help them to transfer their grammatical knowledge into language use. Ellis (1995) suggested that the traditional approach faces various problems. Firstly, research has proved that learners pass through many phases in order to produce L2 structures, and that traditional grammar teaching often fails to follow this sequence. Teaching learners how to produce a structure before they are ready to do so may not work. Secondly, when learners are asked to produce difficult structures, they will make mistakes and their motivation will be affected. In addition, traditional grammar

teachers tend to exaggerate the importance of avoiding errors and as a result, this would also discourage learners from trying.

Candin (1979: 78) claimed that the focus of most language teaching materials is on “the sentence as a unit of structuralist grammar rather than the utterance as a unit of discourse”. He argued that foreign language learners face many obstacles to the achievement of fluency. One is that they are learning a language in such a way that is unlike a real language because the “sentence-illustrating task excludes its proper communicative tasks as an illustrator of the speaker’s role and verbal purposes” (p. 78). These sorts of obstacles mostly arise due to the use of traditional activities which usually do not take into consideration present-day language usage.

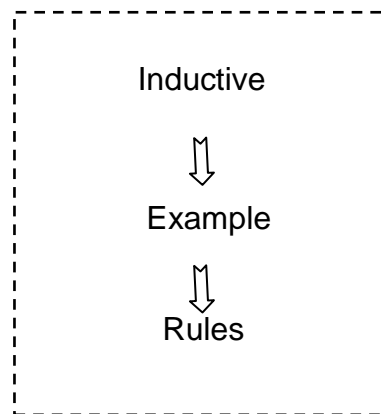
Borg (1999b) conducted a study in Malta with teachers of English as a foreign language to identify their methods of grammar teaching. He observed and interviewed five participants and found that they were encouraged to comment on their methods of instruction, which led to the emergence of teaching theory out of actual application. Widodo (2006) also examined the deductive method of teaching grammar and found that this approach has advantages and disadvantages, both of which and teachers should consider, but it is still considered to be less effective in teaching grammar.

In summary, in response to existing research, this study aims to reassess approaches to teaching grammar by examining teachers’ classroom practices and their own points of view. This is because pedagogical factors are very important in teaching English grammar. This is confirmed by Ur (2009: 5), who found that “very often the decision as to how to teach grammar will be influenced far more by pedagogical factors than by those based on second language acquisition research”.

The next approach to be examined is the inductive teaching of grammar.

### 3.5.2. Teaching Grammar Inductively

For a long time grammar and communication were considered as independent rather than complementary and integrated features whose roles interact in effective language use (Dickens & Woods, 1988). The latter is also the position confirmed by constructivists, as explored in section 3.2.2. Researchers such as Dickens and Woods (1988); Celce-Murcia (1991); Fotos and Ellis (1991); Li (1998); Ellis (2006) and Barnard and Scampton (2008) and Brown (2007) have put the emphasis on communication in teaching grammar. These studies contribute to finding successful ways that help learners integrate instruction on problematic grammar forms within a communicative framework (Fotos, 1994b). Figure 3.5 shows how grammar is presented and explained inductively.



**Figure: 3.5. Teaching Grammar Inductively**

From figure 3.5 we could see that this method of teaching provides students with opportunities to negotiate meanings through grammatical activities which they utilize interactively. In other words, learners are at the centre of the process and they produce the rule. Before producing any grammatical features, students should be aware of the relationship between form and meaning in a sentence, but the problem is that there is no guarantee that learners of grammar may not lose sight of that relation. This might happen if their teachers do not provide them with knowledge which helps them to be aware of how to use their grammatical knowledge.

One might argue that moving from meaning to form rather than the other way around is less relevant in an EFL situation where students do not need English to communicate. However, Libyan students usually face difficulties communicating in English when they move to an EFL situation. Moreover, providing EFL students with opportunities to negotiate meaning through solving grammatical problems will help them gain explicit knowledge of grammatical features, and develop the strategic competence required to develop fluency (Cotterall, 1995).

Accordingly, Stern (1992) found that learners probably prefer the presentation and explanation of grammar inductively because it encourages their use of language to start from their own observations, and to discover rules by themselves rather than being told in advance what the rule is. That seems a fair assessment, but it may not work in every case. In the Libyan context, for example, some teachers believe that teaching with an inductive approach is difficult, and needs a particular climate, so they prefer to use the deductive approach.

Sakui (2004) conducted a study about the inductive language teaching conceptions of 12 EFL teachers through interviews and observations in order to identify whether the teachers' practice coincided with their definition of communicative language teaching (CLT). She found that "teachers' understanding of CLT is more semantic than conceptual. In defining CLT, they reported lists of features which included exchanging messages and self-expression, but their definitions lacked the coherence of a methodology incorporating goals, planning, and tasks" (Sakui, 2004: 160). Similar shortfalls in teaching-specific knowledge of CLT have also been found in studies by Foss and Kleinsasser (2001) and Andrews (2003), and also by Wilson, et al. (1992: 481). The latter stated that "The teacher's responses seemed to reflect what should be done rather than what is done in her classroom". These findings contributed to the aims of the current study, which considers this issue in identifying the relationship between teachers' practice and knowledge about the teaching and learning of English grammar.

In the past few years, the Libyan government has decided to improve and develop the educational system in the country (see section 2.3). Consequently, most secondary schools in Libya are now provided with almost all of the equipment needed to facilitate the educational process. Brown (2007: 46-47) summarised the main characteristics of teaching English communicatively as follows:

- Overall goals. The goals of the CLT are mainly focusing on all the language elements including; grammatical, discourse, functional, sociolinguistic and strategic in a flexible way.
- Relationship of form and function. The approach aims to engage the students with the functional use of the language to clarify its meanings.
- Fluency and accuracy. One of the techniques of CLT is the focus on the comprehension and production of the learners. Moreover, fluency can be seen as important as accuracy in an attempt to maintain the learners engagement with the use of the target language.
- Focus on real-world contexts. As the CLT tasks suggest dealing with real-life situations, students will easily acquire the skills which they need to communicate effectively outside the classroom.
- Teachers role. The teacher's role in CLT can be seen as a guide to the students by showing them the key points of the task. Moreover, the teacher's duty in the class is to motivate the students to interact with each other and with the teacher, in order to improve their understanding.
- Students role. Students should be active and cooperative by participating in the tasks and activities given by the teacher. Thus, the class is then learner-centred, which gives the students more opportunities to learn.

This approach may also be less ineffective in some contexts, Widodo (2006: 128) stated some disadvantages of teaching English grammar inductively as follows:

- The approach is time and energy-consuming as it requires learners to have the appropriate concept of the rule.
- The concepts given implicitly may lead the learners to have the wrong concepts of the rule taught.
- The approach can place emphasis on teachers in planning a lesson.
- It encourages the teacher to design data or materials taught carefully and systematically.
- The approach may frustrate the learners if their personal learning style, or their past learning experience (or both) lead them to prefer simply to be told the rule.

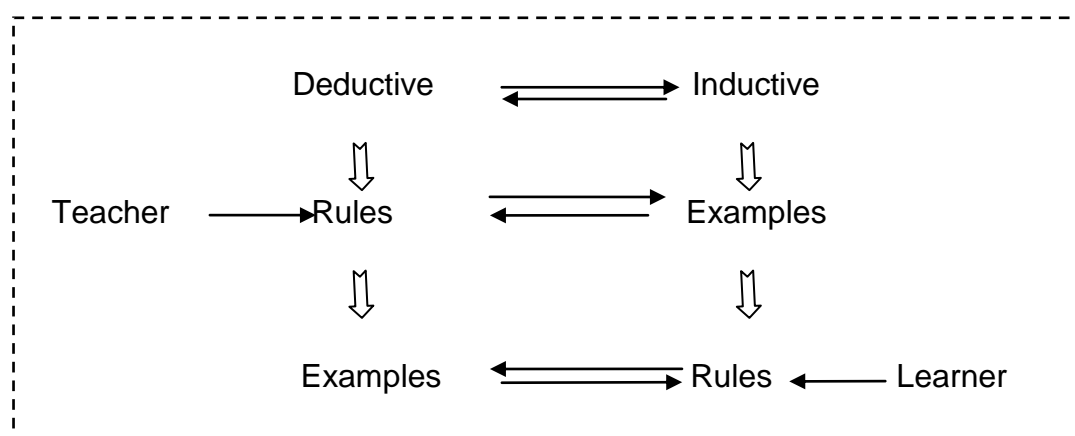
Given these possible disadvantages and the changes in the methods used in Libya (see section 2.4) it can therefore be argued that the best method is that which suits the students' needs according to their level of English, their L1 background and their attitude towards the target language. "Even with the best teachers and methods, students are the only ones who can actually do the learning" (Griffiths, 2004: 2). It would also seem that the inductive approach is seen as a good way of learning grammar among students who have travelled abroad to countries where the target language is spoken. This study aims to examine the inductive approach to teaching grammar to find out how effective it is in the Libyan context.

In summary, it would often not be easy to apply a specific method of teaching grammar in a classroom. There is probably no single best method that satisfies the needs of all students, although some linguists believe that teaching grammar inductively is likely to be the best method whereas others think that a combination of methods is the right solution (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, this latter option for teaching grammar is examined in this study, since

it is believed to be the best method to apply in contexts where a foreign language is taught. The next section thus discusses the eclectic method.

### 3.5.3. Teaching Grammar Eclectically

For a long time the methods used for teaching grammar have alternated between deductive and inductive methods. Recently, “however, more and more practitioners realize that the two orientations grammar-based and communicative have elements that complement each other and that, when combined, can result in an eclectic approach that is effective in teaching grammar to adult students” (Savage et al., 2010: 5). In this eclectic method, teachers are allowed to use mixed strategies and techniques to present and explain the features of grammar. Figure 3.6 shows how English grammar could be taught using an eclectic approach.



**Figure: 3.6. Teaching Grammar Eclectically**

As shown in figure 3.6, teachers can design their practice using deductive and/or inductive approaches. In the literature, various standpoints are suggested by researchers about teaching grammar eclectically. For instance, Batstone (1994b:53) considered that there are three main approaches for teaching grammar, (grammar as product, as process, or as skills). The product approach would help students to notice structure by focusing on specified forms and meanings, while teaching grammar as process would help students practise the skills of language use, allowing them to proceduralize their knowledge. Teaching



grammar as skills, on the other hand, would guide students in utilizing grammar for their own communication.

Another view was presented by Thornbury (1999) in his book *How to Teach Grammar*, wherein he classified the various approaches to teaching grammar. He said that, first, grammar might be taught from rules, using a deductive approach in which teachers present the rules to students. Grammar might be alternatively taught using examples, as in inductive learning. Yet another option which would be to teach grammar through the use of texts. This method, for instance, might work with Libyan students whose teachers are more experienced and who could choose appropriate texts according to their students' needs and use the students' own language.

In his paper 'Integrative L2 Grammar Teaching: Exploration, Explanation and Expression' Sysoyev (1999) mentioned a good method of teaching grammar which he termed the EEE method. This involves teaching grammar through combining form, meaning and purpose at the same time. The method consists of three equally important stages: exploration, explanation and expression (EEE). In the first stage students look at certain sentences under an instructor's supervision, and discover a grammatical pattern. This stage also involves cognitive learning, and students spend some time discussing and identifying the patterns, which helps them to understand the rules. In the explanation stage the teacher makes these rules explicit. Sysoyev's proposal is supported by Pica's (1985) findings that showing the rules makes students' speech more grammatically accurate. He considered it essential for teachers to connect the rules to examples from the first stage, upon which students have already built some knowledge. The third stage of expression is then concerned with production, because here students use new structures in interaction and produce meaningful utterances.

Furthermore, Sysoyev considered that this method will help L2 Learners to focus on form and meaning equally, thus leading them to use language communicatively. This method is useful but it may not work in all contexts, because moving forward from one stage to the next depends on teachers' proficiency. Students may also have different levels of English, and so some circumstances related either to students or to teachers might inhibit the process.

Huang (2005) stated that grammar might be taught in terms of product or process. Teaching grammar as product focuses on giving learners a clear and explicit framework for the language but it may not help learners to use the language. Conversely, teaching grammar as process emphasizes the use of language by the learner. It was concluded that "grammar teaching and communicative teaching both completed each other and he advised teachers to do both" (Azar, 2007: 11).

Borg and Burns (2008) argued that regular phases of explicit practice encourage students to discover rules, even if the use of direct explanation is discounted. The present researcher disagrees with this view because explicit practice guides students towards understanding rules, leading them to build their knowledge of grammar only, which does not always help them to use the language. "Essentially, the decision as to the best way to teach grammar has to be taken by the practitioner within a specific situation, informed by research and by his or her own professional experience- and reflection-based judgment" (Ur, 2009: 8).

In some studies such as those by Fotos (1993) and Mohamed (2001), inductive instruction has been found to lead to higher gains in learning than did deductive instruction. In contrast, other studies such as those by Fotos and Ellis (1991), Sheen (1992) and Robinson (1996) found that deductive instruction was more effective. Other findings such as those of Fotos (1994b) and Rosa and O'Neill (1999), indicated no significant difference between the effectiveness of inductive and deductive instruction. However, all of these studies confirmed that both

methods can lead to significant gains in knowledge. Therefore the present study is concerned with investigating teaching grammar methods with different modes of instruction used among the teachers involved.

In summary, although different studies have been conducted into approaches to teaching grammar, it is yet not clear whether or not mixed-method approaches work effectively. Therefore, this study also examines this approach to teaching English grammar by observing teachers in their actual classroom practice and from their own points of view. It is clear that inductive methods of teaching grammar are more constructive than deductive methods, because students will use their awareness of the language to discover rules.

### **3.6. THE TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN GRAMMAR ACTIVITIES**

The teacher's strategies often change to fit the nature of the lesson, the type of classroom activity, the level of the learners and the specific objectives of the teaching process. Dubin and Olshtain (2000) pointed out that the teacher is the most significant factor in determining the success of a new syllabus or materials. If a teacher selects materials carefully, plans the lesson well, organizes classroom activities properly and changes his/her teaching strategies and techniques occasionally, his/her task will be much easier and more successful. The teacher's role in modeling the activity then also develops the students' readiness for the grammar task (ibid).

Accordingly, it is known that the teacher's role in modeling and monitoring activity in grammar practice results from the teaching methods used, which could involve deductive or inductive practice or both. In teaching English grammar, teachers use these strategies or techniques to manage using grammatical terms, error correction, providing feedback, using students' L1 and checking that students understand the task.

### **3.6.1. Using Grammatical Terms**

Grammatical terminology or metalanguage is a form of language which teachers use when teaching language rules. “The use of grammatical terminology in the language classroom has received little practical discussion, perhaps because it is considered incompatible with most approaches to language teaching in the late twentieth century” (Berry, 2008:19). There are different views in the field of second language learning about the teacher’s use of grammatical terms. Azar (2007) found that grammatical terminology could be taught as an end in itself, or taught as a way to help learners to understand how the English language works. This means that grammatical terms could be taught deductively or inductively, and classroom practice depends on the teachers’ plans, methods of teaching, and the classroom environment.

Some researchers support its use, and others do not. However, it seems that it is necessary because EFL learners will not be able to build sentences unless they can distinguish their composite parts. Carter (1990:109) found that using metalanguage or grammatical terminology provides “an economic and precise way of discussing particular functions and purposes of language”. Ellis (2006) stated that grammatical items should be taught, but he pointed to the lack of practical evidence within second language acquisition (SLA) research to provide clear support for this. However, other researchers do not support its use. For example, Mitchell and Redmond (1993) argued that teachers need to teach students how to develop their ability to interact in the target language, but not to talk grammatically about the language. Yet other researchers have said that using metalanguage depends on the learners’ need for such terminology, but it can be argued that learners always need to know it in order to arrange their ideas. Freeman (1991) found that grammatical terms are useful if teachers use them in ways that help to improve and develop their learners’ ability to acquire the language. The use of grammatical terms is explored in-depth in the current study.

Another study conducted by Andrews (1999a) used a sixty-item test to assess the knowledge of twenty experienced EFL teachers in Hong Kong. It was found that the teachers had a firm grasp of grammar and linguistic metalanguage, but that did not help them to explain grammatical rules or mistakes since they scored only 42% on the fifteen items requiring explanation. Andrews (2006) conducted a follow-up study of three of these teachers which revealed that additional teaching experience as well as the completion of post-graduate degrees in EFL teaching did not increase their ability to explain grammar rules or mistakes. The reason for this could be that participants in his studies were used to the traditional methods of teaching grammar, where the teachers focus on teaching metalanguage as an end in itself (Lan, 2011).

When L2 is learned in class, learners need some exposure to grammatical terms as it shows students how to name the types of words and word groups that make up sentences. However, having taught metalanguage for many years, the present researcher has found that Libyan students encounter difficulty when seeking to understand the jargon. The reason might be because metalanguage is seen as a subject like algebra, although Azar (2007) argued for using grammar terminology more as a temporary tool to facilitate teacher-student communication.

The reason for difficulty might also be related to the ways in which students use English grammatical terms in different situations. In this case, students need to learn how to use English words according to their form, function and meaning. Leech, et al. (1982) mentioned that for students to know the difference between words they should first test the word to determine whether it is a noun, verb, adjective or adverb. To perform that test, we can look at its form: for example, good-ness (noun), novel-ist (noun), stiff-en (verb), clari-fy (verb), Liby-an (adjective), credible (adjective), slow-ly (adverb).

To demonstrate this, Leech et al. (1982) divided form into two elements. We can tell the class of a word partly from its form: First, definite suffixes distinguish certain word classes, e.g. satisfaction (noun); satisfy (verb); satisfactory (adjective). Finally, irregular cases should be considered. Changes occur in the form of some words when the vowel letter changes, for example, woman/women, ring/ rang; or words may change completely, such as in good / better, go / went. It has also been argued that function is more important than form and meaning. For example, according to Leech et al. (1982) we can also tell whether a word is a noun, verb, adjective or adverb from its function. We rely on a word's function more than its meaning or form, because the latter attributes are not always a reliable reference.

Some researchers such as Berry (2008: 19) have asserted that “whether teachers use terminology seems to be determined not so much by methodological factors as by personal ones”. He supported this by indicating that “there is evidence that one of the majors 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). This argument is supported by Borg (1998), who found that teachers’ classroom practices are guided by their personal beliefs and attitudes. It certainly seems that the teacher’s background, supported by their own experience of learning, represents the most important aspect that guides and directs teachers in class. It can also be argued that there are other factors which affect teachers’ decisions regarding the use of metalanguage or grammatical terminology. However, Berry (2008: 19) found that these factors are “outside the teacher’s control, such as the presence of terminology in textbooks, or its usefulness for learners in self-study mode”.

In summary, research into all of these issues in teaching grammatical terms reveals that it is still controversial. Nevertheless it was considered very important to explore this in the present study.

### **3.6.2. Grammatical Error Correction**

Researchers have different views of error correction in general and how and when it should be conducted in particular. For example, Ellis (1996: 22) stated that, "errors, according to behaviourist theory, were the result of non-learning rather than wrong learning". This means behaviourists look at errors as a bad thing which should be avoided. This theory, however, has been completely rejected by researchers in the field of applied linguistics. Recently, a number of studies on language teaching show that errors sometimes need correction (Brown, 2000; Gass & Selinker, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Lochtmann, 2002; Sercombe, 2002; Block, 2003; Hulstijn, 2005). According to these studies, learners commit errors because of a lack of knowledge of their target language. They also added that teachers should allow students to initiate error correction procedures themselves, and therefore make more independent progress in learning.

Furthermore, there is another view concerning error correction those from the cognitivists' point of view. Here, errors are believed to be a step towards learning and may show the progress of learning. For example, Johnson (2001: 39) said that, "we do not need to worry when a learner makes an error". According to Brown (2001: 66), "Errors are, in fact, windows to a learner's internalised understanding of the second language, and therefore they give the teachers something observable to react to".

It can be argued that EFL teachers have different methods in correcting students' errors in general, and grammatical errors in particular. The main reason for this is that there is no clear division between situations in which teachers should offer correction and those in which they should not. McDonough and Shaw (2003) found that the methods used for and decisions about error correction depend on the teacher's attitude and the type of error. They also stated that teachers' feedback may help students achieve better results. This is also confirmed by Hargie and Dickson (2004), who found that encouragement and feedback from

the teacher have a great impact on students' engagement in meaningful communication.

Moreover, "in foreign language learning, error correction has become one of the important teaching processes" (Fang & Xue-mei, 2007:10). Therefore, the current study aims to identify the appropriate strategies and techniques that teachers of grammar in Libya use to correct their students' errors. Savage et al (2010) stated that students' grammatical errors may be corrected overtly or indirectly. The teacher's choice is dependent on a number of variables. In overt error correction, the correct form is provided whereas indirect correction techniques involve cuing students and expecting them to correct the error by themselves.

Previous studies (James, 1998; Nunan and Lamb, 1996; Harmer, 1998; Stuart et al., 2002; Gottlieb, 2006 & Ali, 2008), have identified different techniques of error correction EFL teachers could use when they teach English grammar. The choice is determined to a large extent by the approaches adopted by language teachers. These techniques of error correction in teaching grammar as listed below, should be effective and prompt in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the language course:

- Gestures such as pointing, raising a hand and/or facial expressions could be used to correct grammatical errors. For instance, a smile, raised eyebrows, pursed lips or an expression of distaste could help students in understanding. As James (1998: 21) stated, "As a general rule, your face (and your body) ought to mirror the mood of what you are saying or the intention behind it".
- Eye contact could also be used as a non-verbal communication when explaining or correcting oral grammatical errors. Eye contact gives the students the feeling that their teacher is paying much attention to them and this engages the students' attention and give them confidence (see



Stuart et al., 2002). Therefore, EFL teachers need to keep moving their gaze from one student to another to include everyone. In Libyan culture, nonverbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions and eye contact can show the emotions of teachers towards students' responses.

- Repetition techniques could be used in correcting grammatical errors. Repetition techniques may involve individual or choral repetition. Choral repetition is of great value because the whole class benefits from the correction of an error. It gives students confidence (where immediate individual repetition might cause anxiety) and it gives the teacher a general idea of whether or not the students have grasped the model (Harmer, 1998: 65).
- Peer correction could be also used. When the self-correction process breaks down, or is not workable, another student can help by providing the correct answer. In this regard, Harmer (1998:69) suggests that: "We can ask if anyone else can give the correct response. We can ask if anyone can 'help' the student who has made an error. If another student can supply the correct information it will be good for that student's self-esteem. However, the student who originally made the mistake may feel humiliated if this technique is used insensitively". Nunan and Lamb (1996) point out that peer correction is useful in the case of understanding how the students made errors. It develops students' awareness of their errors because when a student makes an error, the other students make him/her aware of that error and s/he gradually develops a sense of awareness. However, "it is a useful technique that the teacher, after peer correction, asks the student who first made the error to repeat the correct form or utterance again. This is to let the students know the example his/her students gave was correct" (Ali, 2008: 55).

- Finally, the students' L1 might be used to correct grammatical errors. Some teachers find this an effective technique. "English language learners should be encouraged to use their first language, especially at the onset of second language acquisition, and the extent that the first language is an instructional aid or tool should be reflected in classroom assessment practices" (Gottlieb, 2006: 42). However some researchers oppose the use of L1 in classroom practice (see section 3.6.4).

It seems likely that, in teaching grammar, error correction is essential in EFL contexts. This is confirmed by researchers such as Lochtman (2002), who found that a focus on form in learning a second language is needed. He also added that it is better if teachers do not use direct error correction techniques, as this encourages students to feel more confident. This is confirmed by Pazaver and Wang (2009: 28), who argued that "several studies carried out in foreign language situations do seem to indicate that students find error correction and grammar instruction helpful in language learning".

In addition, there are different opinions in the literature regarding the best time to correct errors. Kelly (2006) and Fauziati (2011), for example, found that correction should be done immediately after the learner has finished his/her message, and again at the end of the lesson. In contrast, Johnson (2008:336) argued that fluency practice "can be noted down (or tape-reordered) and corrected after the event". The process of error correction at any time should of necessity be done carefully and in a cautious manner, in order not to put the student under any pressure.

Correspondingly, it is clear that the timing of correction depends on the goals of the activity. If the teacher's focus is on accuracy then correction should be instant, whereas if the teacher is focusing more on fluency they can be more generous with mistakes (Borg, 1998).

In summary, it can be said that teachers have various options in correcting learners' grammatical errors. Knowledge of these techniques may help teachers of grammar to select what fit their teaching situations.

Therefore, providing students with feedback is reviewed next as an important strategy in the teaching and learning of English grammar.

### **3.6.3. Providing Feedback**

Providing students with feedback is an essential function in language teaching and teachers may apply implicit and/or explicit feedback. Ellis (2006: 99) stated that "there is some evidence that explicit feedback is more effective in both eliciting the learner's immediate correct use of the structure and in eliciting subsequent correct use". The reason for this may be that explicit feedback is given directly to the learners and they do not need to think about what the teacher means. Applying implicit feedback will not always work because not all of the learners may understand, even though some researchers such as Muranoi (2000) have found that implicit feedback is most likely to be more effective.

Nassaji and Swain (2000) found that both positive and negative feedback from teachers affects the process of learning grammar. They confirmed that negative feedback is essential and could help EFL learners, whereas positive feedback leads the learners towards the correct form of the target language. Furthermore, negative feedback has been found to be more effective for more advanced learners in a study by Nassaji and Swain, (2000: 34), which also identified the differences between types of feedback in teaching grammar and how they might affect the learning of English grammar.

Cook (2001) found that feedback occurs during classroom interactive activities. This interaction is usually structured by the teacher, and involves the evaluation of the student's response (ibid). Feedback informs students about their achievements (Daines et al., 2006), which can be assumed to be beneficial in learning English

grammar. Therefore, the current study considers the use of feedback between teachers and students in teaching grammar.

While monitoring an activity, the teacher notes the learners' errors and therefore should provide them with the required feedback, asking them to make their work clear or to repeat what they said. This strategy can be considered to be positive feedback for learners because it helps students to improve their linguistic competence. Negative feedback sometimes discourages learners and damages confidence.

There are two options that teachers choose when giving learners feedback in grammar practice. When providing feedback during an activity, "the teacher should provide feedback on grammar and pronunciation errors that are common to all the students" (Savage et al., 2010: 23). Learners or the whole class can be provided with feedback inductively after the activity is concluded. For example, Ellis (2006: 100) found that "it is best conducted using a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based and output based".

In summary, some teaching methods require a major role for the teacher in the classroom situation, while others tend to minimize the teacher's role and instead maximize that of the learner. Therefore, EFL teachers should be aware of all the techniques stated above in order to be successful in teaching grammar.

Due to the importance of the L1 in L2 classes, its use is considered in the following section.

#### **3.6.4. Using Students' L1**

The use of L1 in the L2 classroom remains a vexed issue. It is still used in the context researched. Researchers such as Al-Nofaie (2010: 65) suggested that because some teachers "believed that mixing two languages would not help students to reach fluency; therefore, learners should employ their mental abilities

to understand the meaning of the new language". Howatt (2004) also found that some teachers emphasize the importance of L1, especially when introducing unfamiliar items. The reason for this might be that students "find difficulties in using English for communication" (Rababah, 2003:16). The present study aims to explore this issue in the teaching and learning of English grammar.

On the other hand some linguists, such as Tumbull (2001), argued that the use of L1 can facilitate the process of teaching grammar and vocabulary, but cautions against teachers relying on it too much. Phillipson (1992) found that those caught using the first language were often punished or shamed for doing so. Those who argue against using the first language say that it does not encourage students to learn the second language. They further argue that students do not get to hear the second language as much as they might if the teacher uses the L1 extensively (Ellis, 1984, cited in Hawks, 2001; Prodromou, 2002). In Libya, for example, students tend not to try to understand the meaning of a particular task, and will wait for the teacher to translate the meaning of new words instead. Learners feel that they will be unable to understand until these words have been translated into their L1 (Atkinson, 1987). Some appropriate use of L1 surely does facilitate a student's learning rather than interfering with it. If the structures of the two languages are distinct, then one expects a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in the second language due to interference by the first language on the second language (Ellis, 1997).

Cook (2001) stated that, over the last century, the use of the first language has generally been proscribed in second language teaching. It may even be completely forbidden and, at the least, its use is minimized in second language classes. However, Cook (2001) advocates the more positive stance of maximizing L2 use. He states that since the L1 is always present in the user's mind it would be artificial, as well as sometimes unsuccessful, to avoid its use completely.

Some studies have shown that the occasional use of L1 by both students and teachers increases both the comprehension and learning of an L2 (Tang, 2002; Wells, 1999). However, according to one group of researchers, a number of grammar points can be taught in the target language, especially through the use of physical or visual displays (Pachler & Field, 2001). There are occasions when the first language should be used in the classroom, such as when giving instructions, helping the class to express and check their comprehension of lexical items, or presenting rules governing grammar or grammatical forms and meanings. It may be difficult to do this without using the first language, and it saves time that might be wasted trying to enforce a rule prohibiting the use of the first language.

Some researchers point out the benefits in using the first language of students in the English classroom. Auerbach (1993) argued that it reduces their anxiety. Others have found that it creates a more relaxing learning environment (Burden, 2000), and may facilitate the task of explaining the meaning of abstract words and introducing the differences between the L1 and L2 in terms of grammar and pronunciation (Buckmaster, 2000). In addition, it helps the teacher to check if the students understand or not, as well as in giving instructions (Atkinson, 1987).

In summary, different arguments have been made about the students' use of L1 in L2 classes. Therefore, the current study takes into account the extent to which students use the L1 in grammar classes.

### **3.6.5. Checking Students' Understanding**

Checking students' understanding of the task is one of the teacher's most important activities in classroom practice. Savage et al. (2010: 23) argued that there are different ways of checking students' understanding of grammar: "one way to check understanding is to have a student or students do the first item in an exercise. Another way is to have a student volunteer explain the task. Yet a third way is for the teacher to ask questions about the process". They also stated

that “while students are working on their own, the teacher circulates to check that students are doing the task correctly and assists them as needed, including correcting individual students’ errors in grammar and pronunciation” (ibid: 23). All of these strategies are examined in the current study.

Checking students’ understanding of the rules of grammar is necessary and important. It was described by Harris and McCann (1994:5) as “a way of collecting information about our students’ performance in normal classroom conditions”. This means that teachers can check their students informally, without the students feeling that they are being assessed. This technique may be continuous during the teaching and learning process. For example, a teacher may assess how his or her students speak, write and read.

Hedge (2000) found that teachers may make use of any information that has been gained about their students’ progress as a basis for future procedures aiming to support students’ learning. On this point, Harlen (1994) stated that teachers employ this type of information in order to make decisions about their students. Broughton et al. (1980) investigated whether or not students had learned what had been taught them and argued that, if they have, this means that the teaching process has been effective.

Generally speaking, checking the understanding of grammar activities is carried out so that students can be informed about their positive achievements as well as their weaknesses, and in order to be advised or directed about what they need to do to learn better. Checking understanding is not carried out at a certain point in time, as is the case in some teaching techniques, but is an ongoing process which may be conducted, as Sutton (1992:3) stated, “every few minutes”. He also added that, without this technique teachers could not function effectively.

Moreover, the teacher’s checking of student understanding could occur through observation during grammar classes. This technique may also tell teachers what

the next steps should be; whether to go forward, or if they need to revise certain points first because the students have not understood them. It is useful for both teachers and students, because it has no impact on students as they continue to learn, if they are unaware that their teacher is assessing them (Wilson, 1988). Teachers find observation easy and may do it at any time they wish. The purpose of this technique is to improve the quality of the students' learning of grammar or other aspects of language, and it should not be evaluative or involve the grading of students.

In summary, these techniques of checking understanding are very important for EFL teachers who need to know how they can put them into practice in order to effectively teach English grammar. A great deal of effort is required to fulfill such a demanding task. Once it is understood how teachers check their students' understanding, there is a need to know how they provide them with feedback.

### **3.7. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

The teaching and learning of English grammar is assumed not to be an easy task, and theories of learning relevant to this field of study have been reviewed. Motivation is also discussed as it is also an important factor in learning grammar. The asymmetry between the roles of teachers and learners is discussed, and methods of teaching grammar and teacher strategies are then also reviewed.

In the next chapter, other factors such as teacher cognition and knowledge are discussed. Some of the immediate and external factors which affect grammar classroom practices are reviewed. Finally, research on the relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practice in teaching grammar is reviewed.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: LITERATURE REVIEW II**

### **TEACHER COGNITION AND TEACHING GRAMMAR**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter investigates the importance of teacher cognition and knowledge and how it is related to the teaching of grammar. Brief definitions of cognition and the difference between knowledge and beliefs are given. Next, different types of theoretical knowledge, including general pedagogical knowledge (GPK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and knowledge of context are discussed. Furthermore, the practical knowledge of language teachers, such as concerning subject matter knowledge (SMK), and their prior experience as language learners and as teachers is also considered.

The importance of EFL teachers having theoretical and practical knowledge is reviewed in order to develop an understanding of what teachers need to know in order to be professional teachers of grammar. The issues related to transforming the teacher's knowledge into practice are also considered. This includes consideration of the effect of immediate and external factors and the classroom context on the teaching and learning of grammar, such as teacher knowledge about language, teacher language awareness, classroom size, learner variables, and the teacher's language skills, training and development, and educational culture. Finally, research on teacher cognition and classroom practice in teaching English grammar in particular is also reviewed.

#### **4.2. TEACHER COGNITION**

Teacher cognition is a broad concept. Borg (2003: 81) stated that it is “the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching what teachers know, believe, and think”. Technically, it refers to how information is stored in the mind as knowledge, what knowledge is, and how that knowledge is used. Moreover, cognition includes the mental information processing which impacts on behaviour. The concept is considered to be an umbrella term which includes “the

store of beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, theories, and attitudes about all aspects of their work which teachers hold and which have a powerful impact on teachers' classroom practices" (Borg, 1998:19). All of these psychological phenomena and their relationship to teachers' classroom practice in teaching English grammar have been investigated in many studies.

#### **4.2.1. Knowledge and Beliefs**

Researchers such as Grossman, et al. (1989); Richardson (2002) and Nickols (2003) have different views about how to distinguish between knowledge and beliefs as aspects of teacher cognition, but in this study the teacher's knowledge in general, rather than beliefs, is investigated. Some researchers consider that knowledge is different from beliefs, whereas others see both mental constructs having the same meaning. Alternatively, knowledge is used as an umbrella term which covers beliefs and thoughts. Possible distinctions between the meanings of knowledge and beliefs are discussed below.

Knowledge and beliefs have similar meanings, and it is difficult to separate them. Grossman et al. (1989: 31) reported that "while we are trying to separate teachers' knowledge and beliefs about subject matter for the purposes of clarity, we recognize that the distinction is blurry at best". This was also recognized by Borg (2003: 86) who stated that distinguishing between "beliefs and knowledge is problematic. Researchers attempting this task have concluded as much". Woods (1996: 195) found that "it was difficult in the data to distinguish between teachers referring to beliefs and knowledge as they discussed their decisions in the interviews." One solution to this problem is to ask the interviewees what they know rather than what they believe about phenomena, and this strategy was chosen in the present study.

On the other hand, some researchers make clear distinctions between knowledge and beliefs. For instance, Richardson, (2002) reported that knowledge concerns what is true; beliefs do not. Beliefs are highly open with no

clear limits (Abelson, 1979). In other words, knowledge focuses on 'what is' and beliefs focus on 'what should be' (Borg, M, 2001). Therefore, beliefs can be thought of as part of knowledge, and so in this research teachers' knowledge is considered in broader terms.

Those who consider beliefs to be part of knowledge think that "knowledge encompasses all that a person knows or believes to be true, whether or not it is verified as true in some sort of objective or external way" (Alexander et al., 1991: 317). This is particularly relevant with respect to research into the teacher's knowledge. Woods (1996:197) argued that "the hypothetical construct I am proposing, then, is of BAK [beliefs, attitudes, knowledge], a construct analogous to the notion of schema, but emphasizing the notion that beliefs, assumptions and knowledge are included". It is assumed that knowledge is everything in our minds, some of which is true and some not true but all of which exist as knowledge. Thus, in this thesis, knowledge includes both beliefs and thoughts.

Knowledge is very difficult to define comprehensively, as one must first understand what it means to know something. Thus, this section presents various definitions of 'knowledge' in order to understand what it is, and also how important it is not only from the educational perspective but in other areas of life. According to Nickols (2003), we should consider three things when we use the word 'knowledge': first, a state of knowing, such as to be aware of, to recognize or apprehend facts, methods, principles, or techniques. Second, the word 'knowledge' refers to the capacity for action; and third, it refers to codified, captured and accumulated facts, methods, principles, and techniques.

Geisler (2008) argued that we are told that knowledge is power and the gateway to prosperity. Another worthwhile definition was presented by Davenport and Prusak (1998: 5) who did not give a comprehensive definition of knowledge, but focused instead on a working definition more suitable for their purposes:

Knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices and norms.

The literature presents numerous definitions of knowledge, but none seem to be universally appropriate and depend on the context in which they are used. However it must be said that knowledge itself is very important to mankind and this is because people deal with it from the day they are born (Geisler, 2008). The question raised here concerns what types of knowledge people gather to meet their requirements; the main point being that not everyone needs the same knowledge, and different categories of knowledge cover different aspects of their life.

Consequently, each person has his/her own knowledge which is required or learnt according to needs and motivations. For instance, EFL teachers in general, and the teachers of English in Libya who participated in this study in particular, need more than one category of knowledge in order to do their job.

Since teachers' beliefs are considered as a part of their knowledge (Alexander et al., 1991), they are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

#### **4.2.2. Teacher Beliefs**

In the literature, teachers' practices are said to be guided and affected by their beliefs in various different ways. To a large extent, what teachers say and do in the classroom is governed by their beliefs, as revealed in many different studies such as Johnson, (1992); Richards al et. (1992); Yim, (1993); Smith, (1996); Woods, (1996) and Ng and Farrell, (2003). Any training programme which changes teachers' beliefs would result in these teachers teaching differently (Peacock, 2001). A study conducted by MacDonald et al. (2001) examined the ideas of 55 novice teachers about language and language learning before and

after their course, using a beliefs inventory questionnaire. It was found that there were important changes in many of the scores, and in particular significant movement was noted among most of the participants towards academic conceptions of learning the language.

In contrast, Chaves de Castro (2005) found that whether changes in beliefs effect similar changes in teachers' practice have always shown that changes in conceptions do not cause a corresponding change in teachers' practices. Studies of task-based learning in Hong Kong, for example, showed that participants admitted using a specific method of teaching, but observations of their classes revealed that, in fact, they used it very little (Carless, 2003). Another study on Malaysian EFL teachers conducted by Kennedy (1996) found that participants had an interactive view of language teaching and student-centred learning; however, their teaching was exclusively to traditional teacher-centered instruction.

In other studies, teachers were found to regularly use activities and practices which reflected their conceptions of a focus on form, but sometimes this was not the case (Basturkmen et al., 2004; Tsang, 2004). This means that teachers are not always affected by their beliefs in their practice. Nunan's (1992) study explored the decisions of nine teachers in Australia concerning their practice. "A considerable body of literature now exists documenting the role of context, and particularly constraints, that can hinder teachers from implementing their stated beliefs" (Basturkmen, et al., 2004: 246).

As stated above, different interpretations of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practice have been reported. While some studies confirm that teachers' practice is guided by their beliefs, others do not. This gives the implication that we should explore teachers' knowledge more deeply and investigate its relationship with their practice in teaching grammar.

### **4.3. TEACHER KNOWLEDGE**

The EFL teacher's knowledge is considered to be of great importance in the field of English language teaching. There are numerous definitions of teacher knowledge. For instance, Carter (1990) defined it as the total knowledge that the teacher has at his or her disposal at a particular moment which, by definition, underlies his or her actions. However, this does not mean that all the knowledge a teacher holds will actually play a role in her or his actions.

Calderhead (1996) stated that teacher knowledge may have a variety of origins including both practical experience, such as usual practice, and formal schooling in the past, from initial teacher education or continued professional training. In addition, teachers can consciously or unconsciously refrain from using certain insights during their teaching. Teachers may also differ enormously in the extent to which they absorb theoretical knowledge along with their practical knowledge.

Verloop et al. (2001) stated that various labels have been used in the literature of EFL teacher knowledge, each indicating some relevant aspect. For instance, professional craft knowledge refers to a specific component of knowledge that is mainly the product of the teacher's practical experience (Brown & McIntyre, 1993; Shimahara, 1998), whereas action oriented knowledge indicates that this knowledge is for immediate use in teaching practice (Carter, 1990). Conversely, content and context related knowledge is knowledge that is to a great extent tacit (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Cochran, et al., 1993; Eraut, 1994; Van Driel, et al., 1998) or it may be based on reflection on experience (Grimmett & MacKinnon, 1992).

It is assumed that it is important to evaluate studies on EFL teacher knowledge not according to the labels used, but for a precise examination of what the study is about. Shulman (1986) and Wilson, et al. (1987) argued that knowledge is essential for effective teaching. They stated that L2 teachers' knowledge and effectiveness are affected by their proficiency in the target language, the degree

of knowledge the teacher has about the formal properties of the language such as its grammar and the culture of the L2 community, as well as an understanding of applied linguistics and curriculum development. In their study of the professional knowledge base required for teaching, they found that teachers draw upon many types of knowledge when making decisions in instructional planning and practice. If the goal of teaching is to promote learning, teachers need to be aware of the centrality of learners and how teacher behaviour will affect individual learners (Randall & Thornton, 2001).

Furthermore, one of the most significant areas in investigating different components of teachers' knowledge is to know how aspects of this knowledge may impact upon their performance as well as students' achievements in learning grammar.

It is therefore important to consider how the different components of teachers' knowledge are related to what they actually do in class. However, it appears to be very difficult to grasp the implicit and intuitive components of teacher cognition in research on teacher knowledge, which makes theoretical development and research initiatives in this field all the more important.

Accordingly, second language teachers of grammar should have some theoretical knowledge of learning, including an understanding of the social, psychological and cognitive development of students. McMeniman, et al. (2003) summarized the most important types of knowledge which teachers should bring to their lessons or classrooms as being: content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of learners and their characteristics. They should also have some knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values as well.

In Grossman's (1990) study, the teacher's knowledge was classified into four general areas which are summarized as follows.

1. Subject matter knowledge (syntactic structures, content and substantive structure).
2. General pedagogical knowledge (learners and learning, classroom management, curriculum and instruction and other).
3. Pedagogical content knowledge or conceptions of purposes for teaching subject matter (knowledge of students' understanding, curricular knowledge and knowledge of Instructional strategies).
4. Knowledge of context (students, district and school).

It is assumed to be very important for language teachers to be armed with all of these types of knowledge. Johnston and Goettsch (2000: 464) argued that “the knowledge base and all its components should be central to any language teacher education program”.

Researchers such as Shulman (1986) have categorized these types of knowledge as practical knowledge which supports teachers in good practice. Meijer, et al. (1999) pointed to a complex and strong relationship between these categories of knowledge. However, in the current study, teacher knowledge is categorized into two main areas:

1. Theoretical knowledge: general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and knowledge of context.
2. Practical knowledge: subject matter knowledge, prior experiences as language learners and prior experiences as language teachers.

The teacher's knowledge is divided into these two main basic areas in order to understand how theory and practice are integrated in teaching English grammar. This study hopes to contribute to knowledge in both main areas. In order to understand the importance of teacher cognition, the different types of theoretical and practical teacher knowledge are discussed next, since these components are considered to be the main factors leading to effective grammar teaching.



#### **4.3.1. Theoretical Teacher Knowledge**

There are several definitions of theoretical knowledge; some of which call it implicit knowledge and others procedural knowledge. Anderson (1995) argues that procedural knowledge is knowledge of how to do things, which is often implicit. In other words, implicit knowledge may be defined as a set of skills and experiences stored inside the minds of individuals, which is difficult to transport or transfer to others; this represents the greatest challenge in the management of knowledge within educational institutions.

The literature on teaching has shown that rich theoretical knowledge is a basic part of expertise in teaching, but there is some evidence that reorganizing knowledge is a difficult task (Johnson, 1994; Woods, 1996; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Tsui, 2003). It has been found that that any change in teachers' conceptions or mental models would require changing the whole organization of their theoretical knowledge, which would not be easy. For example, Wood (1996) conducted a study of eight ESL teachers, and found that "bits of knowledge are interrelated in structured ways, and thus...one piece of knowledge cannot be changed without having effects on other pieces of knowledge in the system. The growth of knowledge, then, implies a reorganization of the system" (Woods, 1996: 62). However, procedural knowledge or theoretical knowledge is seen as an essential but not sufficient factor in the development of knowledge about teaching. This is confirmed by Tsui's (2003) findings that one teacher who learned a lot of teaching activities could not develop his knowledge of EFL teaching.

Research has also confirmed that theoretical knowledge is important for learning because it helps to improve the teacher's cognitive capacity in order to focus on understanding the classroom and learning to teach. In her study of four EFL teachers, Tsui (2003) found that this kind of knowledge, such as that concerning routines, was crucial in the process of teacher learning: "the mental resources

freed up by the use of routines will be 'reinvested' in the pursuit of new goals and problem-solving at a higher level, which the teachers did not have the capacity to deal with earlier" (ibid, 2003: 19). This type of knowledge is not only helpful for teachers but also for learners. Therefore, the present study explored this type of knowledge in more detail regarding the teaching and learning of English grammar.

#### **4.3.1.1. General pedagogical knowledge**

The first component of knowledge which is needed by a teacher is general pedagogical knowledge. This important type of knowledge focuses on the understanding of the broad principles of teaching and learning, including classroom management (McMeniman et al., 2003). It also considers the understanding of organization and planning, of teaching strategies and research methods, all of which contribute to the effective teaching of grammar.

Moreover, teachers should have some knowledge of educational aims, goals and purposes, and should know how to manage both educational rules and their own ideas when they teach. Therefore, these issues are explored in this study in order to know whether or not EFL teachers of grammar have at least some general information about pedagogical aspects such as how to use certain techniques, strategies and other elements related to classroom management. Teachers of grammar should also have knowledge of the curriculum in order to know how to use particular materials such as new textbooks. According to McMeniman et al. (2003), general pedagogical knowledge is divided into four components: learners and learning, classroom management, the curriculum, and instruction.

Teachers' knowledge about learners is an essential component of the knowledge they require (Mullock, 2003; 2006). Mullock's (2003) study found that understanding students' strengths, weaknesses and needs was an essential aspect of the TESOL teachers' work. Knowledge of learners is considered as a

part of the pedagogical knowledge held by teachers (ibid). This type of knowledge has been discussed in more detail in section 4.5.4.

Knowledge of learning includes theoretical knowledge about learning. Teachers already have knowledge of learning because they were themselves once students. Meanwhile, they should know about different learning theories and their processes involved in learning. Freeman (2001) stated that this type of knowledge is neglected in L2 teacher education, but that it should be considered because it promotes understanding among teachers of how students learn a topic such as grammar.

With respect to different learning theories, it is a commonplace that learners may have learning styles and ways of learning. Researchers such as Sarasin (1998: 3) defined learning style as “the preference or predisposition of an individual to perceive and process information in a particular way or combination of ways”. One important issue here is what kinds of styles, strategies, techniques and methods of learning teachers know about or themselves used to learn English grammar, because their knowledge of learning will affect their knowledge of teaching. Generally speaking, it can be argued that we learn from our mistakes and from our experience or from things that have happened to other people around us.

Furthermore, Butler (1988) suggested that learners might learn using any of four learning styles: concrete, abstract, sequential, and random. Moreover learners could combine these learning styles according to their needs or their interests. In order to tackle this issue, EFL teachers should have knowledge of students’ learning needs as well as their cognitive development. More details about the learning of grammar have been given in section 3.2.

Another component of general pedagogical knowledge is classroom management which, according Siedentop and Tannehill (2000), includes

organizing for instruction, obeying rules of behaviour, getting equipment out and putting it away. Classroom management involves routines, strategies or techniques used by teachers. Siedentop and Tannehill (2000) argued that teachers must draw up their management systems before effective instruction takes place.

Furthermore, knowledge of instruction and the curriculum are important because they include general principles of teaching and learning. Instruction means the behaviours that teachers engage in to fulfill the curriculum and teach according to their aims and the lesson plans they use. Siedentop and Tannehill (2000) stated that instruction and the curriculum complement each other, and therefore must be integrated appropriately.

Active instruction enables teachers to use particular strategies, including creating a positive learning climate, where “the ability of the teacher to increase the quantity and quality of practice is the ultimate teaching skill” (Rink, 1996: 178). In other words, effective instruction means the teacher could use instruction that supports students in communicating with each other and with their teachers. Instruction also includes the teacher’s ability to provide feedback to encourage student learning. Therefore, it involves everything teachers do in their classes related to teaching grammar.

Consequently, it can be assumed that teachers give instructions and adapt them for the specific content they are teaching. This can also be called ‘teaching style’ according to the different options or methods they employ. Mosston and Ashworth (1994) stated that teaching style includes: practice, self-check, the self-teaching style, command, discovery, convergent discovery, learner-initiated and the individual programme. Therefore, this research investigates if Libyan teachers of English grammar are aware of different teaching styles.

#### **4.3.1.2. Pedagogical content knowledge**

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is important for teachers because it enables them to transform difficult ideas into concepts that students, as novices, can grasp (Kennedy, 1998). It “includes knowledge of students’ understanding, conceptions, and misconceptions of particular topics in a subject matter” (Grossman, 1990: 8). Additionally, Shulman (1987:8) defined PCK as:

the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction.

Shulman added that PCK is crucial part of his conceptualization of the professional knowledge base needed for teaching. In other words it aims to achieve effective teaching practice in any subject.

However, Bromme (1995) argued that the term pedagogical content knowledge was too unclear to have been properly researched. Freeman (2002: 6) similarly concluded that, “while PCK has helped to refocus both research and teacher education on the kinds of knowledge and know-how that teachers actually use in their classroom practices, as an epistemological concept it is seriously flawed”. Pedagogical content knowledge or conceptions of purposes for teaching subject matter include knowledge of students’ understanding, curricular knowledge and knowledge of instructional strategies (Grossman, 1990). These components are discussed below.

Knowledge of students’ understanding has attracted the attention of researchers such as Shulman (1987) and Marks (1990) as the basic component of pedagogical content knowledge. It refers to the teacher’s knowledge of what the students already know about the subject matter, their skills and abilities, and what they still find puzzling about the content (Grossman, 1990). This knowledge could include beliefs about students’ prior knowledge and experience of grammar.

Furthermore, this type of knowledge enables teachers to supply students with suitable representations and explanations and helps them with “both curricular planning and expectations and evaluations of students” (Grossman, 1990: 105). Thus, when teachers have knowledge about their students’ level of understanding, they will understand the difficulties and problems the students face and can develop suitable strategies to overcome these.

In addition, Shulman (1987) argued that ‘curricular knowledge’ was a category of knowledge essential for teaching. This is the second component of pedagogical content knowledge which differs from the instruction component of general pedagogical knowledge (Grossman, 1990). Moreover, the focus of curricular knowledge is on the specifics of teaching particular content, whereas general pedagogical knowledge focuses on the concepts and definitions which are applicable to a wide variety of content. Knowledge of the curriculum is required by teachers because it provides them with materials used for presenting particular subject matter. Therefore, the lack of such knowledge will affect their planning of suitable and coherent lessons.

Knowledge of ‘instructional strategies’ is another component of pedagogical content knowledge. It helps teachers to manage the subject matter so that it is easier for students to understand. Teachers must be able to adapt these general strategies to content; otherwise they would not be able to know how to break down the specific content they are teaching. Knowledge of instructional strategies is assumed to include activities which promote teachers to do their best when they represent and teach particular topics. Simon (1993) interviewed experienced maths teachers to examine their knowledge of division problems. He found that the teachers had knowledge about the written task but “many important connections seemed to be missing” (ibid, 1993: 251).

What has been stated above suggests that EFL teachers are required to understand the relationship between pedagogy and the specific content they are

teaching. However, it is difficult to confirm that pedagogical content knowledge will always impact on teaching practices, because not all changes in pedagogical content knowledge accompany changes in practice. Yet Kutame (2002) stated that pedagogical content knowledge does not develop by itself as a result of the acquisition of other knowledge from a teacher education programme. For this reason it needs to be taught. In order to identify what EFL teachers should know in order to teach grammar well, the question of knowledge of context is considered below.

#### **4.3.1.3. Knowledge of context**

Knowledge of context is very important for all teachers, and particularly important for teachers of English because the linguistic context is an additional factor which impacts upon classroom practice. "The teachers used their knowledge of context to define and articulate their needs and concerns regarding the curriculum" (Sharkey, 2004: 291). Tudor (2003) found that the educational process is not only an exchange of information between teachers and students, but it is also a set of conventions which decides what happens between these parties. Jaworski (2003: 4-5) argued that "no classroom environment is an isolated box. It is part of a wider community (of school and beyond) which has cultural practices and social norms. There are therefore acts or actions or activities which happen because they are part of this socio-cultural setting".

It is clear that classroom teaching practices are not only guided by in-class aspects but also by extra-classroom matters such as issues in the teacher's everyday life. Locastro (2001:495) found that "classrooms are social constructions where teachers, learners, dimensions of the local educational philosophy, and more general socio-cultural values, beliefs, and expectations all meet". Therefore, teachers of a second language should know more about the culture of the target language they are teaching, because in some circumstances misunderstandings may arise.

Consequently, the teachers' knowledge of context is important to classroom practice. Indeed, "the classroom provides traditions and recipes for both teachers and students in the sense that there are tacit understandings about what sort of behaviour is acceptable" (Holliday, 1994: 24). This was confirmed by Genc and Bada (2005:45), who suggested that a culture "is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession". Genc and Bada, also added that contextual knowledge "has a great deal to offer to the development of communicative competence as well as other skills in the instruction of any language" (ibid, 2005:45).

Nunan and Lamb (2001:33) found that "classroom decision making and the effective management of the learning process cannot be made without reference to the larger context within which instruction takes place." Xue-wei and Ying-jun (2006:74) asserted that "people need to read a lot to understand the cultural background knowledge of the target language; only in this way can they communicate successfully with others". There are many hidden aspects which hinder teachers' efforts to convey knowledge and which might cause mismatches between what they mean, and what the students understand. Therefore, the teachers' knowledge in this study is explored in order to understand the situation of teaching English grammar in the context researched.

Moreover, knowledge about the school is an important contextual factor that may influence instruction. Research has shown that learning in schools occurs differently from that elsewhere because "schooling is viewed as the institutional site for decontextualizing knowledge so that, abstracted, it may become general and hence generalizable, and therefore transferable to situations of use in the 'real' world" (Lave, 1999: 18). The lack of a teacher's knowledge about their school leads to ineffective teaching. Corrie (1996); Kleinsasser & Savignon, (1992); Kleinsasser (1993), and Farrell (2001) found that collaborative processes between more and less experienced teachers were rare. However, this does not



happen in all schools. For example, Kleinsasser (1993) found that teachers in some schools “help each other with teaching duties” (Kleinsasser, 1993: 380) and “colleagues in the environment do not feel they are alone or ashamed about revealing frustration or inadequacies” (ibid, 1993: 381).

In addition, various studies such as those of Eisenstein, et al. (1997); Borg (1999a) and Carless (2004) have found that teachers of English grammar are affected by their context. For example, Borg (1998) stated that teachers should know about the context before deciding which grammatical terminology to use in instruction. He also stated that general knowledge about language and language learning is not enough for teachers to teach metalanguage.

#### **4.3.2. Practical Teacher Knowledge**

Many researchers have attempted to categorize teachers’ practical knowledge. Anderson (1995) argued that declarative knowledge is explicit knowledge, something that we can report and of which we are consciously aware. Although some researchers use the term declarative knowledge and others the term explicit knowledge, a more suitable term may be practical knowledge. Borg and Burns (2008: 479) found “evidence that teachers make sense of their work largely in relation to experiential and practical knowledge” and that “formal theory does not play a prominent and direct role in shaping teachers’ explicit rationales for their work”. Accordingly, this would mean that the majority of the EFL teacher’s knowledge is mostly practical in nature rather than theoretical or derived from received knowledge.

Therefore this section reviews the two main sources of a teacher’s practical knowledge: subject matter knowledge and background sources such as prior knowledge as a language learner and as a language teacher. These sources of teacher knowledge are assumed to be fundamental for language teachers.

#### **4.3.2.1. Subject matter knowledge**

Subject matter knowledge is obviously important for EFL teachers. Borg (2001: 21) stated that “in recent years educational research has stressed the role which the teachers’ subject-matter knowledge plays in shaping what they do in the classroom”. This type of teacher knowledge can be discussed in terms of three components; ‘the syntactic structures of a discipline’, ‘knowledge of content’ and ‘the substantive structures of a discipline’. Grossman, et al (1990) argued that both substantive and syntactic structures are essential to guide the discovery and acquisition of new content knowledge. All of these components of practical knowledge are needed by the participants of the present study, because they could not employ their theoretical knowledge without them.

Syntactic structures can be defined as the “different methods of verification and justification of conclusions” (Schwab, 1978: 246). This component of knowledge refers to knowledge about how to conduct inquiry within the discipline. In other words, syntactic structures “involve knowledge of the ways in which the discipline creates and evaluates new knowledge” (Wilson et al., 1987: 118). Grossman (1990: 6) found that syntactic structures “include an understanding of the canons of evidence and proof within the discipline, or how knowledge claims are evaluated by members of the discipline”. Grossman et al. (1989) revealed that teachers need knowledge of syntactic structures which, if lacking, impact negatively on their ability to acquire new knowledge. Therefore, this kind of knowledge is examined in the current study in order to identify how it relates to the teaching of English grammar.

Content knowledge refers to the ‘stuff’ of a discipline: factual information, organizing principles, central concepts” (Grossman et al., 1989: 27). Thus teachers in the current study should know the content of the subject of grammar and phonology together with a sound grasp of teaching methods if they are to teach well, although the link between subject knowledge and effective teaching may be less direct where L2 instruction is concerned (Borg, 2006).

Furthermore, content knowledge informs teachers about how to “identify relationships among concepts in a field as well as relationships to concepts external to the discipline” (Grossman, et al., 1989: 27). Kennedy (1998) stated that teachers should be aware of the importance of content knowledge, reasoning that this knowledge is exactly what the teachers will be teaching. Meanwhile, it provides teachers with a wide view of the curriculum in order to know how to answer students’ questions. It can be argued that content knowledge informs the teacher about how to manage and structure the content of the subject they teach in order to smooth the progress of their students in gaining understanding.

Consequently, high value is placed on content knowledge since its lack would affect the performance and ability to teach of a teacher. The third component of subject matter knowledge is the substantive structures of the discipline. Grossman, et al. (1989) stated that this is important because it directly affects curricular decisions. It also refers to “the various paradigms within a field that affect both how the field is organized and the questions that guide further inquiry” (Grossman, 1990: 6). “The substantive structures include the ideas, facts, and concepts of the field, as well as the relationships among those ideas, facts, and concepts” (Wilson et al., 1987: 118).

For a long time, researchers such as Wilson et al. (1987) and Shulman (1987) surmised that subject matter knowledge includes comprehension, preparation, representation, selection, adaptation, and tailoring, instruction, evaluation, and reflection. All of these aspects are needed by EFL teachers of grammar in order to convey their teaching knowledge to their students for their learning progress. They are considered as part of the teacher’s practical knowledge in this study. Previous studies have offered valuable insights related to teachers’ subject matter knowledge in general which can be exploring the applied in teacher’s knowledge and practice in teaching grammar.

#### **4.3.2.2 The teacher's prior experience as language learner and language teacher**

The literature shows that the prior of experience teachers as learners or as teachers is one of the main factors which influences their knowledge (Arioğul, 2007). Researchers such as, (Freeman, 1991; Meijer, et al., 2001; Breen, et al., 2001& Borg, 2003) have all confirmed that prior experience and knowledge of learning is important for teachers when they teach, and for their classroom practice. Meijer, et al. (1999) also considered that this prior experience is one of the background variables that may influence teachers' knowledge. Borg (2003: 88) argued that:

The general picture to emerge here then is that teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualisations of L2 teaching during teacher education.

Breen, et al (2001) also found that teachers' classroom work is highly influenced by their prior experiences as learners during their early years. Teachers are likely to utilize the same modes of learning if they thought they would work well with their students. However, this may not be always the case, as different students might have different needs.

Various studies in second language education and applied linguistics also show that language teachers' knowledge of teaching is influenced by their own prior experiences of teaching and learning (Carter, 1990, 1991; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Meijer et al., 2001 & Borg, 2003). Borg (2003: 81) found that "There is ample evidence that teachers' experiences as learners can inform cognitions about teaching and learning which continue to exert an influence on teachers throughout their careers". This means that teachers' experience of teaching is considered as one of the main factors which influences their knowledge when they teach English grammar or any other language skills.

Moreover, Nespor (1987:320), found that, “A number of teachers suggested that critical episodes or experiences gained earlier in their teaching careers were important for their present practices”. Tsui (2003) explored the experiences of four teachers. She found that those who lacked disciplinary knowledge were influenced by their own learning experiences. Westerman (1991) compared less and more experienced teachers using a variety of data collection tools. The findings showed that the knowledge of the more experienced teachers was more integrated than that of the less experienced teachers. Teachers’ experiences were discussed in section 2.5. 2.

In summary, it is very clear that teachers’ prior experience and knowledge of learning and teaching English is an essential factor affecting their classroom practice in teaching grammar. This is because “background knowledge shapes the teachers’ new learning, it eventually influences teachers’ practical knowledge” (Arioğul, 2007: 170). In order to know how teachers’ theoretical and practical knowledge are transferred into the teaching of grammar, the different specific technical aspects of this are explored next.

#### **4.4. TRANSFERRING TEACHERS’ KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE**

There are several factors which affect EFL teachers when translating their theory into practice. One of these is a lack of knowledge whether related to theory or to practice. In general it could be said that explicit and implicit knowledge complement each other, and all teaching tasks involve a mixture of the two. Krashen’s (1985) monitor hypothesis brings these terms closer together by describing the differences between the natural and implicit acquisition process and conscious and explicit learning processes. Wolff (1995) stated that the two systems of explicit-implicit and declarative-procedural knowledge, are related although they develop separately.

To understand how explicit knowledge becomes implicit knowledge or vice versa, the transfer of knowledge in general must first be considered. Transfer means to

move from one stage to another and this also happens with mental processes such as the acquisition of knowledge. Zander (1991) stated that successful knowledge transfer results in the receiving unit accumulating or assimilating new knowledge. Grant, et al. (1998) described four stages in the successful transferral of knowledge: awareness, association, assimilation and application. Anderson (1980) believed that declarative knowledge can become procedural knowledge.

To transfer knowledge of grammar into language use, Leech (1994: 18) suggested five characteristics that effective language teachers should have: They should:

a) be capable of putting across a sense of how grammar interacts with the lexicon as a communicative system [...]; b) be able to analyse the grammatical problems that learners encounter; c) have the ability and confidence to evaluate the use of grammar, especially by learners, against criteria of accuracy, appropriateness and expressiveness; d) be aware of the contrastive relations between the native language and foreign language; e) understand and implement the processes of simplification by which overt knowledge of grammar can best be presented to learners at different stages of learning.

In addition, Bender and Fish (2000) have confirmed that the transfer of knowledge should lead to changes in practice, behaviour and policies, and the development of new ideas, processes, practices and policies. Furthermore, all of these will be significantly affected by transferring knowledge to students. In learning and acquiring grammar, when learners know some of the rules about the second language they may not be able to apply them in natural use, since they have not yet acquired procedural knowledge. Therefore the present research investigates the relationship between teachers' knowledge and their practice in teaching grammar in the Libyan context.

In order to investigate the weakness or strengths of the teachers' classroom practice when teaching English grammar, various immediate and external factors are explored in the next section.

#### **4.5. FACTORS AFFECTING EFL TEACHERS IN TRANSFERRING KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE IN TEACHING GRAMMAR**

Libyan teachers of English grammar are no different to teachers of English around the world as they try to apply what works best for their learners. However, constraints may occur related to “the contextual factors which may have facilitated or hindered the kinds of decisions teachers were able to make” (Borg, 2003: 98). These factors include teacher knowledge about language, teacher language awareness, classroom size, learner variables, and the teacher’s language skills, training and development, and educational culture.

##### **4.5.1. Teacher Knowledge about Language (KAL)**

Knowledge about language promotes the transfer of the teacher’s knowledge of grammar rules to students. However, the ways in which the teachers present and transfer their knowledge of grammar to students is often difficult for them to understand. Various studies show that knowledge about language is very important for EFL teachers, although some have confirmed that teachers may not be able to use this type of knowledge in their teaching.

Snow, et al. (1998) argued that teachers should know as much as possible about language, because this is crucial in helping them to do a better job. Teaching grammar is based on a large pool of specialized knowledge, and teachers should have that specific knowledge if they are to be able to teach successfully. The link between subject knowledge and effective teaching may be less direct where L2 instruction is concerned (Borg, 2006).

Brzosko-Barratt and Dahlman (2005) found that teachers could use their knowledge of literacy for literacy instruction and KAL for grammar instruction; but on the other hand, they found it difficult to use their KAL throughout literacy instruction and their knowledge of literacy throughout grammar instruction.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Karatepe (2001) investigated whether or not non-native speaking teachers were able to use their knowledge of pragmatics to recognize if a response was pragmatically correct. It was found that they were not able to use their knowledge to produce multiple examples of appropriate pragmatic responses.

Cajkler and Hislam (2002) conducted a study of ten elementary teachers with varying levels of knowledge about language. They found that none of the teachers felt that their knowledge was broad enough for their teaching. In a follow-up study in 2005, classroom observation and interviews were used to investigate the use of knowledge about language among four elementary teachers. It was revealed that they found it difficult to use their knowledge about language to create grammatical explanations which were clear and not misleading. The participants in the study also reported that traditional sources of KAL were not useful. "Many grammar books, websites and textbooks, including those on recommended course lists, were deemed inaccessible, did not help them explain points of grammar or exceeded their current level of knowledge" (Hislam & Cajkler, 2005: 328).

In addition, Andrews (2006) conducted a study with the same teachers as in his original 1997 study to discover if they had gained more KAL in the intervening years. He did not find any growth in KAL. This may be because acquiring KAL needs more time. For example, Andrews (1999a) found that greater experience helped EFL teachers in their ability to explain their students' errors.

To sum up, it is obvious from the literature that EFL teachers have difficulties in using KAL under the real-world conditions that exist in L2 teaching, and also that knowledge about language is not easy to transfer. However, research focused on the teachers' behaviour may miss deeper patterns of insight. "Further research into the processes through which language teachers' cognitions and practices are transformed as they accumulate experience is...required" (Borg, 2003c: 98).



Therefore, this type of knowledge is considered essential for teachers and students to be able to transfer their grammatical knowledge into language use, which the current study investigates.

#### **4.5.2. Teachers' Language Awareness of Teaching (TLA)**

Teachers' language awareness of teaching (TLA) is required by the teacher who "needs to reflect upon that knowledge and ability...These reflections bring an extra cognitive dimension to the teacher's language knowledge/awareness, which informs the tasks of planning and teaching" (Andrews, 1999b:163). Andrews also distinguished between "the language knowledge/awareness of the educated user of a language and that required by the teacher of that language" (ibid).

Andrews (2001) conducted a study to examine the impact of TLA on classroom practice. He found that it plays a fundamental role in structuring the input for learners. He also stated that filtering the input which the learners are exposed to could be influenced by a number of factors, such as the teacher's confidence and explicit knowledge and time constraints. The impact of teachers' subject matter knowledge on their practice has also been proven in many studies, such as those by Grossman et al. (1989); Wright and Bolitho (1993); Leech (1994) and Thornbury (1997). For example, Grossman et al. (1989: 28) claimed that "knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of the content can affect how teachers critique textbooks, how they select material to teach, how they structure their courses, and how they conduct instruction".

Furthermore, Wright and Bolitho (1993) explored the effect of TLA on lesson planning and other teaching tasks across the curriculum. They also claimed that any lack of TLA will impact on teacher performance. This happens especially "when a teacher is unable to identify and compensate for shortcomings in a course book, or is 'caught out' by a learner's question on the language", and they added that "in these situations, teachers need to draw upon their linguistic

knowledge, not to provide 'right answers', but to provide the necessary expertise to help the learner to overcome difficulties" (ibid: 292).

Andrews (1997) concluded that, "many of the apparent weaknesses in performance described seem to relate to metalinguistic awareness in operation rather than to problems with the underlying declarative KAL" (Andrews, 1997: 160). This means that LA is important for EFL teachers of grammar in helping students to transfer their grammatical knowledge into language use.

In summary, it is argued that TLA is fundamental and is investigated in this study as a tool which allows teachers to translate their knowledge into practice in teaching English grammar.

#### **4.5.3. Class Size and the Environment**

Class size has a crucial effect on the successful teaching and learning of English grammar. Researchers such as Cooper (1989); Bennett (1996) and Achilles (1999) have examined classroom interactions between teachers and learners, and found that bigger classes decreased the amount of time teachers spent on instruction when dealing with individual students. In this case, the process of teaching and learning will be negatively affected. Adeyemi (2008:7) found that "schools having an average class-size of 35 and below obtained better results in the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) examinations than schools having more than 35 students per class".

In contrast, some other researchers such as Shapson et al. (1980) have found no significant differences related to class size, and they stated that most of the teachers' behaviour was related to their own plans and views. Ehrenberg et al. (2001) supported this view, arguing that the effects of decreasing class size on teaching are minimal.

Angrist and Lavy (1999) found significant effects related to class size. This was because teachers with small classes could apply their knowledge of teaching better than when dealing with larger classes. Adeyemi (2008:7) also found that “students in schools having small class-sizes had better quality of output than students in schools having large class-sizes”. However, there is no guarantee that small classes will automatically lead to them being more productive. Therefore, this study considers this issue in terms of professional development in teaching grammar.

What also needs to be considered is that most classrooms were designed to be compatible with earlier educational specifications. All classrooms in Libyan schools are large enough to accommodate between twenty-two and thirty students. This prevents the teacher from moving around the class easily as the seating has to take the form of rows due to the lack of space. This problem is acknowledged by researchers such as Orafi (2008), who argued that at the present time greater efforts are made to allow flexibility of classroom layouts.

In addition, it can be argued that it is difficult for teachers to pay attention to psychological aspects such as students’ emotions and motivation in large classes. This may have a negative effect on the relationship between teachers and students. Cooper (2006:1-2) argued that “understanding the significant role of emotion and empathy in teaching and learning affords a major advantage in the study of human... we now know that they are central to the fast processing of the brain and are embedded in all our interactions with our fellow human beings and the environment”. When teachers understand these psychological phenomena they are more likely to use techniques appropriate to the students in learning English grammar. These psychological factors, however, have not been considered in previous studies of the teaching and learning of English grammar.

Furthermore, the physical structure of classrooms should be considered by educational authorities in Libya, however. Of course, issues other than the room

size are important, such as ventilation, particularly in winter when classes need to be warm enough, and electricity. Air-conditioning and heating are often considered a problem when the temperature is very low in winter and high in summer. All of these factors could help to produce an appropriate environment for better teaching and learning task.

Due to the importance of the learner variables in the teaching and learning process, they are discussed below.

#### **4.5.4. Learner Variables**

According to Celce-Murcia (1991), learner variables and instructional variables have an impact on determining when and how much grammar learners should be taught. Such variables include age, level, and educational background. Age is a very important variable which contributes to determining the extent to which learners should focus on grammatical forms. Compared with adults, young children need less concentration on grammar because they are more holistic in their approach to learning than adults (Celce-Murcia, 1991). Although young children can produce correct grammatical sentences, it is difficult for them to analyze these sentences because they utter them unconsciously. Young children are excellent at memorization and repetition, whereas adults need an explicit focus on form in order to facilitate their learning. It is appropriate for them to analyze sentences and identify various grammatical features.

Another essential variable is the learners' proficiency level which is important in teaching grammar communicatively. "An explicit presentation, including an overt explanation of the target grammar and the use of grammatical terminology, is probably less effective with lower-level students who may not know enough English to be able to understand the explanation" (Savage et al, 2010: 23). Thus, the more the learners are proficient in the target language, the more there can be a focus on grammar. If students are beginners, they will not be ready to analyze meanings. They tend to be holistic in their approach to learning something new.

On the other hand, if the students' level is intermediate or advanced, it is beneficial for them to be provided with form-related feedback in order to progress (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

A further important learner variable is educational background. If students are preliterate with only little formal education, it may not be productive to focus on form. In contrast, literate and well educated learners should be taught formal instructions, otherwise they may become frustrated. Providing them with opportunities to focus on form, such as by correcting their errors, would help them achieve accuracy and fluency in the L2 (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Instructional variables are also important in teaching grammar. Celce-Murcia (1991) found that the need to focus on form also changes according to three instructional variables: educational objectives (skills), register, and learners' needs. While teaching a receptive skill (listening or reading) or a productive skill (speaking, or especially writing), learners need different degrees of concentration on grammar. Savage, et al. (2010: 33) stated that:

Learners with limited education or literacy skills in their first language may not have a sense of the grammar of their own language or a command of grammatical terms...With these learners, an implicit presentation may be more effective. On the other hand, students who have learned the grammar of their first language may respond well to an explicit explanation of grammar patterns and rules.

It would be less relevant to focus on grammar explicitly while teaching listening or reading. On the other hand, it would be more relevant to focus on form while teaching writing or speaking because without knowing the forms of grammar, learners could not produce understandable language. Furthermore, register should also be considered as an important variable. So, if the class is focused on conversation, it is less important to stress form than if it is focused on formal writing. The learners' goal is also important, and if it is communication, formal accuracy is not so important. However, if the goal is formal writing, accuracy is very important.

Before being engaged in teaching grammar, teachers in Libya should be familiar with the above mentioned variables. This will help them to determine the extent to which they should focus on grammar, which would be beneficial only for learners who need it. Nevertheless, students in Libya would not benefit from grammar unless it is taught in such a way that enables them to integrate such knowledge into their interlanguage system. Libyan teachers should select an appropriate way of teaching grammar in order to obtain the best results. This leads us to the conclusion that teachers' language skills should be investigated in the following section.

#### **4.5.5. The Language Skills of the Teacher**

Language skills are very important factors which have a crucial impact on teaching. It would be difficult for teachers to explain grammar in different ways unless they are accurate and fluent. Therefore, EFL teachers of grammar should possess excellent language skills in order to make a positive contribution when they teach. Carless (1999:23) argued that "teachers need to acquire the skills and knowledge to implement something, particularly if it is slightly different to their existing methods".

In order to help EFL students to use their grammatical knowledge, teachers should encourage them to move from deductive into inductive learning, since deductive learning does not lead to good language use (see section 3.4). According to House (1997:7), "Language is usually delivered in the classroom following an established belief regarding the order of language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading, and then writing".

Previous studies have confirmed the relationship between teaching grammar and the language skills of the teacher. For example, Hillocks (1986) confirmed a relationship between grammar and writing skills, in that he argued, "Taught in certain ways, grammar and mechanics instruction has a deleterious effect on

student writing. In some studies a heavy emphasis on mechanics and usage (e.g., marking every error) resulted in significant losses in overall quality” (ibid, 248).

Recently, Macedonia (2005) found that teaching the traditional rules of grammar does not lead to well spoken language, and learning is often too slow to enable successful spoken language. This means that the relationship between knowledge of grammar and speaking skills is weak. However, this may not always be true, and depends on the teacher who monitors practice and the learner who receives the knowledge of grammar. This issue is considered in the current study in order to understand more about how the language skills affect the teaching of grammar in the Libyan context.

Consequently, it can be argued that fluency and accuracy are both essential for EFL teachers and learners. This is because “if a learner has mastered a language successfully, that means that he or she can understand and produce it both accurately (correctly) and fluently (receiving and conveying messages with ease)” (Ur, 1991: 103).

In summary, previous studies have confirmed the relationship between grammar and receptive and productive language skills. If the teachers use grammar drills in isolation from these skills, learners may not transfer their grammatical knowledge into language use. As the teachers’ receptive and productive language skills can be improved by in-service training sessions, the latter are reviewed below.

#### **4.5.6. Teacher Training and Development**

The development of teachers is essential for the successful teaching of grammar. Short training sessions will be insufficient to equip EFL teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. As Adey and Hewitt (2004:156) pointed out, “real change in practice will not arise from short programmes of instruction,

especially when those programmes take place in a centre removed from the teacher's own classroom". EFL teachers need to know about new methods and techniques in order to manage their activities. This is also supported by Carless (1999:23), who stated that

If teachers are not equipped to deal with the implications of a new approach, they are likely to revert to the security of their previous behavior and the desired change may not take place. Without sufficient retraining, even teachers initially enthusiastic about an innovation can become frustrated by the problems in innovation and eventually turn against it.

Therefore, regular teacher training sessions are needed in the context researched, because when teachers' knowledge is continually updated they become more confident. Kennedy (2005) found that teacher training programmes which depend on knowledge transmission models may not be effective in bringing about the desired change. Because of such models, teachers might not take into consideration the contexts in which they work. Karavas-Doukas (1998) found that innovation can lead to positive changes in curricula and the beliefs and behaviour of teachers. So, it can be argued that training sessions are needed for teacher development but these should be focused and organized so as to produce positive outcomes.

The literature shows that development programmes may include either short or long sessions. There is consensus in the literature about the value of long training sessions, but less agreement concerning short sessions (Miller, 1998 & Robb, 2000). This might, according to Lamie (2004), be related to lack of self-confidence which prevents teachers from changing their behaviour. However, some researchers such as Sandholtz (2002) have found that short sessions in development programmes worked with the majority of teachers.

Context is also important. As mentioned by Bax (2003: 283), "any training course should make it a priority to teach not only methodology but also a heightened awareness of contextual factors, and the ability to deal with them". Teachers also need to know how to deal with students according to their needs. A student who



is studying English just to pass an exam is different from someone learning English to use it in the future.

Shamim (1996) stated that teachers face different obstacles while trying to implement new textbooks and many teacher training programmes do not take account of the dynamic of change. Therefore, she explained:

It is important for teacher trainers to encourage participants in teacher training programmes to discuss both overt and 'hidden' barriers to the successful implementation of change in their own teaching/learning contexts. This will not only make trainees aware of potential sources of conflict but it will also enable them to develop strategies and tactics to deal with anticipated problems in initiating and managing change in their own classroom. (Shamim, 1996:120).

In summary, all of these issues are considered in the current study. Various obstacles encountered in training are important for EFL teachers. So that training courses are important to update teachers' knowledge in order to be able to approach their teaching tasks more effectively.

Due to the significance of educational culture impact in L2 classes, it is considered next.

#### **4.5.7. Educational Culture**

It is important in any society for teachers to understanding the educational culture of the target language, because their teaching is affected by sociocultural factors (Sharnim, 1996; Tudor, 2001). Teachers and students do not come into the classroom with empty minds; they bring with them their existing knowledge and thoughts about what happens inside class, what to teach, and how to teach.

Many aspects of educational and cultural norms in Libya stem from the principles of Islam (Orafi, 2008). In Libyan society, teachers and textbooks are considered as the main sources of knowledge and their role is to impart that knowledge to their

students. The system focuses more on teachers because it is thought that they know everything and should not make any mistakes (Tantani, 2005). Therefore, it is thought that teachers are well equipped with knowledge of the target language, and they are in a better position to transfer this knowledge to students. Teachers will then be held responsible for students' failure. This kind of belief reflects deeper ideas about education in the culture.

Shamim (1996:119) stated that the behaviour of learners in the classroom is inherited from the culture of the wider community. She added that the similarity between expectations about the etiquette of teacher/learner activities in the classroom and the culture of the community makes it easier for any improvement to be rejected. That might be true, but learners can resolve that issue if their teachers explain to them that they will learn the L2 better if they can change their ideas and think in different ways that accord with the target language they are seeking to learn.

Furthermore, textbooks are considered to be the second most important source of knowledge in Libya. The schools supply students with different textbooks, and they are expected to master and comprehend their content without questioning their credibility. "Education in Libya has a traditional character in methods and schemes. It is interested to supply students with information, but it does not care much for scientific thinking methods" (Libyan National Commission for Education, 2004:65).

Correspondingly, students in the Libyan educational culture assume that their role in the classroom is to sit quietly and to memorize information imparted by the teacher. Students should be polite when they argue with the teacher, classes are arranged in rows and students are seated at desks facing the front of the class. Students are supposed to "normally participate in classroom activities when they are called upon by the teacher. Such assumptions about students' role might

prevent them from taking part in classroom activities where their active involvement is required (Orofi, 2008).

In summary, it is clear that the Libyan educational culture is affected by the various factors discussed earlier. These factors are considered central in Libyan society and play an important role in shaping what goes on in Libyan classrooms.

The next section explores some studies concerning teachers' cognition and classroom practice in teaching grammar.

#### **4.6. RESEARCH INTO TEACHER COGNITION AND TEACHING GRAMMAR**

Numerous studies of examining teacher cognition and classroom practice have been conducted. This section focuses on investigations into the relationship between teacher cognition and practice in teaching grammar. Most studies of teacher cognition argue that what teachers know and believe about teaching is largely constructed out of their experience.

A number of valuable studies have been conducted in this area, including by Andrews (1999), Berry (1997); Myhill (2003); Burns and Knox (2005); Schulz (1996); Farrell and Lim (2005); Canh and Barnard (2009); Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997); Borg (1998a, 1998b, 1999c, 2003, 2006) and Phipps and Borg (2009). These studies clarify what practitioners know, think, believe and apply while integrating grammar instruction into their own teaching practice and context. Studies related to the teaching of grammatical terminology are described in detail in the following discussion.

Andrews (1999) compared explicit knowledge of grammar and grammatical terminology in four teacher groups: non-native speakers who were teachers of English (NNS), non-native speakers who were prospective teachers of English; English native speaking teachers (NS), and English native-speaker prospective teachers of modern languages. A 60-item test measured their explicit knowledge

about language, including knowledge of metalanguage and the ability to state grammatical rules. The non-native teachers of English with at least two years of experience did significantly better on the test, and outperformed the other three groups. The authors concluded that non-native speaker teachers could be expected to possess a better level of explicit knowledge of grammar and grammatical terminology. In addition, teaching experience seemed to be a determining factor in the development of explicit knowledge of grammar and terminology. The current study also investigates these issues and other aspects of teaching grammar in depth in order to identify the relationship between what the teachers do and what they know about the teaching and learning of English grammar.

Berry (1997) conducted a study of 372 undergraduate students and 10 teachers in Hong Kong. A 50-item questionnaire assessed their knowledge of grammatical terminology, and wide discrepancies were found “between the learners in terms of their knowledge of metalinguistic terminology and between this and the teachers’ estimation of it” (Berry, 1997: 143). This mismatch between student knowledge and teachers’ assumptions about metalanguage may negatively affect both the performance of teachers and student achievement. However, Berry’s study aimed only to determine the extent of knowledge among teachers and students about grammatical terminology, whereas the current study focuses on both the teachers’ knowledge of and practices during the teaching of grammatical terminology. Also, Berry only used questionnaires to collect data, whereas this research uses observation and interviews.

Furthermore, Myhill (2003) found that, despite the teachers’ sound knowledge of the passive voice, their explanations and examples were often unclear or confusing. She used observation, stimulated recall and interviews to investigate the explanations and examples given of the passive as used by one L2 teacher, and concluded that “the teaching of metalinguistic knowledge requires more than an ability to identify and define terminology, and...an overemphasis upon content

can lead to a failure to acknowledge the cognitive and conceptual implications of pedagogical decisions” (Myhill, 2003: 355). The difference between her research and the present study is that she focused on one strategy of teaching grammar, but the current study investigates all of the strategies teachers might use. Moreover, this study also focuses on the teacher’s knowledge and practice in teaching grammar.

Burns and Knox (2005) conducted an observational study of two teachers, and found that they used knowledge of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) in ESL teaching, but only in subtle ways. Pedagogical, personal and institutional factors made such transfer of teaching difficult. Again, this differed from the present research. They investigated how teachers transfer their knowledge into practice in general but the current study is concerned with the transfer of knowledge of grammar in particular. Their sample was of only two teachers whereas in this study there were eight.

Studies in foreign language situations do seem to indicate that students find error correction and grammar instruction helpful in language learning. Schulz’s (1996) study of students’ and teachers’ views on error correction and the role of grammar instruction in a foreign language setting revealed that many students have a more favourable attitude towards grammar instruction than do their teachers. The students also believed that in order to master a language it was necessary to study grammar. However, that study was merely aimed to discover teachers’ and students’ views on error correction, whereas the current study compares teachers’ knowledge and practice in terms of error correction.

A study by Farrell and Lim (2005) compared teachers’ beliefs and practice in teaching grammar in a primary school in Singapore. They used pre-lesson and post-lesson interviews as well as observation. The participants were two experienced English language teachers, who were found to have complex belief systems which are not always reflected in their practice, for various reasons

related to the context of teaching. Farrell and Lim's research is partly similar to the present study although their research considered ESL teaching but examined teachers' beliefs rather than their knowledge. The second difference was that they investigated primary school teaching whereas this study looked at the secondary school level. Furthermore, only two experienced teachers were interviewed and observed whereas this study's sample included eight teachers with different levels of experience.

In a recent study, Canh and Barnard (2009) conducted a survey examining EAP teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching in Vietnam. The participants were twenty-nine teachers in Vietnamese universities and other institutes of higher education. It was found that the participants preferred to correct grammatical errors and emphasised the systematic practice of grammatical terms. The main difference between their study and this research is that their participants were from universities and other institutes of higher education, whereas all the participants in this study taught in secondary schools. Moreover, again, their study concerned teachers' beliefs rather than knowledge, and data was collected only from questionnaires.

Borg (2003, 2006) reviewed studies which have examined potential and practice in terms of teacher education and cognition, classroom practice, literacy instruction, and the teaching of grammar, including a consideration of teachers' knowledge of grammar, their beliefs about grammar teaching and the relationship between such beliefs and classroom practice. Borg's (1998a) case study used classroom observation and interviews, and was designed to examine one EFL teacher to discover the pedagogical system used in grammar teaching. It was found that the teacher's decisions about explicit formal instruction of grammar did not necessarily reflect his beliefs.

Furthermore, Borg (1999c) conducted another study in order to understand the personal theories about teaching grammar of two experienced EFL teachers in

Malta. One teacher employed both deductive and inductive strategies in teaching grammar. The teacher's reasoning had interacting and conflicting beliefs based on her teaching and learning experience. Borg's study differs from the present study in the terms of focus and participants. Borg investigated teachers' beliefs and practice with two teachers while the current study explored teachers' knowledge and practice with eight teachers with different background knowledge.

Phipps and Borg (2009) explored conflicts between teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar and practice. They interviewed and observed three experienced EFL teachers (Turkish, British and American), and concluded that "it is not enough for language teacher cognition research to identify differences, or tensions, between teachers' beliefs and practices; rather attempts need to be made to explore, acknowledge and understand the underlying reasons behind such tensions" (Phipps & Borg, 2009: 389). Their study was conducted with both native and non-native speakers which might affect the findings obtained. This study is considered to be different as it included only non-native speakers.

Lin (2010) conducted study about an ESL teacher's beliefs and classroom practices in grammar instruction. He examined two classes. He interviewed and observed only one teacher in two different classes. The first class included 28 male and 5 female students, whereas the second class incorporated 22 male and 7 female students. He found that twelve different beliefs were arranged from the concept of grammar to the ideal classroom practice. Lin's research is different from the research in hand in terms of the aims, the tools and the sample.

#### **4.6.1. Limitations of Research into Teacher Cognition and Teaching Grammar**

The results of the studies mentioned above confirm that, when teachers work to support learning in the classroom, they are guided by mental constructs that have been shaped by knowledge about teaching and learning collected over the years. However, Borg (2006: 133) asserted that there is still a need for research into a larger variety of contexts in this area. This is confirmed by other

researchers such as Barnard and Scampton (2008:75), who stated that “more fruitful research would seek to identify, and explore, the extent of the convergence and divergence between attitudes, assumptions and knowledge expressed by teachers and their actual classroom behavior”.

The researcher’s focus in the present study is upon one aspect of teacher cognition, namely the teacher’s knowledge, and how this affects the Libyan classroom. There is a substantial body of research in this area, especially regarding practitioners’ knowledge about grammar teaching. Knowledge of the fundamentals of a language is also very important in learning and teaching that language, and here this refers to knowledge that can be used to analyze language, language use and language learning, but not the knowledge used to actually produce or understand the meaning of language.

Although some studies have been conducted in order to find out the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and instructional practices, this study is original in the following respects:

- It investigates the relationship between teachers’ classroom practice and their knowledge and how different aspects of knowledge affect performance in teaching English grammar.
- This study also explores the professional learning of English grammar and how teachers motivate their students to learn English grammar, which was not mentioned in any previous studies.
- This study differs from previous studies in terms of the methodology used, in that it used grounded theory for the analysis of data. Furthermore, a different sampling method was used in this study, to examine the knowledge and practice of eight teachers with varying levels of experience (see section 5.8).



- It is also highlighted by Borg (2006:133) that “further studies into the full range of teacher knowledge that informs grammar teaching practices are thus also required”.

From the literature it is clear that these issues need to be explored in order to develop teachers’ practices and their knowledge in the teaching and learning of English grammar.

#### **4.7. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

Previous research confirms the value of conducting the current study. Aspects of the teaching and learning of English grammar were reviewed in chapter three. The purpose of this chapter was to review the mental constructs of teachers such as their cognition, knowledge and beliefs and how these are related to classroom practice in the teaching of grammar. Various types of teachers’ mental constructs were discussed. More explicitly, different types of theoretical and practical knowledge used by teachers were considered. Then the factors which may affect the transfer of the teacher’s knowledge into practice in teaching English grammar were addressed.

Furthermore, from the general review of studies conducted in different countries into grammar instruction and teacher cognition, this study explores the relationship between what teachers in Libyan secondary schools actually do and what they state that they know about the teaching and learning of English grammar. Given the continuing need for research in this area, the current study attempts to address the gaps in the literature in exploring the teacher’s knowledge related to the teaching and learning of English grammar. Three main research questions were formulated (see sections 1.4 and 5.2), and the findings of this study may prove to be a great value, especially to teachers who are planning to teach English as a foreign language. Having provided the conceptual basis for this study, the next chapter discusses its methodological foundations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapters the literature related to teaching and learning English grammar has been reviewed. The factors that might affect teachers and their theoretical and practical knowledge have been explored. Research on the relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practice in teaching grammar was then also critically reviewed. All of these areas were covered broadly in order to develop a framework for methodology which should be adopted in this study. Appropriate research methods are essential for any study because “they are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined” (Bryman, 2004: 4).

This chapter explains the methodology chosen and gives reasons for this choice. The methodology used was based on studies highlighted in the literature review, because of their similarities in the nature of the enquiry. The chapter begins with the research questions and objectives of this study and then identifies the mode of inquiry employed. The most appropriate research philosophy is discussed in order to justify the research strategy.

The next section presents a detailed discussion of the data collection instruments, their validity and reliability, the process of the pilot. After the process of data collection along with the sampling methods used in the main study, some ethical issues are discussed in detail in this study. Finally, the theory behind analysis followed by the procedures of data analysis employed both are discussed.

### **5.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions were formulated on the basis of the theoretical literature review and the present research context. The literature referenced in this study emphasizes the exploration of what teachers actually do and what they state that they know about the teaching and learning of English grammar, in order to

investigate the relationship between cognition and action (Borg, 2003; 2006). As Mason (2002:19) suggested, the existing literature is used by researchers as a “springboard for launching their own research”.

Furthermore, as demonstrated in chapter two, the study took place in a situation where the education system has changed markedly over the years, but less improvement than expected has resulted in the processes of teaching and learning English grammar. This is despite the fact that students have been provided with new textbooks designed with modern methods of teaching grammar in mind. The research questions to be answered are:

1. What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do in their classrooms related to the teaching and learning of English grammar?
2. What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools state that they know about the teaching and learning of English grammar?
3. What is the relationship between what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do and what they state that they know about the teaching and learning of English grammar?

### **5.3. EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research into teachers' cognition in the field of teaching English grammar as a foreign language has been conceived within different research paradigms, such as positivist, interpretive, and critical frameworks. Studies in the literature are based on different sets of assumptions about the nature of social reality and the purpose of inquiry. Bell advised that “decisions have to be made about which methods are best for particular purposes and then data collecting instruments must be designed to do the job” (2005: 115). The present research design was developed by consulting a range of texts on research methods (Anderson & Burns ,1989; Cohen and Manion,1994; Guba & Lincoln,1994; Jackson, 1995; Calderhead, 1996; Bogdan & Biklen,1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Bell, 1999; Marshall & Rossmans, 1999; Burns, 2000; Bryman, 2001; Robson, 2002;

Richards, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Wiersma & Jurs, 2005; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Cohen, et al., 2007; Creswell, et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2007; Bryman, 2008; Borg, 2009; Nunan & Bailey, 2009 and Abdul-Rahman, 2011 ).

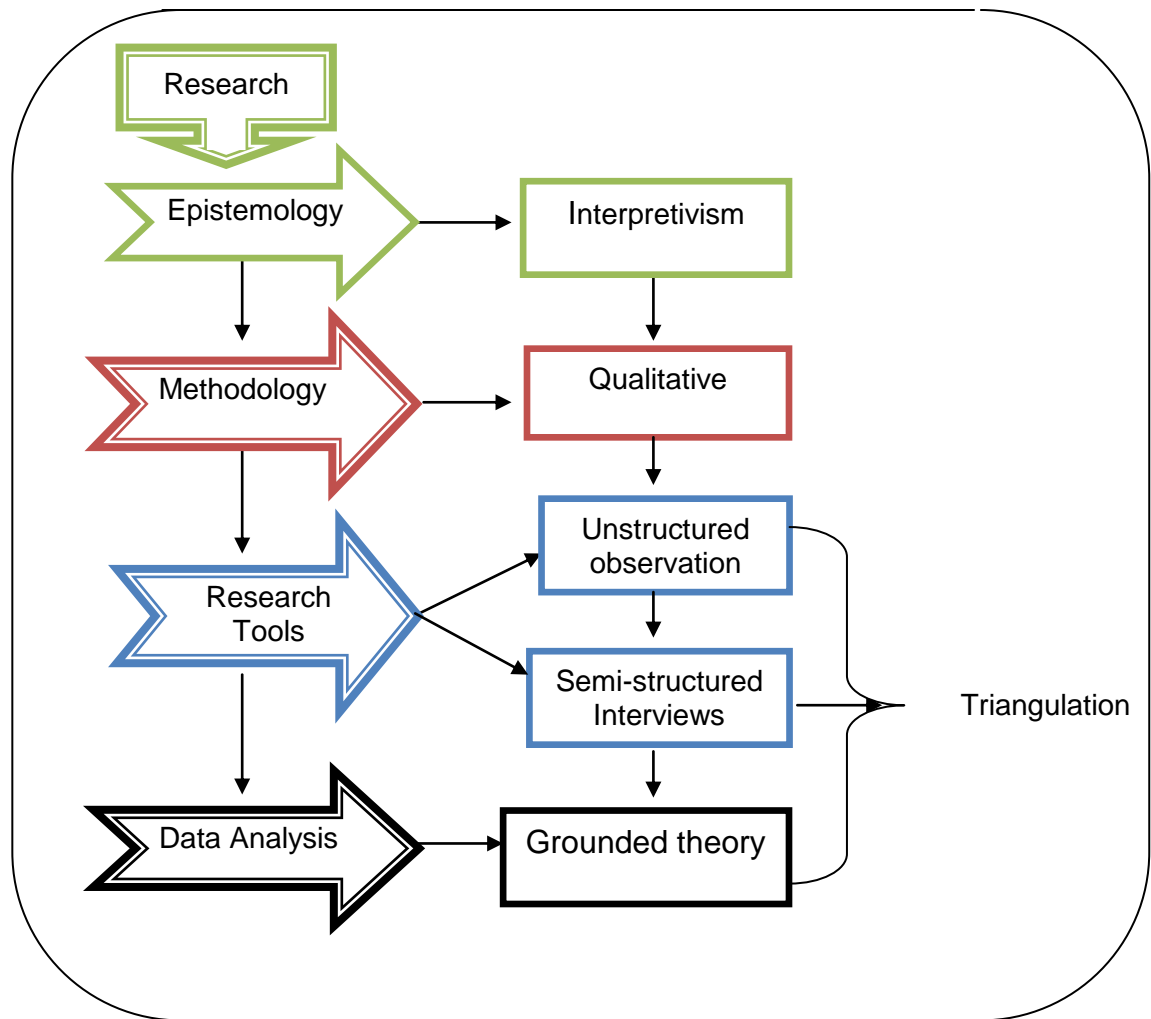
The data collection tools used in this research were classroom observation (Allwright & Bailey,1991; Bell, 1993; Gebhard, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Wiersma, 2000; Walliman, 2001; Lankshear & Knobel,2004; Cohen, et al., 2007; Orafi, 2008 and Bryman, 2008) and semi-structured interviews (Sax 1979; Weir & Roberts,1994; Miller & Gladdner 1997; Cohen et al, 2000; Bryman, 2001; Dawson, 2002; Flick, 2002; Robson, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Mohamed, 2006; Cohen et al, 2007; Denscombe, 2007; Ali, 2008). Grounded theory was used for analysing the data collected (Glazer & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1992; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Miles & Huberman,1994; Bogdan & Bilden, 1998; Mertens,1998; Williman, 2001; Robson, 2002; Allan, 2003, Charmaz, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Ali, 2008; Bryman, 2008; and Abdul-Rahman, 2011).

The design of this study was also influenced by the literature on the philosophy of research, and in particular by interpretivist approaches. The most important goal of research within the social sciences is to produce an understanding of social behaviour, even though goals may differ from researcher to researcher or from one discipline to another. The methodology is chosen to address the research questions and yield findings in valid and reliable ways. In the literature three main types of research epistemologies are cited, which differ in the following ways (Calderhead, 1996: 713):

- A positivist framework assumes that there is an objective reality that can be captured and described in its pure form. It aims to develop testable generalizations about human behaviour that can be used to describe future social occurrences with greater predictability;

- An interpretive framework assumes that there is no single reality. It is concerned with describing an individual's experience of reality, and aims for highly detailed studies for the purpose of understanding human action in context;
- A critical framework is concerned with emancipation through understanding. It aims to sensitize people to the power relations in their own context and the causes and consequences of their own actions.

It is very important to understand the theoretical assumptions of the research paradigm used, because the research philosophy chosen implies a belief about the way in which data should be gathered and analysed. Richards (2003) argued that failure to make these assumptions explicit will have serious consequences for the whole enquiry. Guba and Lincoln (1994) stated that aspects of meaning are important and can only be derived from individuals' perceptions and their interpretations of social interactions. Therefore, an 'interpretive' position was chosen as the most appropriate framework for this study. A qualitative methodology was used in this study as a plan of action to achieve in-depth understanding of the issue of inquiry in terms of collecting evidence about teachers' practices and knowledge about teaching and learning English grammar. Figure 5.1 shows the epistemological framework and research design.



**Figure: 5.1. Epistemological Framework and Research Design**

The above figure shows the epistemological framework adopted in this research. Interpretivism was preferred due to its philosophical stance, which informs the methodology to be used and provides a context for the process and its grounding in logic. The qualitative method was chosen because the field of inquiry involves exploring the behaviour, attitudes, feelings and knowledge of respondents towards aspects of the issue under investigation. Two data collection instruments were employed, unstructured observation and semi-structured interviews. Finally, grounded theory was used to analyse the data collected.

### **5.3.1. The Interpretivist Paradigm**

In the interpretive paradigm, researchers respect “the differences between people and the objects of the natural science and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2008:13). It could be argued that in research involving individual lived experience, human behaviour cannot be understood without understanding the meanings that participants attribute to these actions, and their thoughts, beliefs, values, feelings and assumptive worlds (Marshall & Rossmans, 1999). This means that, in the context of the interpretive research paradigm, the world is understood through the subjectivity of human experience. The interpretivist paradigm was adopted in this study due to the fact that it: (1) deals with the understandings, interpretations, and experiences of people (Anderson and Burns, 1989); (2) assumes that process and meaning are fundamental in understanding human behaviour (Bryman, 2001); (3) does not start with a theory; rather, it is inductive. In the interpretivist approach, researchers “use perspectives that work directly with experience and understanding to build their theory on them. The data thus yielded will include the meanings and purposes of those people who are the source” (Cohen, et al., 2007: 11); (4) aims to increase understanding of the issue researched (Jackson, 1995); (5) the researcher can also benefit from the strengths of qualitative methods, such as small samples (Bryman, 2008).

As a result of adopting an interpretivist framework, the following assumptions were made:

- The relationship between practice and knowledge in teaching grammar is essentially constructed out of a combination of various social actions.
- The social processes involved are shaped by the participants’ practice and their knowledge about teaching and learning English grammar.
- Through understanding these relationships the influence of culture and context on performance when Libyan teachers teach English grammar may be understood.

### **5.3.2. Qualitative Methodology**

The present research aim called for an interpretive approach using qualitative methods because these are “more concerned to understand individuals’ perceptions of the world” (Bell, 1999:7). Although much research on teaching and learning English as a foreign language is carried out using quantitative data collection, this study was conducted qualitatively because quantitative techniques would not be productive when the aim was to answer questions of ‘why’ and ‘how’ the phenomena of interest occurred (Cohen et al., 2007). In this regard, Borg (2009) argued that:

studies which employ qualitative strategies to explore language teachers’ actual practices and beliefs will be more productive (than, for example, questionnaires about what teachers do and believe) in advancing our understanding of the complex relationships between these phenomena (p. 388).

Qualitative techniques were therefore used in the current study, for these reasons: (1) qualitative tools seek insight rather than statistical analysis, which suits the nature of this research; (2) the field of inquiry involves exploring the behaviour, attitudes, feelings and knowledge of respondents towards aspects of the issue under investigation; (3) the qualitative research methodology used does not define hypotheses prior to the actual practical observation. The aim here was to observe everything that teachers actually did in their classes and then to proceed to interview them individually to explore how and why they teach in the way they do; (4) qualitative research emphasizes careful and detailed descriptions of social practices to understand how the participants experience and explain their own world; and (5) this type of research was used “because it is concerned with capturing the qualities and attributes of the phenomena being investigated rather than with measuring or counting” (Nunan & Bailey, 2009: 7).

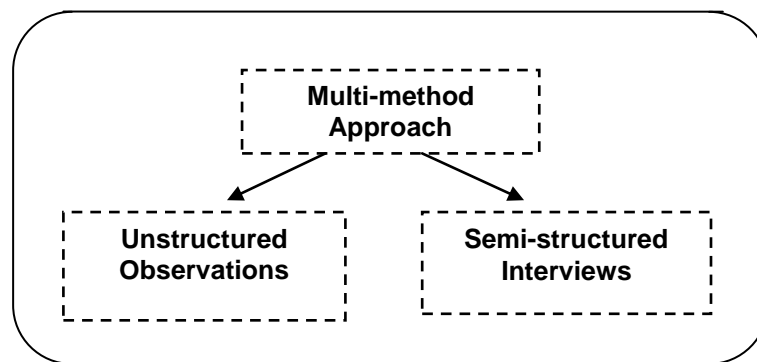
In summary, the type of research enquiry which places emphasis on the constructed nature of the experiences of individuals and groups through association and connectedness appears to be a suitable orientation for this



study. More explicitly, this study was directed by the interpretive research paradigm and used qualitative methods, and so the methods used and types of data collected needed to be in agreement with this position. This choice was dependent on the logical sequence of the elements of the process applied, as presented next.

### 5.3.3. The Multi-method Approach Adopted

The multi-method approach was used in order to investigate the issue researched from different standpoints (Cohen et al., 2007). In the social sciences, more than one research method or technique may be used in a complementary design in order to obtain trustworthy findings. Triangulation is a means of combining different methods or tools, defined by Cohen and Manion (1994: 233) as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour”. Wiersma and Jurs (2005: 256) considered triangulation as basically “qualitative cross-validation”. Figure 5.2 shows the data collection tools used for triangulation in this study.



**Figure: 5.2. Multi-method Approach Adopted**

The research instruments were used for triangulation in comparing teachers’ practice with their knowledge about teaching and learning English grammar, where no single method or instrument could be considered to be perfect for data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2008). The significance of triangulation is the fact that using more than one source of data enables a more comprehensive understanding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Each method has its own strengths and

limitations, and triangulation is used in order to increase the reliability and validity of findings.

Consequently, observations, and semi-structured interviews were considered as suitable data collection methods for this research. The use of diaries and questionnaires were also considered but these were not used for several reasons. Firstly, not all of the teachers followed their written lesson plans. Secondly, questionnaires were avoided because of the concern that responses may not have been of great value, especially when answering open questions, for reasons such as lack of time among the respondents. Moreover, using questionnaires may not have given the researcher the opportunity to question the participants in more depth, which could only be achieved by triangulating observations and semi-structured interview responses.

The examination of the data in this study was carried out using a combination of qualitative analyses of information from unstructured observation and semi-structured interviews. The findings gained were then integrated to provide findings about what teachers actually did and what they stated that they knew about teaching and learning English grammar.

#### **5.3.3.1. Rationale for the choice of the multi-method approach**

The multi-method approach refers to the use of more than one approach to investigate some aspects of human behavior (Cohen, et al., 2007). It can involve triangulation, which was used because it was considered as “suitable for studies which require an understanding of not only the ‘what’ that is being observed but also the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ of the observed behaviour” (Abdul-Rahman, 2011: 73). Using the multi-method approach was based on the precept that a fuller understanding of the research focus can be obtained if it is investigated and observed from different perspectives. This approach allows for both convergence and inconsistencies in the evidence produced by the component methodologies

thereby providing a more accurate overall picture when these components are brought together (Denscombe, 2007).

Furthermore, various reasons led to the use of this approach in this study: (1) the multi-method approach was used in order to understand the relationship between the teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge about teaching English grammar. In other words, it was used due to the nature of the inquiry in the research; (2) it was also used to increase the reliability and validity of the research findings, because each method has strengths and limitations; (3) this approach was used because "there is no single interpretive truth" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998: 30); (4) a multiple approach has special relevance where a complex phenomenon requires elucidation such as comparing teachers' practice and knowledge; and (5) the multi-method approach helps the researcher to identify areas of similarity and, perhaps more productively, differences, anomalies and apparent contradictions in the findings. This helps to provide a useful dialectic for the discussion of the findings and the conclusions and limitations of the study.

#### **5.3.3.2. Limitations of the multi-method approach**

Although using a multi-method approach has advantages, it has also disadvantages. Creswell, et al, (2007) argued that integrating data from different sources is not easy and may be resource consuming. The approach "complicates the procedures of research and requires clear presentation if the reader is going to be able to sort out the different procedures" (ibid: 10).

The following section deals with the factual questionnaire from which the researcher was able to select the sample required for the present study.

#### **5.3.4. Designing the Factual Questionnaire**

A factual questionnaire was used for collecting data from the participants about themselves. Dornyei (2003: 8) stated that questionnaires are used to elicit three types of data: "factual, behavioural, and attitudinal". After extensive discussion

with other researchers I was satisfied that this study required a factual questionnaire for the following reasons:

- It is the most suitable research tool for identifying the participants' personal background, and their length of experience in teaching and learning English grammar. It was used as part of the sampling strategy in order to choose representative participants.
- Questionnaires could be distributed to large numbers of people simultaneously and thus time and effort was saved (Dornyei, 2003). This would encourage greater participation in comparison to semi-structured interviews, for example, as well as requiring less effort.
- The researcher agreed with Bell (1993:76) who argued that "questionnaires are a good way of collecting certain types of information quickly and relatively".

To achieve the best results from questionnaires the following points should be taken into consideration, according to Mackey and Gass (2005: 96):

- Simple, uncluttered formats.
- Review by several researchers.
- Piloting among a representative sample of the research population.

All these points were considered in order to make the questionnaire valid. The items in the questionnaire were adopted from Mohamed (2006), who used only eight items focusing on the age, gender, nationality, number of years of teaching experience, school that the teachers currently taught in, academic qualifications, English being their first or second language, and age that they began learning English. Some questions and items were added, as detailed below, that were believed to be essential for the purpose of this research.

- Question number 6 was included to find out which level they taught at, as my research focus was only on second year teachers. The selection of second year teachers was based on the fact that they teach grammar as a separate module at this level.
- Question number 7 was added about which subject they taught because only teachers who taught grammar were required, and a further question was designed to identify the teachers' length of experience of learning English as a foreign language before becoming a teacher. In Libya some teachers graduate from intermediate institutes where they learn grammar for five years, whereas others graduate from universities and have learned grammar for seven years (three years at secondary school and four at university).
- Question number 9 was asked about their school because it was important to know which school to visit if a teacher was included in the sample.
- Question number 10 was asked to identify how many years respondents had been working as teachers of English. In the Libyan context experience is an important variable because teaching methods have changed (section 2.6).
- Question number 12 was added to identify whether or not the teachers had studied teaching methodology as a subject when they were students, which might impact on their grammar teaching.
- Question number 13 was asked to identify if they had studied English abroad and, if yes, how long they had lived abroad, and where/why. This question was important because those who had studied abroad may have had more opportunity to develop their professional practice.

The factual questionnaire used in this study could be completed in ten minutes. Data on the respondents' backgrounds were elicited in answers to 13 questions

(see Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it could easily be understood by the participants. This instrument was specially created for teachers of second year English in secondary schools in Zawia (for more details see section 5.8).

The questionnaire items were revised by the researcher, the supervisor, and colleagues. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to identify its strengths, weaknesses and validity (see section 5.3.4.2). The participants are asked to answer the factual questionnaire in order to select representative teachers for the next phases of the research.

#### **5.3.4.1. Limitations of factual questionnaires**

A factual questionnaire has limitations, of which one of the most serious is mentioned by Sax (1979: 245), who argued that "the motivation of the respondent is difficult to check". A second limitation is related to sampling, because unreturned questionnaires could increase the likelihood of biased sampling. A third limitation is that the respondents may complete the questionnaire quickly without considering their answers (Weir & Roberts, 1994).

#### **5.3.4.2. Validity and reliability of the factual questionnaire**

The purpose of the factual questionnaire used in this study was to provide a guide in selecting representative participants by knowing more about their backgrounds. In order to determine the validity of the factual questionnaire, the questions sought information which had a direct connection to the purposes of the enquiry. Inadequately constructed questionnaires may not produce reliable and valid data (Dornyei, 2003). Therefore the questionnaire here only concerned factual information (see appendix A). In the literature, there are many different types of validity, however the researcher only considered those which had a direct influence on his research tool. Construct validity was ensured when the language used in the questionnaire was simple and easy to understand. The questionnaire was also piloted with ten teachers from two Libyan secondary schools in Zawia

before the final version was designed. The feedback obtained helped the researcher to modify certain items of the factual questionnaire in order to be more valid in the main study (see section 5.6.1.1). Content validity was ensured by checking the questionnaire items first with colleagues then with supervisors. Some of the questionnaire items were amended according to the feedback obtained.

#### **5.3.4.3. Issues with the factual questionnaire**

The researcher considered many points which helped to make the questionnaire valid, such as using a simple, uncluttered format, and review by several other researchers (Mackey & Gass, 2005). However, some weaknesses were addressed during the design, distribution and collection of the factual questionnaire. The first problem was how to design a questionnaire the results of which would allow representative participants to be identified for subsequent of the study. Therefore, various items were changed or added after the pilot study (Burns, 2000). Researchers such as Dornyei (2003) argued that questionnaires can be distributed to large numbers of people simultaneously, which thus saves time and effort. This is true, but the problem was that if the questionnaires was sent by post or email, recipient may not find time to fill them in, or forget to do so or they fail to return them on time. Therefore, questionnaires were distributed to the teachers at their schools. During visits to the schools, there was no guarantee that meetings with all of the teachers would be possible. I was concerned not to waste time distributing and collecting the questionnaire. Therefore, the questionnaires were given to the head teachers to distribute and collect on behalf of the researcher. This may also have made the teachers more diligent in completing the questionnaires, thus leading to better results. One problem which can occur in such contexts is that potential participants may not bother to complete and return questionnaires. Using the questionnaire during the first stage of the research helped the researcher to get to know a representative sample of the research population (Mackey & Gass, 2005), and to identify those who would be willing to participate in later stages of the study.

In the following sections all of the processes of data collection are described in detail, the choice of research instruments is justified and an explanation given of how these were applied in the research.

#### **5.4. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Two instruments of data collection, namely unstructured observation and semi-structured interviews, were used in this study in order to obtain a greater level of validity of the findings according to the arguments proposed by Cohen, et al. (2000). Unstructured observation was used to discover what the teachers actually did in their grammar classes and semi-structured interviews were used to find out what the teachers said that they knew about teaching and learning English grammar. The process of designing these instruments is described below.

##### **5.4.1. Unstructured Observation**

Observation is a valuable strategy in the study of language teacher cognition because it provides evidence of what happens in the classroom (Borg, 2006). It was also stated by Borg that observation on teacher cognition research provides “a concrete descriptive basis in relation to what teachers know, think and believe” (ibid, 231). Gebhard (1999:35) defined classroom observation as the “non judgmental description of classroom events that can be analysed and given interpretation”. Therefore, the purpose of the classroom observation in this study was to understand what the teachers actually did in the classroom when they taught English grammar. The observations took place in eight secondary schools with eight graduate teachers in total. All of the teachers were Libyan (see section 5.8). Observation can be defined as “the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviour, and artifacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:107).

Unstructured non-participant observation was conducted by recording and taking notes about the practices used when teaching grammar. Cohen, et al. (2007)



argued that unstructured observation provides a rich description of a situation under investigation. Therefore, this kind of observation was considered to be the most suitable for this study. Other reasons for observing the practices of teachers of English grammar are presented below:

- Observation is used because it gives the observer a clear picture without becoming personally involved. It provides the researcher with a rich description of the situation under investigation (Cohen et al., 2007).
- It involves the “non judgmental description of classroom events that can be analysed and given interpretation” Gebhard (1999:35).
- Observing the teachers in action allowed the researcher to compare what they did and what they said they knew about teaching and learning English grammar. Observation “can be particularly useful to discover whether people do what they say they do, or behave in the way they claim to behave” (Bell, 1993:109).

Direct classroom observation served as one of the main sources of data in this study. In order to achieve trustworthy data, observations were conducted before the interviews. This technique was adopted because, firstly, if teachers were interviewed first this might affect what they subsequently did when observed, and secondly it was aimed to ask the teachers about their behaviour and identify the rationale behind their techniques of teaching.

#### **5.4.1.1. Limitations of unstructured observation**

Observation also has limitations as a research instrument. Walliman (2001: 242) claimed that “much time can be wasted waiting for things to happen, or so much happens at once that it is impossible to observe it all and record it”. Furthermore, Cohen, et al. (2007: 412) argued that "it may take a long time to catch the required behaviour or phenomenon, it is prone to difficulties of interpreting or inferring what the data means". Furthermore, many different events may occur in any classroom and therefore it may be difficult for an observer to monitor them

all. Observation might thus not be reliable because, when there is a great deal happening in the classroom, it is difficult to record everything satisfactorily. Additionally, the findings obtained could not be generalized.

#### **5.4.1.2. Validity and reliability of unstructured observation**

The purpose of observation in this study was to identify what EFL teachers in Libyan secondary schools actually did whilst teaching grammar. Qualitative validity can be assessed in many ways, and “might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, [and] the extent of triangulation” (Cohen et al., 2007: 133). In order to maximise the validity of observation, all precautions were considered. The teachers’ classes were visited in order for the researcher to introduce himself in the first observation visit, and the importance of this study was briefly explained so as to encourage teachers to behave naturally in their classes.

Furthermore, participants’ agreement and permission for the audio tape-recording for their classes was secured in advance as an essential part of this research. It was felt that this was a necessity to allow accurate transcription because the present researcher could not just rely on his memory and notes of what happened. The confidentiality of participants was guaranteed by not using real names in any report of the research. In order to avoid any unpredictable results, I used two digital audio recorders. To reduce any possible anxieties, the teachers were informed that my presence was not to assess them but to collect data that would be only for my research. The teachers were also informed that the data gathered would not be seen by anybody not involved in the present research. The use of a triangulation technique is another source of validity and reliability in this study (Somekh & Lewin, 2005).

#### **5.4.1.3. Issues with unstructured observation**

Observation can provide a researcher with a rich description of the situation under investigation (Cohen et al., 2007). However, various issues were identified in the literature concerning the observation of teachers in their classes. These

issues were described by Allwright and Bailey as “the observer’s paradox” (1991:70). The first issue during observing teachers in this study was when I noted that not all of the teachers were comfortable and were clearly worried in some of their classes, even though I had explained to them that I was not assessing them. This was particularly true of those who were less experienced. The reason for this might be simply that my presence during lessons could cause both teachers and students to alter their behaviour in slight ways, and therefore influence the data collected (Bryman, 2008). This situation was also noted during the pilot study, when I became convinced that using a video recorder would not be helpful in observing teachers’ normal behaviour. They became very self-conscious, and seemed very aware of how they looked and sounded. Therefore I decided not to use video. However, a partial solution was to use audio recorders and to visit the teachers many times beforehand in order to reduce their anxiety so as to observe normal patterns of teaching (Cohen et al., 2007). It was also decided to go into each setting open to going with the flow and trying as much as possible just to see what there was to be seen (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). The second issue was that teachers are not always able to commit themselves to the requirements of the fieldwork (Orafi, 2008). This was also noted in this study. For example, I was supposed to conduct observation in one of Omar’s classes, but when I came to the school I could not find him and he called me later to say that he could not come to school on that day because of difficult personal circumstances. This happened twice. Therefore, researchers should consider this issue in order to avoid wasting time (Bryman, 2008). The third issue was that observing a class and writing notes at the same time made it difficult to notice everything, even though a digital audio recorder was also used. Afterwards I could not remember all of the actions observed in the class, particularly those related to interactions between teachers and students which were not picked up by the digital audio recording. This issue was noted by Walliman (2001: 242), who claimed that “so much happens at once that it is impossible to observe it all and record it”. The solution to this was to transcribe the recording and write up

the notes on a class in the same day, because it was easier to remember when the experience was fresh (Cohen et al., 2007).

#### **5.4.2. Semi-structured Interviews**

Different interview methods exist, such as the “unstructured interview, semi-structured interview and structured interviews” (Dawson, 2002: 27). Cohen et al. (2007) considered the interview to be a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee to obtain relevant information. Compared to questionnaires, interviews are more flexible and adaptable, because the questions can be adjusted to fit the situation. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to elicit information about teachers’ perceptions and knowledge of grammar teaching, and the difficulties facing their practice. This type of interview was also chosen because:

- It is commonly used in connection with qualitative research (Bryman, 2001), when a specific list of questions is predetermined by the researcher, but the order can be changed depending on the interviewer's perception of what works best.
- In a face to face interview the researcher can modify any questions where required (Robson, 2002). Therefore, the semi-structured interview allows more relevant questions to be asked and to focus on particular topics which provide opportunities for two-way communication.
- The interviewees’ responses can be clarified and developed through follow-up questioning (Weir & Roberts, 1994).
- The interviewer can develop unexpected themes and issues which come up during the interview (Cohen et al., 2000).
- Qualitative interviewing it helps us discover the participants' points of view, and thus "information about social worlds is achievable through in-depth interviewing" (Miller & Gladdner 1997: 99).

#### **5.4.2.1. Limitations of semi-structured interviews**

The flexibility of the semi-structured interview may lead to difficulties, especially when questioning by the interviewer can be an endless process. Sax (1979) and Weir and Roberts (1994) mentioned other, such as the data obtained not being objective and that bias can also arise from the interviewer's responses to the answers. In addition, Denscombe (2007) stated that the presence of the interviewer might have an impact on the respondent. The context in which the interview is conducted is also a potential influence on the data that is forthcoming. Because unique and individual responses are collected in specific contexts, the reliability and consistency of interview data may be in doubt.

#### **5.4.2.2. Validity and reliability of semi-structured interviews**

The purpose of using semi-structured interviews in this study was to identify what the EFL teachers knew about the teaching and learning of English grammar. The flexibility of this method was the main reason behind adopting it. Nevertheless, flexibility was not favoured at the expense of validity. Denscombe (2007) identified that various methods can be adopted to check the validity of data emerging from interviews.

Considering qualitative validity is essential, and is "addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of data achieved, the participants approached, [and] the extent of triangulation" (Cohen et al., 2007: 133). A further way of assuring validity is to estimate whether or not the interviewee is in a position to have expert knowledge in order to answer questions with relative authority. In some cases, respondents may be tempted to respond quite persuasively in areas which are liable to be beyond their competence.

Therefore, I did my utmost to consider all precautions to maximise the validity of the interviews. The questions in the interviews were carefully constructed to be concise and to guarantee full understanding. The questions were given to colleagues who have good experience in teaching English in the context

researched. The feedback gained helped the researcher to modify some of the questions. Furthermore, after each interview in the pilot study, the interviewees were given the list of the interview questions and were kindly asked to give their opinions about them to avoid any misunderstanding in the main study. The participants were also given permission to use Arabic, if preferred, to save time and confirm understanding. This was because it was thought that the teachers' language level might not allow them to express what they intended to say.

The respondents, and especially female teachers, were assured that their recorded contributions would not be used by anybody else, and that their real names would not be used. I also avoided any leading questions during the interviews, since my role was restricted to asking questions and encouraging the participants in order to achieve more active participation. All of these methods were used to maximise validity and create an environment for useful conversation to occur between the researcher and participants.

However, any sort of verification is problematical where opinions and feelings are being elicited, and therefore it is necessary to consider the reliability of the interview data. Their consistency over time would mean, according to Punch (1998), that if the same interviews were to be carried out at another time but under the same circumstances, the same results would be gained. If not, the teachers might change their responses as a result of experience gained since the last interview.

Reliability in qualitative research "can be regarded as a fit between what researchers recorded and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched" (Cohen, et al., 2007: 149). The reliability of the interviews data was approached through the transparency and honesty in providing detailed mental picture of the interviews in terms of creating the interview questions asked and piloting them. Moreover, the triangulation technique adopted provided another source of reliability.

### **5.4.2.3. Questions in the semi-structured interviews**

In the light of the research questions and aims, the interview questions were formulated with the help of the relevant literature. Some of the interview questions were adopted from Mohamed's (2006) study and modified in order to be suitable for this study, which in addition investigated teachers' knowledge. Other questions were added which were relevant to the present research enquiry. Mohamed's interview questions aimed to elicit information about the participants' teaching and learning background and how their experience had influenced the way they taught. I used a similar question but with a different wording in order to discover how their learning impacted on their teaching of grammar.

Furthermore, Mohamed also asked her participants to describe their approach to teaching grammar and asked them whether or not their approach had changed in any way during their career as a teacher and if so, how and why. She also asked how, when planning lessons, they decided which grammar features to focus on and what kind of grammar activities they normally used with their students. Another question was about the use of grammatical terminology in the classroom.

These questions were helpful as a starting point for designing my interview questions. Many questions were added to cover all of the areas related to the teacher's knowledge about teaching and learning English grammar. Since the aim of the interview instrument was to discover what teachers knew about the teaching and learning of grammar, the interview questions were divided into two parts. The first part was aimed at finding out what the teachers knew about learning English grammar and the second their knowledge about teaching it (see Appendix B).

The interview questions were revised after comments from the supervisor and colleagues, and a pilot study was conducted to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the interview questions and also to assess their reliability and validity. Moreover, other questions to discover how teachers' responses reflected what they actually did in class were inspired by the classroom observations. The interviews were audio-taped and, as they were conducted in the participants' L1, they were first transcribed in the L1 and then translated by the researcher into English. The transcriptions were also checked by an experienced translator to achieve more accuracy and precision.

#### **5.4.2.4. Issues with semi-structured interviews**

Many insights were gained from the teachers' comments on their behaviour and about teaching and learning English grammar in general. However, various issues related to the interview processes needed to be addressed. One such issue that unexpected themes and issues came up during the interviews (Cohen et al., 2000). Another issue which emerged in this study, and which may face any researcher who investigates the knowledge of teachers, is the language teachers actually use to describe their knowledge and how it is drawn upon in practice. A problem can arise due to a lack of awareness on the part of the teacher about one or more aspects of practice. Therefore, after I conducted the pilot study I decided to offer the interviewees the choice of whether to use their L1 or L2, and I tried to speak as clearly as I could and to maintain eye contact to show interest (Cohen et al., 2007). The reason for this was that the teachers in the present study may not have always had the language required to discuss fully issues related to their practice, and may not have been used to talking explicitly about issues related to teaching and learning English grammar.

Although all of the interviews were conducted in the participants' L1 to enable the teachers to express ideas more fluently and confidently (Rossman & Rallis, 2003), some of the teachers asked for clarification in order to understand some of the interview questions. For example, certain teachers did not understand



certain terms, such as the 'deductive' and 'inductive' methods of teaching. The solution here is for questions to be worded appropriately, and for personal experience of teaching to be drawn upon in discussing with the teachers what was observed in their classes in such a way that the interviews are as relaxed and enjoyable as possible.

Researchers should also consider issues related to the site in which the interviews take place, in order to give the interviewees more freedom in how to express their points of view (Flick, 2002). In some schools in this study it was not possible to conduct the interviews in the teachers' room because it was full of other teachers. Thus, I had to ask for permission from head teachers to conduct the interviews in their offices. Another issue concerned interviewing female teachers, because in Libya men and women are not allowed to remain alone together in a room (Ali, 2008). The solution here was for female teachers to arrange for a friend to accompany them to the interview.

## **5.5. ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE STUDY**

Ethics refers to rules of conduct; typically, to a code or set of principles. Researchers are concerned about the ethical issues that might occur at any stage of their research. Ethical issues require special consideration as they relate to the people with whom researchers conduct their research (Bryman, 2001). Therefore, researchers should consider each ethical concern before doing their research. Cohen, et al. (2007:51) stated that:

Ethical issues may stem from the kinds of problems investigated by social scientists and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data. This means each stage in the research sequence raises ethical issues.

To avoid ethical problems in this study, several points were considered:

- A letter from the research supervisor confirming that I wanted to collect data in Libya was sent to the Libyan Embassy in London. Then they gave me another letter to take with me to the education authority in the

Municipality of Zawia. After that another letter from the embassy was given to all school head teachers to allow me to carry out data collection legally.

- For the purposes of confidentiality the participants' names were kept secret and they were informed that even if they wrote their names on the questionnaire forms and interview notes they would be not mentioned in any report arising from the study. This avoided putting pressure on the participants, and encouraged them to act as naturally as possible.
- Each participant was asked whether or not he/she was happy to participate and was informed that there would be no problem if anyone wanted to withdraw from the study.
- The participants were informed about the purpose and aims of the study and it was explained that the study might help them by offering solutions to their teaching problems. They were asked whether they preferred to conduct the interview in English or Arabic in order to avoid them feeling that I might assess their standard of English.
- Religious, cultural and social constraints were taken into consideration, by avoiding meeting female teachers alone and asking them to arrange with their colleagues to attend interview sessions with them. This is because in Libyan society it is not allowed for those of opposite sexes to be alone together behind closed doors. The use of videotape recording was also avoided.
- During observation sessions, I did not interrupt the teachers but remained as a non-participant and sat at the back to be able to see all that happened in the classroom.

Finally, the researcher thanked all the teachers and head teachers. Data files were kept securely and were only accessed by the researcher. All of these measures were considered to be necessary in what Cohen et al. (2000:49) termed striking "a balance between the demand based on them as professional

scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the researcher”.

## **5.6. PILOT STUDY**

The pilot study is very an important device for researchers to assess their research tools. Burns (2000) explained that the purpose of the pilot study is not only to acquire data but also to learn how to acquire data properly and accurately. It helps researchers to discover weaknesses in their methodology. The pilot study was conducted in this research to test the feasibility of and to refine and modify the research tools. It was carried out to check for any ambiguity, confusion or inadequate items in the factual questionnaire and to test whether or not the unstructured observation and semi-structured interview instruments were valid and reliable in order to answer the research questions. Bell (1993: 84) stated that:

All data-gathering instruments should be piloted to test how long it takes recipients to complete them, to check that all questions and instructions are clear and to enable you to remove any items which do not yield usable data.

Therefore, the data collection instruments in this study were piloted before starting to collect the actual data. Although a pilot study is carried out with a limited number of participants, it still could generate interesting insights for the research. The pilot study here was beneficial for the researcher because various deficiencies were found in of all the data collection tools.

### **5.6.1. Reflections on the Pilot Study**

Conducting the pilot study triggered more personal insights and ideas to modify and add more new items so that the research tools would be more effective and efficient to answer the research questions. These modifications are discussed below.

### **5.6.1.1. The factual questionnaire**

Piloting the factual questionnaire drew my attention to the need to add more items and modify others. This was essential for and helpful in selecting an appropriate sample for the research.

#### ***Items added or modified***

- Regarding the question relating to ‘qualifications’, two more items were added, namely ‘Higher institute’ and ‘Mid institute’.
- In order to find out what level the teachers taught at, a new question was added in the form of what level do you teach?
- The question ‘what subject do you teach?’ was added to ascertain the subject taught, with the response options of: ‘grammar’, ‘other language skills’ or ‘both’.
- One existing question was not clear, according to the participants in the pilot study. Therefore: ‘How long have you been studying English as a second language?’ was modified to: ‘How long had you been studying English as a second language before you became a teacher?’
- A very important question was added, which was: ‘Did you study teaching methodologies as a subject when you were a student at a university or institute?’.

### **5.6.1.2. Unstructured observation**

In the pilot study of observation, it was found there were some points that were had not been considered, which were as follows:

- Visiting the intended classes in advance. This procedure was beneficial in breaking down any barriers between the researcher, the teachers and their students in order to minimize any negative influence of my presence.
- It was also useful to practice recording with minimal environmental distortions.

- A final additional point concerned the materials and teaching aids used by the teacher in the classroom to teach grammar.

#### **5.6.1.3. Semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured interview questions were divided into two sections aiming to discover what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools stated that they knew. The first section concerned the learning of English grammar in order to explore their background knowledge and the second section concerned the teaching of English grammar. Three issues were identified about teaching grammar which required more questions be added. The new questions were:

- To what extent does the teachers' knowledge about language and their experience as teachers help them to teach grammar well in the classroom?
- What are the most important aspects that teachers of grammar should be aware of?
- Why did you use the students' first language when you taught English grammar?
- To what extent do your knowledge about language and your experience as a teacher help you to teach grammar?

It is worth noting that there was the possibility for other questions to come up according to the flow of discussion during the interviews.

#### **5.6.1.4. Reflections on the analysis of the pilot study**

The data obtained from observation and interviews in the pilot study were transcribed, coded and analysed using the principles of grounded theory, which revealed that there was a mismatch between what the participants did and what they knew. A number of lessons were learned from the analysis in the pilot study which then were considered in the main project:

- The data collected should be prepared and organized in separate profiles. This procedure helped me to distinguish between the teachers.
- Transcribing the interviews and observation data immediately was beneficial in making an early connection between the participants' practice and knowledge.
- Grounded theory was employed to analyse the data collected. The main reason behind this was to practice the analytic procedure and to check whether or not the research tools were able to provide data which could answer the research questions.

Although the pilot data was gained from a small sample, some interesting insights were gained into teachers' practice and knowledge in teaching grammar.

### **5.7. THE POPULATION**

The term population refers to the group of persons from which the research plans to draw inferences (Lynn, 2002). From different types of secondary schools in Zawia only specialised schools were chosen. In these schools, students study the English language in order to become teachers of English. The rationale for choosing Zawia is that there are many secondary schools in the area, which has a high population as a result of being located by the Mediterranean Sea. It is a typically-sized municipality in Libya and has a large university which produces many graduates who later become teachers of English in secondary schools, and therefore could provide many qualifying participants.

Zawia was also chosen because of its accessibility to the researcher, who had been a teacher of English in a secondary school there before working at the university. Therefore he already knew most of the teachers in the area, where he also lives. "Use friends, contacts, colleagues, academics to help you gain access; provided the organization is relevant to your research questions, the route should not matter" (Bryman, 2004: 297). Every teacher of English in every specialized secondary school in the Municipality of Zawia was asked to answer

the factual questionnaire in order to select representative participants for the study who would be "stratified on more than one variable" (Dorneyei, 2003: 73).

## **5.8. SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

Due to the importance of sampling techniques in any study, participants must be carefully selected (Patton, 2002). Participants must be able to communicate and have no objections to taking part in the intended study (Morse, 1991). Furthermore, Cohen, et al. (2007:115) offered a good comparison between the different kinds of sampling when they said that:

There is a little benefit in seeking a random sample when most of the random sample may be largely ignorant of particular issues and unable to comment on matters of interest to the researcher, in which case a purposive sample is vital.

The nature of the study and Cohen's point were considered regarding the choice of participants of this study. Patton (2002:230) argued that "the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry". Therefore, a purposive sampling strategy was employed in this study. This kind of sampling deals with specific purposes and small populations. The findings of this study may not be generalisable to all, but "could provide a springboard for further research or allow links to be forged with existing findings in an area" (Bryman, 2004:100).

The main variable used in selecting the participants was their experience in teaching English grammar. Different levels of experience concerned not only the length of time they had spent teaching but also how many different textbooks the teachers had used, since older textbooks were designed to teach grammar deductively and the recent textbook to teach it inductively (see section 2.4).

Over two days the factual questionnaires were distributed to teachers in fourteen of the forty-seven schools in Zawia. These fourteen are specialized secondary

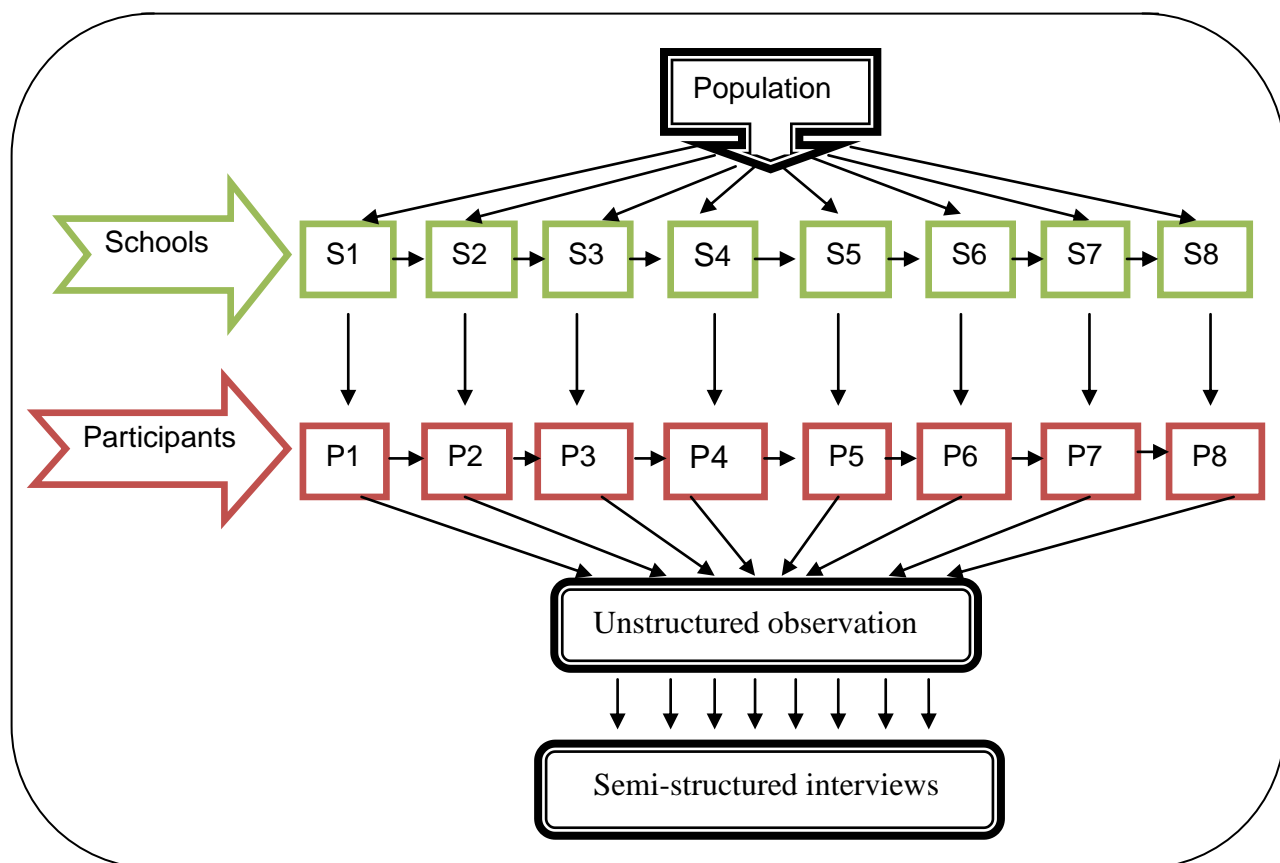
schools which teach only languages and the students who graduate become teachers of English. The completed questionnaires were collected three days later from the head teachers of the schools. The total number of teachers who completed questionnaires only came to fifty-seven, as five did not return the questionnaires to their head teachers. Having checked all of the questionnaires it was decided which schools to visit and which of the teachers would be observed and interviewed. An appropriate sample was then identified that could statistically represent the characteristics of the population, including male and female participants and more and less experienced staff.

Furthermore, I selected only teachers who, according to their questionnaire answers, were teaching grammar to second year pupils. Their background information data also guided the selection of the participants for observation and interview. Twelve teachers were chosen from eight schools, comprising six teachers who had taught using both the old and new textbooks, and six teachers who had taught only from the new textbook.

These teachers were selected according to their demographic characteristics (Cohen, et al., 2007). Each teacher was initially informed about the nature of the study, and that it consisted of two further rounds of data collection, namely classroom observation and a tape-recorded interview to be conducted with each teacher individually. I gave each teacher a pseudonym for the purposes of confidentiality.

The sample size was determined by considerations of theoretical saturation. This occurs when “no new or relevant data seems to emerge regarding a category...the relationships among categories are well established and validated” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 212). In this study, it was intended to observe and interview twelve teachers; however, the researcher was satisfied with eight since no more new data was obtained. This means that a point of saturation was reached and no more observations and interviews were needed (Douglas, 2003).





**Figure: 5.3. The Sample of the Study**

The following table summarises the basic background information gathered about the teachers:

**Table: 5.1. Background Information of Teachers**

Teachers	Variables										
	Sex	Age	L1	Degree	Study abroad	Taken teaching training sessions	Years of learning grammar	Studied teaching methodology	Years of teaching grammar	Levels taught	Currently teaches
Manal	F	37-42	Arabic	BA	none	once	7	no	14	(2,3)	grammar
Lila	F	23-30	Arabic	BA	none	twice	7	yes	8	(2)	grammar
Elham	F	23-30	Arabic	BA	none	once	7	yes	9	(2)	grammar
Tariq	M	43-49	Arabic	BA	none	none	7	no	16	(2,3)	grammar
Omar	M	23-30	Arabic	BA	none	none	7	yes	6	(2)	grammar
Kholid	M	37-42	Arabic	BA	none	none	8	yes	13	(2)	grammar
Karima	F	31-36	Arabic	BA	none	twice	7	yes	7	(2)	grammar
Sami	M	37-42	Arabic	BA	none	none	7	no	14	(2,3)	grammar

### 5.9. THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE AS AN OBSERVER

Classroom observation is considered to be one of the tools which is most reliable in gathering data to evaluate a teacher's performance. However, a teacher's behaviour may often be affected by the presence of observers. After the pilot study and the initial meeting with each teacher, I became more aware of the possible influence of the researcher's presence on the teachers' performance in class. Therefore, I did my utmost to minimize this influence through meeting the teachers individually in advance and explaining to them the purpose of the research and that the data gathered would not be accessed by anyone not involved in the research.

Furthermore, I intended to not gather any data during my first visit to the teachers. The main reason behind this was to help both the teachers and students to be more familiar to my presence in their classes. "You can let participants become familiar with you, hoping that they will eventually get used to you. Once participants are used to you, they may forget that you are there and revert back to normal behaviour" (Mitchell & Jolley, 2004: 155).

**Table: 5.2. Classroom Observations Background Information for Teachers**

<b>Teachers observations</b>			
<b>Manal</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	11-11-2008	45	24
<b>1</b>	13-11-2008	48	26
<b>2</b>	16-11-2008	50	26
<b>3</b>	17-11-2008	47	25
<b>Lila</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	18-11-2008	44	22
<b>1</b>	19-11-2008	45	24
<b>2</b>	23-11-2008	49	24
<b>3</b>	24-11-2008	47	24
<b>Elham</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	26-11-2008	35	30
<b>1</b>	30-11-2008	45	30
<b>2</b>	01-12-2008	45	29
<b>3</b>	03-12-2008	47	30
<b>Tariq</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	07-12-2008	45	25
<b>1</b>	09-12-2008	51	25
<b>2</b>	11-12-2008	47	24
<b>3</b>	14-12-2008	49	25
<b>Omar</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	16-12-2008	45	28
<b>1</b>	18-12-2008	45	28
<b>2</b>	21-12-2008	44	27
<b>3</b>	23-12-2008	45	28
<b>Khlid</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	28-12-2008	40	24
<b>1</b>	06-01-2009	45	24
<b>2</b>	07-01-2009	47	23
<b>3</b>	11-01-2009	50	24
<b>Sami</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	12-01-2009	45	30
<b>1</b>	13-01-2009	47	30
<b>2</b>	18-01-2009	50	29
<b>3</b>	19-01-2009	45	27
<b>Karema</b>	<b>Observation date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>	<b>Number of students</b>
<b>First visit</b>	20-01-2009	46	25
<b>1</b>	22-01-2009	43	26
<b>2</b>	26-01-2009	45	28
<b>3</b>	27-01-2009	45	28

The observation sessions took place during the school year 2008- 2009. Over a period of more than three months each teacher was visited during four periods, of forty-five minutes each. Each participant was observed in three lessons where

data and recordings were collected of lessons teaching second year students. As a non-participant observer, I recorded events as they unfolded in their naturalistic setting. I also noted down the non-verbal actions of the teachers and students. It cannot be claimed that the researcher's presence had no impact on behaviour in the classroom but, as stated earlier, I did my best to minimize that impact.

#### **5.10. THE RESEARCHER'S ROLE AS AN INTERVIEWER**

The interviews were conducted individually after each teacher had been observed. I first explained the rationale behind the interview questions and gave each teacher a copy of them. Then I asked them if there was any question that was unclear or ambiguous. I then asked them if they preferred to conduct the interview in Arabic or English and asked for their permission to record the interview and to take notes. All of the teachers preferred to conduct interviews in Arabic (see section 5.4.2.3). This choice was also beneficial because if I had asked them to talk in English, they might have thought that I was assessing their English. Also the teachers sometimes found it difficult to express themselves in English.

In order to gain useful data and to make it more manageable I interviewed each teacher individually. Interviews lasted for between thirty-nine to fifty-seven minutes. The length of the interviews was dependent on the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. Some interviewees did not want to discuss issues at length, which led the interviewer to move forward to subsequent questions.

Furthermore, the interview schedule consisted of a list of questions, but sometimes I deviated from the list and added extra remarks when this was thought useful for obtaining richer data. I sometimes encouraged the interviewee to clarify vague statements or to further elaborate on brief comments. Otherwise, the interviewer attempted to be objective and tried not to influence the interviewees' statements. I also sometimes shared my own beliefs and opinions because I had been a teacher of English in the same context. At the end of the

interview I asked the teachers if they had any comments to add, and to speak freely about the teaching and learning of grammar.

All of the meetings took place in quiet rooms in the school buildings where the teachers worked. This was not an easy task and I learned to be patient in waiting for and arranging the interviews. The following table shows when the interviews took place and how long they lasted.

**Table: 5.3. Follow up Teachers' Interviews**

<b>Teachers interviews</b>	
<b>Manal</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
18-11-2008	47
<b>Lila</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
25-11-2008	40
<b>Elham</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
04-12-2008	50
<b>Tariq</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
15-12-2008	52
<b>Omar</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
24-12-2008	48
<b>Khalid</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
11-01-2009	50
<b>Sami</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
20-01-2009	57
<b>Karema</b>	
<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Length (minutes)</b>
28-01-2009	39

### **5.11. THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE ANALYSIS**

As the researcher's aim is "to generate a theory to explain what is central in the data" (Robson, 2002:493), a Grounded Theory approach was used to analyse the data in this study. Grounded theory mainly focuses on the discovery of theory development as opposed to logical deductive reasoning which relies on prior theoretical frameworks (Charmaz, 2006). Contrary to the traditional version of grounded theory in which the researcher is obliged to follow strict steps (Strauss, 1987), Charmaz (2006:9) proposed a more flexible approach. She argued that the methods of grounded theory are "a set of principles, not as prescriptions or packages". This version of the grounded theory was employed in the present study to analyse the data collected from twenty-four classroom observation sessions and eight semi-structured interviews. These analytic processes are defined as "the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 57).

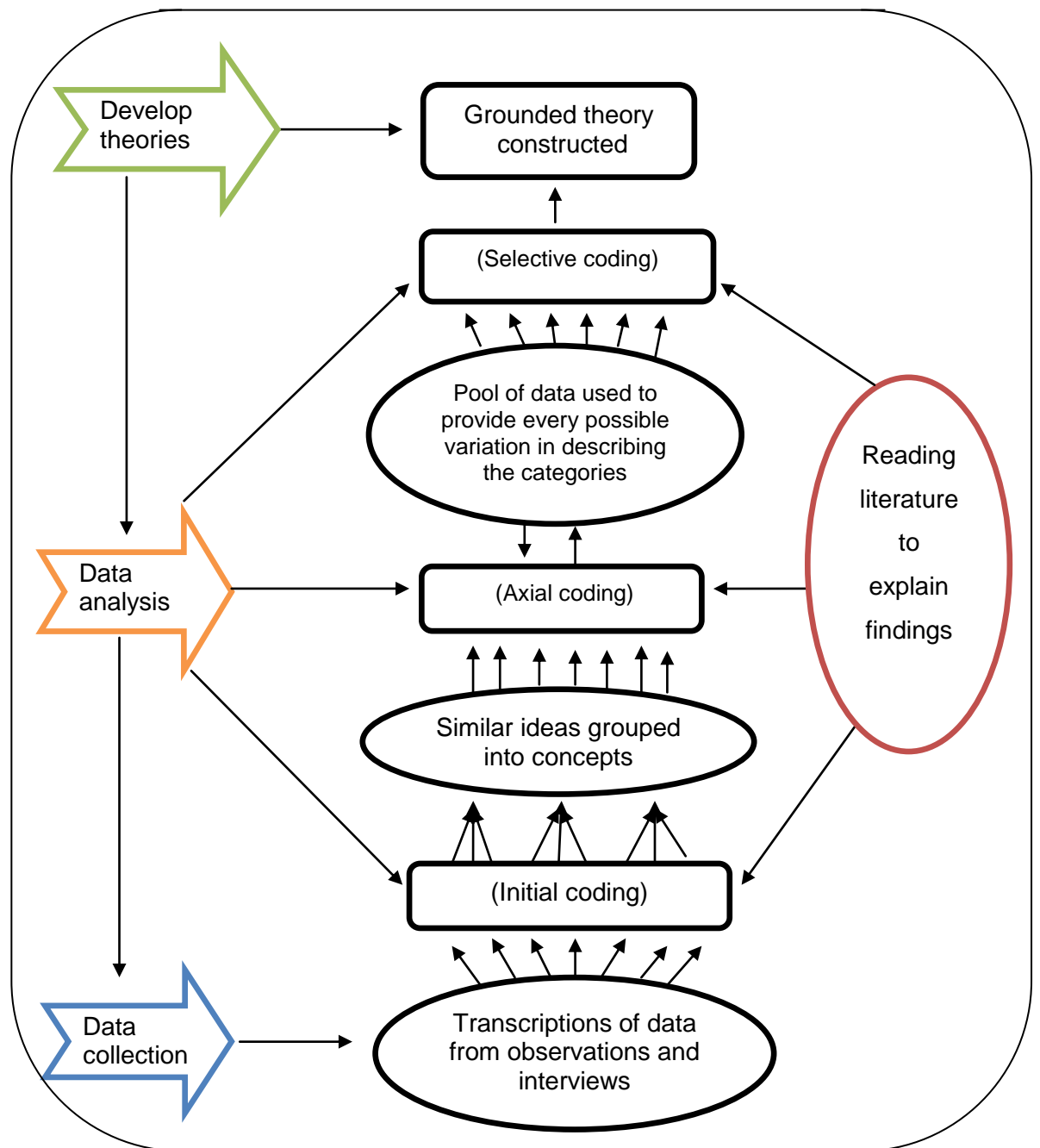
This study follows the methodological suggestions made in Charmaz's (2006) version of grounded theory in which she deviated from those of Glazer and Strauss (1967). In her version, Charmaz (2006:130) emphasized "the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants". Furthermore, the flexibility of Charmaz's version allows a literature review to increase the researcher's knowledge, identify gaps in the literature and enhance the research focus. Thus, the researcher's task according to Charmaz is "to find a central core category which is both at a high level of abstraction and grounded in (i.e. derived from) the data ... collected and analysed". Additionally, grounded theory assists the researcher in understanding the data through the use of codes and themes, where the analysis is an interplay between the researcher and the data (Bryman, 2008; Williman, 2001). Charmaz (2006) outlined a number of analytic steps incorporating initial or open and focused coding, and provided an overview of the axial and theoretical coding which is to be considered by the researcher throughout the process of data analysis.

### **5.11.1. PREPARING DATA FOR ANALYSIS**

The data collected was organized in order to prepare it for analysis. The recorded data files were listened to and transcribed, and were then read without trying to develop coding. All of the data was saved to the computer and read repeatedly in order to understand what the teachers actually did and what they stated that they knew about teaching and learning grammar. This was the initial stage of organising themes in the data. The second stage was to develop a primitive system of classification into which data was sorted to introduce broad regularities into the first themes. The data collected from observations and interview were kept in separate files for each teacher involved in this study. All the classroom observation records and interview transcriptions were written in the left-hand two-thirds of the page. The right hand space was used for the initial coding. This technique allowed the codes to be placed alongside the raw data (see appendix D). Back-up copies of all original materials were also made.

### **5.11.2. Data Analysis Process**

The grounded theory approach was applied to analyse twenty-four observations in investigating what the EFL teachers actually did while teaching English grammar, and eight semi-structured interviews were used to explore their knowledge about teaching and learning of English grammar. Due to the huge mass of data, I used the computer to facilitate the analysis. I used different colours for the codes obtained and highlighted the pieces of raw data from which these codes emerged (see appendix D). Three different types of coding, namely open or initial coding, axial coding and selective coding were employed (Robson, 2002 & Charmaz, 2006). 'Open coding' means that transcripts are read line-by-line and the concepts found in the data are identified and coded, 'Axial coding' means refining the concepts obtained through merging similar ones and discarding irrelevant ones; and 'Selective coding' means focusing on the main or central categories. Figure 5.4 shows the processes of analysis of the data used in this study:



**Figure: 5.4. Data Analysis Process**

### 5.11.3. Procedure of data analysis

During the analysis of the data, three main processes were adopted: recording and transcribing data, data management and coding. These processes provided descriptive as well as explanatory accounts. The process of analysing the data is described in detail below.



### **5. 11.3.1. Recording and transcribing Data**

Two high quality Olympus MP3 recorders were placed near the teacher, and notes were taken on what happened in the classroom. The observations and interviews were recorded because otherwise it would have been impossible to document everything accurately. Using both MP3 recordings and manual note taking methods helped to avoid any missing data. The recorded files were saved for listening to and transcribing later.

All of the observation and interview data were manually transcribed. The interview data were transcribed in Arabic and then translated into English. The transcripts were also checked by an experienced translator to achieve more accuracy and precision. All of his notes were considered when revising the translation. The transcribed data was also used as a source of direct quotations that might provide useful insights into the participants' points of view according to the teaching and learning of English grammar.

#### **5. 11.3.1.1. Issues with transcribing and managing data**

Transcribing the data was not easy because there was so much of it (Bryman, 2008). The audio-recording was used in "making notes from memory after the interviews (to avoid) would risk losing material" (Abdul-Rahman, 2011: 100). However, the audio-recording was sometimes not clear, particularly when the teacher was moving around the classroom. This problem was solved by using 2 MP3 recorders; one on the teacher's desk and another at the back of the classroom. It was also difficult to integrate the recorded data with written notes because the latter did not always include the timing of events, and the transcription of data was thus a very slow process. Written notes were considered by Bogdan and Bilden (1998: 108) as a "written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in qualitative study". However, this was a very beneficial process because the two types of data complemented each other, therefore

avoiding missing data. All of the data was manually transcribed, which gave me the opportunity to become familiar with it and to anticipate what might happen in other observations and interviews (Ali, 2008). Reading the transcribed data once was not enough. Repeated reading helped in identifying common themes or ideas and in constructing an initial list of codes. The data was checked iteratively and all of the observations and interviews were compared to discover similarities and differences and to “force the researcher to become intimately familiar with those data” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006: 158).

Furthermore, another challenge was related to managing the data to be ready for analysis. The transcribed data was not easy to summarise in order to avoid repetition, particularly when during subsequent analysis I found that I had eliminated important details. Condensing material was a useful and important part of the analysis (Abdul-Rahman, 2011). The data was classified in relation to pre-determined and emergent codes, but the classification process was very difficult. Coding allows one to define “what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means” (Charmaz, 2006: 46). A very useful practice was to mark each similar code which emerged under each theme with a specific colour to distinguish it from other codes. The relevant colours of codes were then grouped together to represent thematic topics and sub-topics. These colored codes were also reduced in number and reclassified in order to be clearer. The content of each colour-coded theme was then analysed and developed separately. This stage of analysis involved deciding upon the themes or concepts under which the data should be classified (see Appendices E, F and G). It was difficult to manage the data because there was much material with similar content or properties (Allan, 2003). This forced the researcher to focus more on each set of data to identify all of the relevant categories in the data.

#### **5.11.3.2. Coding data**

Any researcher who wishes to become an expert in qualitative analysis should learn how to generate the process of coding appropriately (Strauss, 1987).

Coding is “the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data. Through coding, you define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means” (Charmaz, 2006: 46). Coding was also defined by Glesne and Peshkin (1992) as a progression of organizing and defining collected data, such as observation notes and interview transcripts, that are appropriate to the research purpose. A microanalytic coding procedure was used to code word-by-word giving the precise meaning of words and sentences. However, Allan (2003: 2) argued that the microanalysis of data has disadvantages. It takes time because the interview transcription contains a lot of data and picking over words individually might lead to confusion. The three types of coding used in this study are initial, axial and selective coding:

### ***Initial coding***

Initial coding is the “process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:101). This process of coding started after transcribing and managing the observed data. The transcriptions were read carefully line by line several times to develop a complete understanding of the data and to create categories. The data were broken down and then grouped together. Initial coding took the form of naming a segment or line of data, using, where possible, words that reflect action gerunds (Glaser, 1978) (see Appendix E). This procedure was adopted to be able to focus on the processes inherent in the data instead of regular nouns, the use of which may lead to the researcher making too-early “conceptual leaps” (Charmaz, 2006:48). The process of open coding examined the data without any restrictions in its scope. Thus all data were accepted and none were excluded, which allowed for patterns to be found. This led to identification of common techniques or strategies of teaching English grammar employed by EFL Libyan teachers at secondary schools.

When the initial coding was completed for the twenty-four classroom observation sessions and eight semi-structured interview transcripts, a long list was compiled consisting of all initial codes (see appendix E)

### ***Axial coding***

Axial coding is the “process of relating categories to their sub-categories, termed ‘axial’ because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 123). This stage involved filtering and refining the list of open codes by deleting or combining some categories, followed by making connections between the categories and defining their properties. As a result of this, core categories began to emerge which highlighted areas such as what techniques or strategies EFL Libyan teachers employed in teaching grammar and what they knew about these techniques (see appendix F).

### ***Selective coding process***

Selective coding is the “process of integrating and refining the theory derived” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:143). This stage is the last stage in identifying the central categories. These categories were reviewed continually in order to establish the appropriate conceptual framework for the study. Six themes were developed during the analysis of observation data and six more themes were developed during the analysis of the semi-structured interviews (appendix G).

### ***Theoretical coding***

Theoretical coding is the stage where the researcher reaches a point of saturation. “Categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your theoretical categories” (Charmaz, 2006:113). This stage is considered to be both a strength and peculiarity of grounded theory (Mertens, 1998). Theoretical coding explores these saturated categories and provides analytical criteria which are useful in the development of conceptual relationships between categories and their relevance

to the literature (Glaser 1978, 1992). In the present study, theoretical coding was saturated after analysis of the twenty-four observation sessions and eight semi-structured interviews, and therefore it was decided that no further data were needed.

### ***Memo writing***

Writing memos was used to record the verbal and nonverbal behaviour of teachers and students in class, and these were then used in the analysis of the data. "Memo-writing constitutes a crucial method in grounded theory because it promotes you to analyse your data and codes early in the research" (Charmaz, 2006: 72). These memos allowed the collection of richer data than would otherwise have been the case. I also wrote memos during the analysis of data. These memos help me to be on the track of my analysis procedures.

#### **5.11.3.2.1. Issues with the coding of data**

Using grounded theory to analyse the data was a further challenge, since I did not in practice collect the data with a mind as empty 'as a blank sheet'. I had learned much from the literature and did have concepts in which I was interested. However, the proposal of grounded theory is that theories should be born entirely out of the data and, as such, no literature review should be performed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990); this was not so in this study where the principles of the theory were used but I had read the literature widely (Charmaz, 2006). The principles of grounded theory were considered to be appropriate because I wished to highlight particular aspects of my research topic. Various different issues were addressed when coding the observation and interview transcripts using a consistent procedure. These issues were very complex, particularly in cases where data were very similar with only slight differences. This resulted in long lists of codes.

One of the issues encountered concerned moving from one case to another to integrate codes so as to classify them under one label. However, further reading of other transcripts then led to fresh understanding (Marshall & Rossman, 2006),

which helped to produce new codes and refine the old ones. Designing an analytic framework was the solution found to reduce most of these problems related particularly when integrating codes, and the framework was considered as “simply the current version of the researcher's map of the territory being investigated” (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 20). The use of the analytic framework also helped in managing and integrating the findings so as to understand the relationships between categories, labels and themes (Borg, 2006). Thus, the data from each teacher was examined and analysed individually, as well as connections being made to other cases.

More specifically, the initial coding involved two main processes of conceptualizing and categorizing (Richards, 2005). Conceptualizing involved descriptions which summarised the events and labeled all chunks of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs which I believed to be key incidents, ideas, or events. These were then examined to identify similarities or differences. The conceptualization process was used to group similar items, to define properties and to give these items a label which represented a frequent link. This reduced the volume of data so as to be more manageable. The categorizing process then used the initial categories from the starting list (Gibbs, 2007). During this operation I faced various problems, especially when comparing events or categories which had been allocated the same label. However, this was a useful process because “comparing incidents of the same order between data spurs you to think analytically about them” (Charmaz, 2006:49). The categories which emerged had the potential to suggest explanations and therefore had more analytical power.

Working bottom-up was a difficult process when the concepts were gradually developed (see section 5.11.2). Thus, a mechanism was created to move from one category to another to develop the final list of categories. During selective coding I integrated and reviewed the categories in order to develop the theory from the coding process and check internal reliability (Abdul-Rahman, 2011).

This helped in checking the patterns of connections and relationships and classifying and linking them in order to develop explanations (Gibbs, 2007). However, it was difficult to integrate memos and categories from closely similar situations during the writing-up the analysis. The conclusions and explanations were grounded in order to make the reporting stage more valid and reliable, and Charmaz (2006:162) argued that grounded theory gives the researcher “a decided advantage when developing a completed report”. Therefore, I did my utmost to render the reported findings more coherent and to be connected in the form of a comprehensive account during the analysis.

## **5.12. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter described in detail the methodological framework of research design. It has presented the research questions, and evaluated the research design and epistemological framework used. Then, the methods of data collection employed were detailed and justified for their role investigating the EFL teachers' practices and their knowledge regarding the teaching and learning of English grammar. Issues of the validity and reliability of the study were discussed. A description of the study sample followed. A discussion of ethical considerations was then presented, and the processes of data analysis were detailed and justified.

The next chapter analyses the findings concerning the teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge about the teaching and learning of English grammar.

## CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the results gained from the participants, and integrates the data gathered in the whole study. The data accumulated from twenty-four sessions of observation of the teachers and eight individual interviews is then analysed to answer the research questions in this study (see sections 1.3 and 5.4). "Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992:127). The analysis is used "to help the account 'live' and communicate to the reader through the telling quotation or apt example" (Robson, 2002:456). Hence, data obtained from the observations and interviews are used to "form explanations and theories that are grounded in the details, evidence, and examples" (Rubin et al., 1995:4).

As the quality of data analysis is a basic factor in the success of any research, various methods such as content analysis, discourse analysis, text analysis, conversation analysis and grounded theory could all potentially be used. However, grounded theory was chosen as the most appropriate for this study, for several reasons as explained earlier (see section 5.11). Dawson (2002) argued that a literature review helps to explain emerging results and there is sufficient flexibility in qualitative data analysis for the researcher to select the method most appropriate for the research. Therefore the conceptual framework used to design the data analysis is explained here. Summaries relevant to each issue and the whole chapter are then given.

From the data, merged categories were generated which were revised and refined by discarding repetition and combining related data. The coding used for the analysis allowed the classification of data into categories directly related to teachers' use and knowledge of teaching English grammar. The analysis in this study is holistic and exploratory in nature, and the aim is to draw out as much



information as possible about how participants used particular strategies in teaching English grammar. As the data set consists of a large volume of words, a summary of findings is provided in the form of tables in order to clarify the main results. Strategies of teaching grammar were identified from participants' classroom practice, and significant comments are highlighted. Some quotations from the participants' classroom practice and interviews are also provided to facilitate the explanation of the strategies they used. These themes and categories were generated in several stages of initial coding, axial coding and selective coding. All of the themes and the codes selected have been analysed using the same procedures (see section 5.11.3).

## **6.2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF DATA ANALYSIS**

This section sets out the conceptual framework used and the findings obtained from twenty-four observation sessions and eight individual interviews with the eight teachers. Six main issues are described, as shown in table 6.1. Each issue is divided into three main sections according to the three research questions of the study (see sections 1.4 and 5.2) concerning teachers' classroom practice in teaching English grammar, their knowledge about teaching English grammar, and finally the relationship between these two variables. The classification of the teachers' classroom practices used was based on that proposed by Savage et al (2010), whose research focused only on presenting grammar, using grammatical terms, checking students' understanding of grammar and providing them with feedback. This study adds new variables to the classification of grammar teaching, such as the use of students' L1 and the teachers' psychology and behaviour during teaching. The study adds to knowledge in this field by exploring teachers' knowledge compared with the strategies that they use in their English grammar lessons. It is worth noting that this is the first research study to deal with the relationship between teachers' practice and knowledge in teaching grammar. In this regard, Borg (2006) postulates that further studies are required of the knowledge of teachers in general and their practice in teaching grammar in particular. The purpose of designing the framework below was to be able to

assimilate the data concerning the various issues involved in order for the analysis to be more manageable. The analytic process begins with what the teachers actually did in class (teachers' practice) and then proceeds to dig deeper to find out what they knew about teaching grammar (teachers' knowledge). The analysis also includes an in-depth analysis of the relationship between the teachers' practice and knowledge (see table 6.1 below).

**Table: 6.1. Conceptual Framework of Data Analysis**

Conceptual Framework of Data Analysis			
Issue	Teachers' Practice	Teachers' Knowledge	The Relationships
1	Presenting grammar elements	Teachers' knowledge about presenting grammar elements	The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about presenting grammar elements
2	Using metalanguage or grammatical terminology	Teachers' knowledge about using metalanguage	The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about using metalanguage
3	Error correction	Teachers' knowledge about correcting students' grammatical errors	The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about correcting students' grammatical errors
4	Providing feedback	Teachers' knowledge about providing feedback	The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about providing feedback
5	Using students L1	Teachers' knowledge about using students L1	The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about using students L1
6	Checking students understanding	Teachers' knowledge about checking students' understanding	The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about checking students understanding

### **6.2.1. Issue One: Teachers' Practice and Knowledge about Presenting Grammar and the Relationship between Them**

As stated in section 6.2, the analysis focuses on what the teachers actually did in class and what they knew about teaching grammar, in order to provide reasonable interpretations of the relationships between these variables. The themes obtained from the data of both the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews are provided in tables 6.2 and 6.3. Moreover examples and quotations from the actual data are used to exemplify and support the analysis.

#### **6.2.1.1. Presenting grammatical items**

The analysis of the data revealed two different sets findings here, in that certain teachers introduced their students to examples supported with pictures to explain new grammatical rules, whereas others teachers introduced their students directly to the new rules and then provided examples illustrating these rules. That is, the teachers adopted different methods in teaching grammar. While in the first the teachers provided examples before introducing the rule (inductive method), the others started by explaining the grammatical rule first (deductive method). These findings are explained in more detail below.

**Table: 6.2. Presenting Grammatical Items**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Presenting grammatical items</b>
<b>1</b>	Teacher presents rules and explains them (teacher-centred)
<b>2</b>	Directing students to deduce how the rule works
<b>3</b>	The classroom provides the context (student-centred)
<b>4</b>	Encouraging students to create new language

### ***Teacher presents rules and explains them (teacher-centred)***

In almost all of the classes observed, the teachers applied similar techniques in teaching grammar and all adopted the deductive method in their teaching. Lila, Omar, Kalied, Karima and Elham, for example, began their lessons by presenting the rules first and then asked students to practise them. That the deductive method was used in teaching grammar can also be inferred from Omar's practice in class, in that he started the lesson by saying, '*our rule today is about "used to" and "would"*'. Omar presented and explained the rule itself, but did not give time for students to use it in different situations. In Omar's class the students appeared to be unable to communicate freely.

### ***Directing students to deduce how the rule works***

During classes, the teachers tried to explain how the grammar rule worked by giving examples on the board and making the students think about them. Their aim was to provide more engagement in classroom activities. This was clearly seen in Manal's class. On the board she wrote several examples to introduce the new grammatical rule, and asked students to consider them. She said "*right, I want you to elicit the rule or the form on which I built these sentences*". But after three minutes students said "*We cannot imagine the rule, teacher*". The teacher seemed disappointed. She said "*Now look at the board*" and started writing the rule out herself. Manal's technique seemed to be useful because it aimed to increase the students' understanding of how they should exploit their grammatical knowledge. But the students failed to achieve this. This can be interpreted in terms of their lack of experience in using the language, which forced the teacher to change tack by presenting the grammar lesson deductively.

### ***The classroom provides the context (student-centred)***

In Manal, Sami, Tariq, and Elham's classes, the inductive method in teaching grammar was observed. They all started their lessons by giving examples and in many cases these examples were supported by pictures or diagrams to introduce the new grammatical items inductively in stimulating the students to recognize

the new rule by themselves. A concrete example of this can be found in Tariq's class. This teacher wrote some examples on the board and asked his students if they had any questions about them. The rule was about how to use 'would' and 'should'. The students participated when they expressed their thoughts about the form of the rule. By using of this type of presentation the teacher helped the students to understand the rule by giving them further explanation. He said "*in this practice you will learn the correct way to express yourselves about something you wish for in life, and you should note that when the first sentence is positive our wish will be negative, and vice versa*". The teacher in this case gave the students some key words regarding the rule which seemed to be very useful for them in discovering the rule by themselves.

### ***Encouraging students to create new language***

Throughout the classroom observation the teachers were observed to encourage students to construct new sentences using the new grammatical rules in different activities. This led to more active interaction between the teacher and students or amongst students themselves. This was observed in Tariq, Sami, Manal and Elham's classes. As an example, Sami motivated his students to create new sentences based on particular pictures. In order to provide more assistance to his students, he raised four questions for them to consider when talking about the pictures. Sami seemed to be aiming to make connections between the students' ideas about the pictures and the questions on the board, encouraging them to use new language forms by describing the pictures. In this case the teacher appeared to be a guide, encouraging the students to be more pro-active and communicative throughout the process of constructing the sentences.

To sum up, the teachers adopted both deductive and inductive methods in teaching grammar. Similar rules in applying deductive methods were observed among the teachers, whereas differences between them were also observed whenever inductive methods were practised.

### 6.2.1.2. Teachers' knowledge about presenting grammatical items

The findings obtained from the eight teachers interviewed revealed that most of them seemed to have sufficient background knowledge about teaching English grammar. The four themes identified are shown in table 6.3 and analysed below.

**Table: 6.3. Teachers' knowledge of presenting grammatical items**

Theme	Teachers' knowledge of presenting grammatical items
1	Awareness of presenting grammar items deductively and inductively
2	Deductive and inductive teaching methods and teachers' preferences
3	The effect of teaching and learning experience in presenting English grammar
4	The effectiveness of grammatical knowledge and experience in presenting English grammar

#### ***Awareness of presenting grammar items deductively and inductively***

The analysis of the data revealed the following findings. Three teachers (Manal, Kalied and Tariq) were not aware of the teaching of grammar in terms of inductive and deductive methods. They moved from one to another haphazardly. For example, in response to the question concerning what he knew about deductive and inductive teaching methods, Tariq said *'I have no idea about these two methods of presenting grammar, 'deductive and inductive'*. The teacher was completely unaware of the terms. According to the data obtained from the factual questionnaire, this teacher is categorized as one of the more experienced teachers (see table 5.1).

On the other hand, five teachers (Sami, Lila, Elham, Karima and Omar) were aware of teaching grammar deductively and inductively. What is interesting here is that most these teachers were categorized among the less experienced teachers (see table 5.1). Elham, who had seven years' experience in teaching,

stated, *“The deductive presentation is direct and the teacher presents the rules to students and gives them examples and the inductive presentation is the opposite”*. It can be concluded from this quotation that she had sufficient knowledge about the deductive and inductive methods of teaching grammar.

### ***Deductive and inductive teaching methods and teachers’ preferences***

During the interviews the teachers expressed different attitudes towards employing deductive and inductive methods in teaching grammar. Four teachers (Manal, Sami, Elham and Tariq) were very interested in teaching grammar inductively. For instance, Tariq was convinced that this method would be more beneficial for students. In this regard he said, *“it is more useful for grammatical rules to be discovered by the students, and they would be remembered better than if the rules directly explained by the teacher”*.

In contrast, other teachers (Lila, Karima, Omar and Kalied) preferred to adopt deductive methods in teaching grammar rules. Interestingly they expressed the same ideas as those who preferred teaching grammar inductively. They also stated that this method was more useful for students. For example, Lila said that *“I always teach the new grammatical items deductively because they do not lead to worse results, but rather to the same or better outcomes.”* This idea was also supported by Karima when she said that, *“progress takes place only when the teacher presents the rule and gives examples to explain it, and then asks the students to do the same.”*

Furthermore, Omar defended this position when he said in his interview that: *‘presenting grammar inductively takes time, and our time is limited; also it needs students with near-perfect English language ability to do that’*. He did not believe that learning was enhanced if the students were left to discover the rules by themselves. This indicates that the teacher might be influenced by his own previous teachers who had taught English in the deductive way, although his reason was that insufficient time was available.

### ***The effect of teaching and learning experience on presenting English grammar***

The analysis of the data confirmed the impact of the teachers' teaching and learning background in teaching grammar. It is worth noting that teachers' learning background refers to the time they had spent in studying English (see see table 5.1). According to the data, there was almost complete consensus among teachers that their prior knowledge of teaching and learning had helped them to teach grammar. In this regard, Manal said, *"I am totally dependent upon my prior knowledge of teaching and learning, because all aspects or elements of language were related and complemented each other and needed to be considered when planning my teaching"*.

### ***The effectiveness of grammatical knowledge in teaching English grammar***

Almost all of the teachers were aware of the influence that grammatical background knowledge might have on their behaviour in class, as Elham commented *"grammatical knowledge helps me to build my sentences and produce the language accurately"*. This means that this teacher was aware that a knowledge of grammar is the backbone of the language. Lila was the only teacher who said that previous grammatical knowledge did not have too much of an effect on her teaching of English grammar. She said that, *"Teaching a language does not depend on a knowledge of grammatical rules only. It depends on creating an atmosphere where teachers can communicate and use their knowledge"*. This suggests that grammatical knowledge itself is useless unless the teacher establishes an encouraging and supporting atmosphere where there are more opportunities to transfer grammatical knowledge to students via communicative language use.

In summary, the teachers had different levels of understanding and preferences and different reasons to justify their practice when teaching English grammar. As regards awareness of presenting grammar items deductively and inductively,



different attitudes were expressed towards teaching grammar in this sample of teachers. While some teachers supported teaching grammar deductively, others preferred to teach it inductively. Furthermore, the teachers were convinced that their experience in teaching and learning had a direct influence on their methods of teaching grammar. Regarding the effectiveness of grammatical knowledge in teaching, two different attitudes were expressed; while the former agreed to its influence, the latter minimized its effectiveness on teaching grammatical rules.

### 6.2.1.3. The relationship between teachers' practices and their knowledge about presenting grammatical items

The analysis of data obtained from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews revealed different relationships between what the teachers actually did while presenting the new grammatical items and what they stated they knew about the relevant issues. The uniqueness of this study that it is the first to investigate this question (see section 4.6). These relationships are analysed below in the order shown in table 6.4.

**Table: 6.4. The relationship between the teachers' practice and knowledge of presenting grammar**

The Relationship			Teachers							
N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Congruence	Incongruence (x)	Manal	Kalid	Tariq	Sami	Lila	Elham	Karima	Omar
1	Teacher presented grammar deductively and inductively but was not aware of it		x	x	x	-	-	-	-	-
2	Teacher presented grammar inductively and had knowledge about it		-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-
3	Teacher did not present grammar inductively although had knowledge about it		-	-	-	-	x	-	X	x
4	Teacher presented grammar deductively and had knowledge about it		-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

***Teacher presented grammar deductively and inductively but was not aware of it***

There was some incongruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge about presenting English grammar lessons, particularly in the data collected from Manal, Kalid and Tariq. The interesting thing was that these teachers did not know about deductive and inductive methods, although they were already using both in their classes. As an example, Manal was observed to present new grammatical items inductively through providing several examples and encouraging the students to elicit these items by themselves. Unexpectedly, the results obtained from the interview indicated that this teacher was not fully aware of the concept of teaching grammar deductively or inductively. What is surprising here is that those teachers were classified as more experienced teachers (see table 5.1). The fact that those teachers applied deductive and inductive teaching methods despite not being aware of them can be attributed partly to the lack of in-service training courses, although there may be many other reasons.

***Teacher presented grammar inductively and s/he had knowledge about it***

According to the analysis, the teachers Sami and Elham adopted a distinctive role in their teaching. They were the only teachers who were observed to teach the grammar items purely inductively, and in the interviews they expressed different levels of background knowledge about the advantages of teaching grammar in an inductive way. The congruence between their knowledge and practice in teaching grammar can be confirmed by Sami's contribution, *"I use communicative approach to teach grammar, I always introduce students to a dialogue and help them to discover the new grammatical rules. I believe this helps them to understand grammar rules better and also helps them to improve their language level"*. These teachers tended to engage their students in classroom activities through adopting inductive methods in their teaching. It is

worth noting that these teachers had different levels of experience, in that Sami was more experienced than Elham.

***Teacher did not present grammar inductively although s/he had knowledge about it***

The analysis of the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews indicated incongruence between how the teachers taught grammar and what they knew about teaching methods in the cases of Lila, Karima and Omar. For instance, Lila, who was categorized as a less experienced teacher (see section 5.6), expressed a marked awareness of teaching grammar both deductively and inductively in her interview. However, during the classroom observation, she restricted herself to deductive methods. Throughout the three observation sessions, she taught grammar as a product, starting by presenting the forms of the rules first and focusing on giving the students a clear and explicit framework for the target language.

***Teacher presented grammar deductively and s/he had knowledge about it***

According to the findings from observation and interview, there is apparent congruence between what the five of the teachers actually did in their classes and their knowledge about teaching grammar items. Sami, Lila, Elham, Karima and Omar were observed to present the grammar items first. In their responses to the question of why they adopted this method, they confirmed that this was the best approach for their students. This can be deduced from Karima's words, "*it is better for grammatical rules to be presented by the teacher because students are used to this method and depend on their teachers in many ways*". More to the point, Karima seemed to be convinced that student progress took place only when the teacher presented the rule and then gave examples to explain it. In this case, Karima apparently did not give her students the opportunity to take a positive or creative role in class. Her main concern was to make sure that the students understood the new grammatical rules.

In conclusion, the analysis of the data reveals four types of relationship in the context of presenting English grammar, each of which has its own value. More explicitly, two indicated congruence between practice and knowledge while the others revealed incongruence (see table 6.4).

### **6.2.2. Issue Two: Teachers’ Practice and Knowledge about Using Metalanguage, and their Relationship**

This section analyses the data obtained from teachers’ observed classes and their semi-structured interviews regarding the teaching of metalanguage. The findings are presented in tables 6.5 and 6.6. The findings from both observation and interviews are integrated at the end of the discussion in order to determine the relationship between them as shown in table 6.7. A summary of the main findings on this issue are also given.

#### **6.2.2.1. Teachers’ practice of metalanguage or grammatical terminology**

Two different patterns were found in teachers’ classes. Five teachers taught metalanguage or grammatical terminology as an end in itself (that is, deductively), whereas three teachers were observed to teach grammatical terminology as a way to help students understand how the English language works (teaching inductively). These findings are analysed in more detail below.

**Table: 6.5. Teachers’ use of metalanguage or grammatical terminology**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Teachers use of metalanguage or grammatical terminology</b>
<b>1</b>	Introducing grammar forms only
<b>2</b>	Focusing the form of the rule in advance
<b>3</b>	Teaching grammatical forms in order to create new ones
<b>4</b>	Explaining the order of sentences
<b>5</b>	Seeking to connect form and usage
<b>6</b>	Using grammatical terms to describe a process

### ***Introducing grammar forms only***

During classroom observation the teachers were seen to introduce new grammatical items. This technique of teaching was used by all the teachers in similar ways but to different degrees. They started by identifying the names of the new grammatical forms themselves (teaching metalanguage deductively). This led to students knowing the differences between grammatical items such as verbs, nouns and pronouns. In his second lesson, Kalied, for example, taught metalanguage as an end itself when he asked students to complete a table which had two columns with different forms of grammar to help students to understand the structure and forms of these grammatical terms.

Verb	Noun
hope	
fear	
Anticipate	
dread	
expect	

This method of teaching seemed to be deductive because all it led to was students knowing the difference between the grammatical forms. It encouraged students to be able to recognize and memorize grammatical forms. It is also led to the ability to check if students knew the differences between verbs and nouns.

### ***Focusing on the form of the rule in advance***

In almost all the classes observed, the teachers were noted to explain the form of the rules. They appeared to want to make sure that the students understood the difference between the rules or items before explaining them (teaching deductively). Lila, Karima, Omar, Kalied and Elham used this method, and Omar, for example, introduced students to the form of the rule of 'the third conditional if' in advance, saying:

*the rule is: if + past perfect + would have + past participle, and the form of the past perfect, as I have explained before, is: noun or pronoun + have + the verbs in past participle. For example: 'I had gone'.*

Here the teacher introduced the form of the rule before explaining or clarifying any further connection between rule structures. This may only help students to build their knowledge of grammar and to be aware of its advantages, such as identifying new grammatical items in order to recognize them.

### ***Teaching grammatical forms in order to create new ones***

The data revealed that two teachers (Karima and Lila) out of the eight were observed to focus on differences between regular and irregular verbs in the English language as a form only (teaching metalanguage deductively). This way of teaching may lead students to learn the new forms, and to understand all of the grammatical features related to them. Karema, for example, asked the students to concentrate on this issue, and said:

*Students, listen, if we look at the sentences we will see that passive sentences in the past simple are made with the past tense of be + the past participle. Therefore, you should know irregular and regular verbs; however, the past simple of the verb form is the same as the verb form in the past participle'.*

The teacher apparently focuses on form and structure rather than on meaning. This technique of teaching seemed to aim to lead students to construct language correctly in the future but it may not help them to perform any interactive activities.

### ***Explaining the order of sentences in an inductive way***

In Manal, Elham, Tariq, Sami and Kalied's classes, it was observed that metalanguage was taught by explaining the order of sentences. This was apparent when they gave their students a chance to create and think of what sentences should consist of (teaching metalanguage inductively). The teachers' plan seemed to be to help students to distinguish between the rules and how they use them. Manal, for instance, wrote on the board: *'the writer wrote the play.*

*The play was interesting.*’ She said that “*the writer is the ‘subject’, ‘wrote’ is a ‘verb’ and ‘play’ is the ‘object’*”. Then she wrote on the board, *‘The writer wrote the play which was interesting’*. Then she drew a circle around the word ‘which’ but omitted the word ‘play’ from the second sentence. After that she said, “*we can use relative clauses to give extra information. A relative clause (pronoun) can refer to a previous noun, place, thing, time or person*”. This shows that this teacher focused on form and structure and on meaning.

### ***Seeking to connect form and usage***

During their classes, the teachers Tariq, Manal, Elham and Sami were observed to use different techniques which aimed to teach metalanguage in order to help students to understand how English works, and in order to use their grammatical knowledge in different situations (teaching metalanguage inductively). For example, Manal introduced the grammatical terms ‘subject’, ‘active’ and ‘passive’, and she also gave students some examples to help them to use these terms appropriately. She focused on both form and meaning at the same time, as shown when she wrote some facts on the board, and under each fact gave an example as follows:

1. I am a meteorologist. Every day I check the air pressure.
2. Air pressure is important for meteorologists. It is checked every day.
3. The air pressure is checked every day. (Someone checks it, but
4. we are not interested in who checks it).

This way of teaching helped students to understand the rule in an indirect way, having initially withheld the names of the grammatical terms and the rule. The extract above shows that in the first example the teacher used the active form to say what the subject does. In the second example, she used the passive form to say what happens to the subject, and in the third example she used the passive to indicate that the person or thing doing the action is unknown or unimportant.

### ***Using grammatical terms to describe a process***

In the classes observed, using different verb forms to describe processes was seen to occur. This may encourage students to understand the rule structure and how to use it in different situations (teaching metalanguage inductively). This technique of teaching was used only by Tariq. He wrote on the board:

Water is passed through the coffee. Next, the liquid is pumped through tubes at high pressure. Then the liquid is boiled. After that, sugar, salt and other chemicals are added. Next, the liquid is put into cylindrical driers and it is dried at 250 degrees. This turns the liquid into a powder. Finally, the coffee is collected and put into jars.

The teacher's aim was assumed to be to help students learn the form of the present passive and how to use it in different situations. This also led students to distinguish between the active and the passive forms. By adopting activities such as this students may understand how to connect words to create sentences full of meaning that they can communicate to others. In other words, this kind of activity helps students understand that grammatical terminology never stops there, but that the student may call upon it when they use language. This was clear when the teachers also asked students to describe how to make coffee to each other.

To conclude, the data confirmed that the teachers used different techniques and ways of teaching metalanguage, whether as an end itself or in teaching metalanguage or grammatical terminology in different ways in order to help their students understand grammatical rules. The teachers who taught metalanguage deductively failed to make any type of connection between language forms or grammatical structures and communicative skills. On the other hand, the teachers who taught new grammatical terms inductively tended to create connections between form and meaning by presenting interactive activities.



### 6.2.2.2. Teachers' knowledge of using metalanguage

The analysis of data obtained from the semi-structured interviews revealed that the teachers had various levels of knowledge about teaching metalanguage. They said that they taught it in different ways and for different reasons. The four themes shown in table 6.6 are analysed in more detail below.

**Table: 6.6. Teachers' knowledge of using metalanguage**

Theme	Teachers' knowledge of using metalanguage
1	Knowing the meaning of metalanguage
2	Awareness of the importance of teaching metalanguage
3	Teachers' knowledge about using metalanguage deductively and inductively
4	Rationales of using metalanguage and of their ways of teaching it

#### ***Knowing the meaning of metalanguage terminology***

The analysis of the data demonstrates that four teachers, Manal, Kalied, Tariq and Sami, were not aware of the term metalanguage. It is interesting that these teachers were categorized as more experienced teachers (see table 5.1), and therefore would be expected to be more likely to know it. Manal, for example said that "I had never heard this word before today". On the other hand, four other teachers, Lila, Elham, Karima, and Omar were aware of the term. These teachers were categorized as less experienced teachers. These findings are unexpected, but the reason could be that the term metalanguage itself is a modern term and more experienced teachers had not been exposed to it before, whereas those who were less experienced had. This lack of knowledge led to deficiencies in the teachers' practice in teaching grammar. In other words, the fact that teachers did not know the term metalanguage was assumed to be as a result of a gap in their professional knowledge and development as teachers.

### ***Awareness of the importance of metalanguage***

The data obtained from the interviews revealed that all of the teachers agreed that students would understand grammar better if they learned grammatical terminology. These teachers assumed that they understood the importance of teaching grammatical terms to students even though they may have used different words, but conveyed the same meaning when talking about metalanguage or grammatical terminology. In her interview, Manal, for example, said that:

*teaching grammatical terminology is important because learners need to know the parts of speech and the form of English sentences if they are to build something similar when they are writing or speaking.*

It seems that this teacher was aware of how teaching metalanguage or grammatical terminology to students is important. This indicated that she would like to do this in her classes as the basis of teaching English grammar. Teachers' awareness of metalanguage and knowing how to teach it in different ways may lead students to understand grammar in a better way because they know how to deal with grammatical aspects in different situations.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about teaching metalanguage deductively and inductively***

The analysis revealed that the eight teachers interviewed said that they used metalanguage in different ways, some of them as an end itself (deductively), and others to facilitate learning the language (inductively). Some of these teachers said that they focused on teaching grammar in terms of form and function rather than meaning, although they knew that grammatical terminology should not be taught only as an end in itself. For example, Kalied said that, "*students always seek more information about which rule this belongs to, or that, and vice versa using the terminology to know the difference between the forms*". This teacher seemed to have knowledge of how to teach metalanguage deductively. In contrast, Karima said that:

*it is perfectly possible to find a word that could be used in different situations because students could not use their grammatical knowledge unless they were given every opportunity to learn a second language.*

The teacher seems aware that students will learn better if they first understand grammatical terminology, because by that time they will already have gathered enough knowledge of the language to help them understand grammar properly.

### ***Rationales for using metalanguage and their ways of teaching it***

The data obtained from the teachers revealed that the teachers had different views regarding the reasons why they taught metalanguage and why they used particular methods. Firstly, the semi-structured interviews revealed that all of the teachers agreed that it is essential to teach metalanguage. Elham, for example, said that *“students could not use the grammatical rules when they speak unless they understood the metalanguage”*. This indicates that this teacher knew that teaching grammatical terminology inductively is the best way to enable learners to use the language.

Secondly, the findings regarding teachers' responses to the question, *“why do you teach metalanguage in the way you do?”* revealed several reasons for teaching new grammatical terminology in the ways that they did. According to the teachers' responses, these reasons were related to the lack of school facilities or training sessions and deficiencies in school management. Lila, Omar, Karima, and Kalied complained about the lack of facilities. For example, Omar said that *“I need some grammar books with a guide and need to watch videos or TV learning programme to help me to teach metalanguage in the right way”*. This indicates that the teacher was not satisfied with his method of teaching.

The findings also revealed that all of the teachers suffered from a lack of training. For example, Lila said that *“it is necessary for teachers to undertake training sessions to find out how to deal with new syllabi and achieve the objective of ensuring student communicative competence”*. This teacher seemed convinced

that teachers would never be able to teach properly grammar in general and metalanguage in particular without regular training.

Furthermore, Manal, Elham, Tariq, Kalid and Sami complained about mismanagement in their schools. Elham, for example was disappointed about her head teachers and inspectors' behaviours when they excluded staff from training sessions. She said that:

*I have been excluded as they told us the training sessions were only for the weaker teachers. This decision created a problem for those teachers who were nominated for training, because the head made a list of their names and put that list on the notice board. This indicated that the named teachers were weak and not able to teach properly.*

This shows an obvious disagreement between Elham as a teacher and her school management. It confirms that the teachers in her school suffered from bad decisions made by the head of the school. This issue was also raised by Kalid, who had encountered similar problems, and he said, "*The head has no idea about English as a subject, nor what teachers of English in the school require*".

In summary, the findings demonstrate that all of the teachers had knowledge of teaching metalanguage or grammatical terms, but as individuals their knowledge and attitudes varied somewhat. Most of the teachers said that they started with the form, and then went through the functions. In this case it would be difficult for students to reach the meaning by themselves, which might be possible only if it was explained by teachers in the lesson. Teachers used metalanguage because they were aware of its importance in teaching grammar. They also stated several reasons why they taught it in the way that they did.

#### **6.2.2.3. The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about using metalanguage**

The analysis of the data revealed different relationships of congruence and incongruence between what teachers actually did during the teaching of metalanguage and what they stated they knew about it. These findings are shown in the following table 6.7.

**Table: 6.7. The relationships between teachers practice and their knowledge about using metalanguage**

Relationship			Teachers							
N	☑ Congruence	Incongruence (x)	Manal	Kalid	Tariq	Sami	Lila	Elham	Karima	Omar
1	Teacher did not know the meaning of the term metalanguage, and taught it		x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-
2	Teacher knew the meaning of the term metalanguage, and taught it		-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Teacher introduced grammar forms in advance and knew about their importance		-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Teacher did not introduce grammar forms in advance and knew about their importance		x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-
5	Teacher focused on both form and usage together and knew about their importance		✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
6	Teacher did not focus on both form and usage together and knew about their importance		-	x	-	-	x	x	x	x
7	Teacher explained the order of sentences in an inductive way and knew about its importance		✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
8	Teacher did not explain the order of sentences in an inductive way and knew about its importance		-	-	-	-	x	-	x	x
9	Teacher presented grammatical forms in order to create new ones, and knew about it		-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-
10	Teacher did not present grammatical forms in order to create new ones, and knew about it		x	x	x	x	-	x	-	x
11	Teacher used grammatical terms to describe a process, and knew about it		-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
12	Teacher did not use grammatical terms to describe a process, and did not know about it		✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

***Teacher did not know the meaning of the term metalanguage, and taught it***

The findings obtained from classroom observation and semi-structured interviews showed incongruence between how some teachers taught grammatical terminology and what they knew about teaching it. These teachers were Manal, Kalied, Tariq and Sami, who were categorized as more experienced teachers (see table 5.1). It was interesting that none of the experienced teachers were aware of the meaning of the word metalanguage, although they already used grammatical terminology in one way or another in their teaching. This indicates that these teachers were not up to date with grammatical terms.

***Teacher knew the meaning of the term metalanguage, and taught it***

The data also revealed that there was congruence between Lila, Karima, Elham and Omar's practice and their knowledge regarding teaching grammatical terminology. These teachers were aware of the meaning of the word metalanguage and they taught it, although they were categorized as less experienced teachers (see table 5.1). This indicates that these teachers were up to date with grammatical terms.

***Teacher introduced grammar forms in advance and knew about their importance***

There was some apparent congruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge about teaching metalanguage in lessons, especially in the data obtained from Elham, Karima, Omar and Lila. These teachers were observed to introduce grammar forms first. They gave several reasons as to why they adopted this mode of teaching, although they were also aware that there are other ways which are much better than the ones they applied. Omar said that *"the head of school does not pay attention to the teachers' motivation and whether they like teaching grammar or not. Teachers must teach whatever the head asks them to"*. This confirms that the teacher was unhappy with his school management because he was forced by the head of the school to teach grammar even though he was not interested in it. This indicates that Omar did not like

teaching English grammar because he assumed he did not have enough knowledge to help him apply what he knew about teaching grammar forms. Such a situation may have a negative impact on the teacher's practice in teaching metalanguage. More to the point, Lila complained about the school's admission policy, when she said that "*students are admitted because this is the only school nearby, not because students have any particular desire to study English*". This causes a major problem for teachers who must deal with very weak students which makes their job very difficult. Different levels of English in the same class may confuse and hinder the teachers from doing their best when they teach grammar.

***Teacher did not introduce grammar forms in advance and knew about their importance***

The process of examining the findings obtained from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews revealed incongruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge about the ways to teach metalanguage. Manal, Tariq, Kaled and Sami did not introduce grammar forms first when they were observed. In their interviews they all agreed that introducing grammar forms first is not useful way for students. For example, Sami said: "*I presented the grammar forms before to students but I found that they understood them but they were unable to use them*". This indicates that this teacher was aware of the importance of teaching metalanguage inductively.

***Teacher focused on both form and meaning together and knew about its importance***

According to the analysis of the data, the teachers Manal, Tariq and Sami were the only teachers who were observed to teach metalanguage inductively, and during the interviews they expressed their knowledge about its importance. Congruence was thus shown between these teachers' practice and their knowledge about teaching metalanguage in this way. This was confirmed by Tariq: "*I teach my students the elements of grammar such as nouns, pronouns,*

*adjectives and so on in different ways because I want them to build their knowledge of the grammatical system and to be able to use that framework when they wish to use such terms in different situations.* It is apparent that this teacher was trying to say that focusing on both form and meaning will help students to use the language itself, or at least to guide them in understanding the rule.

***Teacher did not focus on both form and usage together and knew about its importance***

There was incongruence between practice and knowledge about connecting both form and usage together, particularly in data collected from Elham, Karima, Omar and Lila. These teachers were observed to focus only on form (teaching deductively), but in their interviews they expressed their knowledge about the importance of usage too. In her contribution, Lila said: *Teaching grammar through form and structure and meaning in the same time much better than focusing only on form because they all completed each other*".

***Teacher explained the order of sentences in an inductive way and knew about its importance***

The data revealed that there was congruence between Manal, Kalied, Tariq, Sami and Elham's practice and their knowledge about teaching metalanguage through explaining sentence order. These teachers were observed to explain the order of sentences in their classes and they stated that they knew the importance of this. This is apparent in Elham's words: *"I teach students to know how they understand the sentences' order to help them to identify the difference between the grammatical terms and to enable them to apply these forms when necessary in context"*. This indicates that this teacher can be assumed to have knowledge about teaching metalanguage in different ways, when she said that such that knowledge helps students to understand the structure of the language and grasp its meaning properly.



***Teacher did not explain the order of sentences in an inductive way and knew about its importance***

The findings show that three teachers, Lila, Omar, and Karima, were not observed to explain the order of sentences in their classes although they all said that they knew about it. This indicates that there was incongruence between their practice and knowledge regarding this technique of teaching. Omar's reason was clear when he said: *"It is difficult for students to follow some inductive activities in the textbook which forced me to change my teaching method to be more deductive"*. It was apparent that this teacher did his utmost to be more inductive with students but that he assumed he had failed.

***Teacher presented grammatical forms in order to create new ones, and knew about it***

The findings gained from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews indicated congruence between two of the teachers' practice and their knowledge about adopting these kinds of teaching strategies. These teachers were Lila and Karima. Lila, for instance, said that *"it is difficult for students to learn a language without knowing how to produce new grammatical terms from old ones"*. This indicated that students cannot use the language correctly unless they know how to create new language from existing grammatical knowledge. It is apparent also that Lila was trying to say that this strategy of teaching grammatical terminology will help learners to use the language itself in one way or another, or at least guide them to understand the rules.

***Teacher did not present grammatical forms in order to create new ones, and knew about it***

The analysis of data show that there was incongruence between Manal, Tariq, Kalied, Sami, Omar and Elham's practice and their knowledge about teaching grammatical forms in order to create new ones. These teachers were categorized as among both more and less experienced teachers (see table 5.1). They were not observed to teach grammatical forms in order to create new terms in their classes, although they said in their interviews that they knew about this technique

of teaching metalanguage. They all had similar reasons, Omar for instance, said that, *“I did not teach students such this activity because students will get confuses between the similar grammar forms”*. The teacher’s justification was not assumed to be objective because it is difficult to generalize about a lack of understanding among all students.

***Teacher used grammatical terms to describe a process, and knew about it***

The findings revealed that only Tariq used grammatical forms to describe processes in his classes, and in the interview he stated that he knew about this. This indicated that there was congruence between his practice and knowledge about using such inductive activities to teach metalanguage. This can be confirmed by Tariq’s contribution, *“I create new activities such as describing a process in order to help students to understand how to practise and use the grammatical terms”*. The teacher’s aim was to create situations through which grammatical rules can be contextualized to help students to be able to use them in similar situations outside the classroom.

***Teacher did not use grammatical terms to describe a process, and did not know about it***

There was congruence between practice and knowledge regarding teaching grammatical terms through describing a process in Manal, Sami, Kalied, Lila, Elham, Omar and Karima. These teachers did not use this technique of teaching in their classes when they were observed, and they all expressed in their interviews that they had no idea about it. For example, Karima said that, *“I do not know how to teach grammatical terms through describing process technique but I know how to use other teaching techniques.”* This teacher seemed to be unaware of the possibility of creating activities which would lead students to use grammar forms in different situations.

To sum up, the analysis of the data revealed twelve types of relationship between teachers’ practice and knowledge regarding teaching metalanguage or grammatical terminology. These relationships were significant for different

reasons with several kinds of incongruence and congruence being apparent (see table 6.7).

### **6.2.3. Issue Three: Teachers' Use and Knowledge of Error Correction and their Relationship**

The analysis in this section focuses on the three aspects of the treatment of student grammatical errors; the teachers' practice, their knowledge and the relationship between them. The themes found in the data from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews are presented in tables 6.8-6.9. In order to enhance the presentation of the analysis, examples and quotations from the data are provided.

#### **6.2.3.1. Teachers' use of error correction**

The analysis of data yields two main sets of findings. These findings were gained after merging the revised categories which were developed by discarding repeated ones and merging related ones. This produced two main categories. The first is called 'How teachers correct students' grammatical errors' while the other is summarised as 'At what time teachers corrected students' grammatical errors'. Both categories were grouped under the major theme which was called 'error correction techniques'. These findings are analysed in more detail below.

**Table: 6. 8. Teachers' use of grammatical error correction**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Teachers error correction techniques</b>
<b>1</b>	Using direct correction immediately
<b>2</b>	Correcting errors while students were speaking
<b>3</b>	Giving students the opportunity to think
<b>4</b>	Correcting errors after students had finished speaking
<b>5</b>	Giving chances to choose the correct answer
<b>6</b>	Giving a chance for peer-correction

### ***Using direct correction***

The analysis of the data revealed that all of the teachers in one way or another employed the technique of the direct correction of grammar errors in their classes. It was most widespread among teachers in different schools, although used at different frequencies depending on the nature of the activities. This may not allow the students to think about the right answer. The extract below which was taken from Omar's class reflects this finding.

T: Who can tell us the correct verb of the sentence one when we change the whole sentence into passive?  
SS: I teacher, I teacher  
T: Yes Sami  
S: the verb 'use' will change into 'uses'.  
T: No the right answer is 'used'.  
T: Now Libna, can you tell us the correct answer of the verb in the sentence two? Libna changed the verb 'invent' to 'inventing'.  
T: That is wrong: the correct answer is 'has invented'. After that,  
T: Who can change the verb in example three?  
A male student said: Yes, I can.  
T: Ok  
S: The correct answer is 'has sent' and not 'send'.  
T: Well done, that is right. Thank you, Ashraf.

The teacher was seen to correct the student(s) directly by himself without waiting for their self or peer-correction, as can be seen in line eleven. The teacher here did not offer students solutions or at least give them the chance to think more about what the right answer is. This indicated that the teacher aimed to teach grammar deductively.

### ***Correcting errors while students were speaking***

During the classes researched, the teachers were observed to correct their students' grammar errors while the students were speaking. They all interrupted students when they heard grammar errors. This occurred at different frequencies. Manal, Tariq, Sami and Elham used this technique of correction less than

Karima, Omar, Kalied and Lila. This was shown in Karima's practice, as in the extract below.

T: Ok let us start with this group as group one, Ali and Kamel, one is 'A' and one is 'B'.  
Ali: I'm looking forward to next weekend.  
Kamel: Do you? Why?  
T: Stop that it is not correct. The correct answer is "Are you"? not 'do you'?. Now I want you to do the dialogue very fast without interruption as a real dialogue between two people.  
Ali: we're having picnic on the beach.  
Kamel: that will be a great.  
Ali: yes, it will.  
T: Ok much better now thanks.

Line five in the extract above shows how the teacher interrupted students during the activity, which may panic them. This led to the deductive teaching of grammar. The teacher did not consider the student's emotions when she stopped the student, which may not encourage the students to interact freely. Correcting grammatical errors immediately also did not give the student any chance to self-correct.

### ***Giving students the opportunity to think***

In Manal, Tariq, Sami and Elham's classes, providing students with opportunities to think about an error and then produce the right answer was observed. Most of these teachers were categorized as among the more experienced teachers (see table 5.1). This technique led to more classroom participation (teaching grammar inductively). As an example, Sami gave a student a chance to check the answer given, as shown in the extract below.

S: The first picture of a helicopter was drew [sic] by Leonardo da Vinci.  
T: think more about your answer and said do you have another answer?  
S: No.  
T: I am sorry your answer is wrong. Who can correct the verb? He chose another student to give the correct answer.  
S: The verb 'drew' should be changed to 'drawn' to make the sentence correct.  
T: That's right, thanks.

The teacher was seen to encourage students to think about the right answer which is assumed to be beneficial for them. This indicated that the teacher's aim was not to give feedback to the students about their answers straightaway, but to give an opportunity for them to make sure of their answers. The teacher seemed polite and more flexible with students, which may help them to participate more in other grammar activities.

### ***Correcting errors after students had finished speaking***

Throughout the classroom observations the teachers were observed to correct students' grammatical errors after the conversation, depending on the activity involved. This was observed in Tariq, Manal and Sami's classes. The teachers were assumed to be aiming to encourage students to be more motivated and to increase their self-confidence. This finding can be seen in Tariq's practice as follows.

#### *Conversation three*

Libna: I hope you're feeling better by next weekend.  
Khadeja: Why? What is happening?  
Libna: Some of us are going for a Wadi trip.  
Khadeja: Just my luck! I expect I'll still have a cold.  
Libna: Ok, you aren't be such a pessimist!  
T: Libna can you repeat the last sentence?  
Libna: Ok, you aren't be such a pessimist!  
T: Do you think that is correct?  
Libna: Yes, teacher.  
T: No, it is not, because the correct sentence is 'Don't be such a pessimist!'  
SS: Ok teacher.

The teacher here apparently acted as a guide, because he did not interrupt the students when they were speaking. This confirms that the teacher's aim was not only to correct oral grammatical errors, but to also allow students to feel more free when they were speaking (teaching grammar inductively). This technique may also lead students to have positive expectations about learning English grammar because they were engaged in dialogue as they would be in normal conversation.

### ***Giving chances to choose the correct answer***

The analysis of the data revealed that Tariq, Sami and Elham were observed to provide students with additional responses as a technique to correct their grammatical errors. This led to helping students to think about and choose the right answer. A concrete example of this can be found in Elham's practice when she asked students questions about someone's experience using the perfect passive. She wrote the following sentence on the board:

Peter's bike was stolen yesterday.  
your / bike / ever / steal?  
-----  
T: Ahmed, can you answer this?  
S: I am not sure teacher.  
T: Ok, just try.  
S: said "Have your bike ever been stolen?"  
T: "Have your bike ever been stolen?" Or "Has your bike ever been stolen?" Choose one answer please?  
S: "Has your bike ever been stolen? Sorry"  
T: "yes now it is correct now, thanks sit down."

The extract above shows that the teacher seemed to be aiming to help the students to find the correct answer more easily and to encourage them to participate in other activities. By employing this technique of correcting students' grammatical errors, the students may become more comfortable and motivated. This also led to reducing negative impressions among students about learning grammar.

### ***Giving a chance for peer-correction***

The data analysis revealed that giving the chance to classmates to correct grammatical errors was rarely observed in these teachers' classes. This technique of teaching was seen only in Sami and Tariq's practice. Their aim was assumed to be to engage the whole class in error correction and to encourage students to follow what was going on in the class during the grammar activities. Tariq, for instance, asked students to write three sentences in the future tense and then he asked each pair of students to swap their papers and find errors. After about three minutes the teacher asked the two students who were sitting at the first desk to go to the board. Then he asked them to say what errors they had found. This might change students' traditional perceptions that the teacher is always the one who is corrects. From the use of this technique students might feel more comfortable when they ask their teacher or each other rather than admitting errors in front of the class.

To sum up, the teachers adopted different techniques in correcting students' grammatical errors, and these were used at different times depending on their methods of teaching (deductive or inductive). The teachers who used deductive practice corrected students' grammatical errors immediately and did not offer any solution or choice to help their students, while the teachers who used inductive methods corrected after students had finished speaking, giving extra choices and giving a chance for peer-correction.

### **6.2.3.2. Teachers' knowledge of correcting students' grammatical errors**

The findings obtained from the interviews revealed that the teachers in this study had different kinds of knowledge about dealing with students' grammatical errors. Their interview responses were coded, revised and refined to produce the main categories. Six themes resulted, as presented in table 6.9.



**Table: 6.9. Teachers' knowledge of correcting students' grammatical errors**

Theme	Teachers' knowledge of correcting students' grammatical errors
1	Teachers' knowledge about using direct correction
2	Teachers' knowledge about offering students another solution to their error
3	Teachers' knowledge about correcting students' grammar errors while they were speaking
4	Teachers' knowledge about correcting students' grammar errors after speaking
5	Teachers' knowledge about giving the chance for peer-correction

***Teachers' knowledge about using direct correction***

The analysis of the data showed that all the teachers were aware of the importance of the use of direct correction. They all knew that using this kind of correction may not help students to learn grammar well. The teachers knew that this technique of correction was assumed to have negative effects on students' achievements. For example, in response to the question of what he knew about using direct correction during teaching English grammar, Omar said,

*I always correct students' grammatical errors immediately to save time, although I know it is not beneficial for them but students sometimes cannot correct their grammatical errors by themselves. I am sure some students could not grasp my hints or options of answers even if I gave them more time to think about the right answer.*

The teacher assumed that he knew what to do in the class although his justification for using this technique was his students' low level of English. This does not mean, however, that the main reason was the students themselves. The teacher himself might be part of the problem, because he could at least try to give more explanation of errors to make it possible for students to know how to correct the error more easily by themselves.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about offering students another solution to their error***

Throughout the interviews the teachers expressed similar attitudes towards providing students with possible solutions from which to choose the correct answer. According to the data, all of the teachers knew that this kind of technique was helpful and useful for students. Their knowledge about employing this technique was that it was aimed to help students to think more carefully about the right answer. For example, Sami said that *"during my explanations of some activities I sometimes provide the students with options to correct their grammatical errors because I found it works with most of the students"*.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about correcting students' grammar errors while they were speaking***

The analysis of data revealed two different findings here. Firstly, all the teachers were aware of the significance of correcting grammatical errors while students were speaking, although three teachers, Manal, Tariq and Sami, added that they did not use this technique in their classes. Secondly, five teachers, Kalid, Lila, Elham, Karima and Omar, said that they knew about and used this method in their classes. For instance, Lila said that *"I use this kind, the first being oral or spoken correction because it is important to correct all the grammatical errors in students' speech to know whether the students understood the rule or not"*. This suggests that the teacher used the deductive method of teaching English grammar.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about correcting students' grammar errors after speaking***

The analysis shows that there were two patterns among the teachers. Manal, Tariq, Sami, Lila, Elham and Kalied had knowledge about correcting students' grammar errors after speaking activities. For example, Tariq said that *"I know about it and I usually correct the students' errors after each activity because I do not like to interrupt them."* This suggests that this teacher corrected the students' grammar errors only when they failed to correct themselves. He seemed satisfied that it is important for students to be given the right answers at the end of the

activities. Conversely Omar and Karima did not have knowledge of how to use this technique, although they were aware of its importance. Omar, for example, said that *“I heard about it before but I could not apply it in my class because it is difficult to manage it unless to find the right context”*.

### ***Teachers’ knowledge about giving the chance for peer-correction***

According to the analysis of the data all the teachers were found to know about giving a chance for peer-correction. They also said that they employed it in their classes. This technique of error correction is assumed to make students more independent, which may increase their self-confidence. For example, Sami said that *“I ask students to correct whatever was wrong. If they continue to make the same mistakes then I ask them to do more practice through peer-correct. I use a variety of different exercises to increase their understanding of the grammar rules”*. The teacher apparently wanted to help students to use grammar correctly and to be able to understand how grammar works. In this case, the teacher gave a chance for students to correct their grammatical errors by themselves, which is assumed to be really useful.

In summary, the findings above revealed that all of the teachers’ stated that they knew the importance of correcting grammatical errors although they had different reasons. These findings allow us to know more about how and why the teachers correct students’ grammatical errors in order to evaluate their practice and knowledge in teaching English grammar.

### **6.2.3.3. The relationships between teachers’ practice and knowledge about correcting students’ grammatical errors**

The findings gained from the twenty-four classroom observation sessions and eight semi-structured interviews revealed various relationships between the teachers’ practice and their knowledge regarding the treatment of students’ grammar errors. These are analysed in the order shown in table 6.10.

**Table: 6. 10. The relationships between teachers' practice and knowledge about correcting students' grammatical errors**

Relationship			Teachers							
N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Congruence	Incongruence (x)	Manal	Kalid	Tariq	Sami	Lila	Elham	Karima	Omar
1	Teacher used direct correction and knew about it		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Teacher corrected errors while students were speaking and was aware of it		-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
3	Teacher knew about correcting errors while students were speaking and did not do it		x	-	x	x	-	x	-	-
4	Teacher corrected errors after students had finished speaking and was aware of it		✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
5	Teacher knew about correcting errors after speaking and did not do it		-	x	-	-	x	x	x	x
6	Teacher gave choices to choose the correct answer and knew about it		-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
7	Teacher knew about giving choices to choose the correct answer and did not apply it		x	x	-	-	x	-	x	x
8	Teacher gave the chance for peer-correction and knew about it		✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
9	Teacher did not give the chance for peer-correction and knew about it		-	-	-	-	x	x	x	x

***Teacher used direct correction and knew about it***

The findings obtained from the classroom observations and semi-structured interviews indicated congruence between how teachers treated their students' grammatical errors and what they knew about it. For example, during the classroom observation, Lila restricted herself to direct correction and later expressed strong awareness of how and when to correct students' errors throughout the interview. This can be confirmed by her contribution, "*although I know about the advantage and disadvantage of correcting students' errors directly but I always use it*". Teachers who employed these activities tended to

engage students in classrooms activities by adopting deductive methods of teaching.

***Teacher corrected errors while students were speaking and was aware of it***

There was also apparent congruence between teachers' practice and their knowledge about correcting errors while students were speaking. The teachers Lila, Omar, Kalied and Karima were observed to correct their student's errors during speaking. However, in their interviews they demonstrated that they were aware of their use of this technique of correction. This was confirmed by Omar: "*I know correcting students' grammatical errors while they speak may confuse them but it is useful. Therefore, I use it in my classes*". It is apparent that this teacher understood the advantages and disadvantages of using this technique of teaching.

***Teacher knew about correcting errors while students were speaking and did not do it***

It noteworthy that, although Manal, Tariq, Sami and Elham considered correcting grammatical errors in general as a necessary step towards the effective use of grammar, they were agreed that it is not useful to do it while students are speaking. This assumption was confirmed when they were observed. None of them were noted to correct students' grammar errors while they were speaking. These findings indicate that there was incongruence between what they stated that they knew and what they did in their classes regarding correcting students' grammatical errors while they were speaking.

***Teacher corrected errors after students had finished speaking and was aware of it***

As revealed from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews, there was congruence between Manal, Tariq and Sami's practice and their knowledge regarding correcting errors after speaking. They were observed to correct errors after students had finished their speaking activities, and their knowledge confirmed that they knew about using this technique of correction. For

example, Sami said: *“it is not good to interrupt students when they speak, this could encourage them not to participate again”*. This indicated that the teacher’s practice was guided by his knowledge and assumptions.

### ***Teacher knew about correcting errors after speaking and did not do it***

There was, however, incongruence between some teachers’ practice and their knowledge related to the correction of errors after speaking. Omar, Lila, Kalied, Elham and Karima knew about correcting students’ grammatical errors after speaking but they were not observed to apply their knowledge in their classes. These teachers gave several reasons. For example, Omar said: *“I correct students’ errors immediately in order to help them to do not repeat the same errors in future and to inform them why they are wrong otherwise they will not know their errors”*. This suggests that this teacher was convinced that grammatical errors in grammar lessons should be corrected straightaway. He also believed strongly in the impact of immediate error correction on students’ grammatical accuracy.

### ***Teacher gave choices to choose the correct answer and knew about this technique***

The findings show congruence between three of the teachers’ practice and their knowledge about providing chances to choose the correct answer. Tariq, Sami and Elham were the only teachers who gave students alternatives to choose from for the correct answer when they committed grammar errors. In their interviews these teachers confirmed that they knew about the method and used it in their classes. All of the teachers shared the view that grammatical errors in grammar lessons may need to be corrected in different ways. This is evidenced by Tariq’s contribution, *“Correct grammatical error depends on the objective of the lesson. There are some errors related to the teaching content. I do not pay much attention to all students’ grammatical errors although I did that in certain situations with sometimes few choices for student to choose the right answer”*.

***Teacher knew about giving choices to choose the correct answer and did not apply it***

Most of the participants, namely Manal, Omar, Lila, Kalied and Karima, did not offer students solutions from which to choose the correct answer. However, those teachers stated that they knew about this possibility in their interviews. Incongruence between what the teachers did in their classes and what they expressed in their interviews about giving choices to choose the correct answer was clearly evidenced. These teachers gave various reasons. For example, Manal said that *“this technique of correction is very easy. Therefore, I do not like it, it wastes time. If I gave students some choices, that means I told them the right answer”*. Omar, Karima and Lila were in agreement in stating that it is difficult to find more than one potential answer to some errors. They added that if they adopted this method, students would ask them to do it regularly. These teachers were assumed to suffer from a lack of the grammatical knowledge necessary to provide students with options. Kalied’s reason was slightly different when he said that *“giving choices to choose the correct answer will not encourage students to be independent therefore I avoided it”*.

***Teacher gave a chance for peer-correction and knew about it***

The findings showed that Tariq, Sami, Kalied and Manal gave chances for peer-correction in their classes, and in the interviews they stated that they knew about this. This indicated that there was congruence between their practice and knowledge about peer-correction. Sami, for example, said that: *“Although I knew students did not like being corrected by others but I use this technique of correction in my classes because it encourages them to participate, it is like a competition”*. The teacher’s aim seemed to be to help students to participate. He was also apparently pushing students to transfer their knowledge of grammar into practice.

### ***Teacher did not give a chance for peer-correction and knew about it***

Elham, Omar, Lila, and Karima were not observed to give any chance for peer-correction, however, they expressed in their interviews that they knowledge of this technique of error correction. This indicated that there was incongruence between their practice and knowledge regarding this. One of these teachers, Karima justified herself when she said that “*this technique will not work with students because they were not linguistically competent enough to do peer-correction*”. The teacher seemed to want to say that peer-correction would be appropriate only for simple errors or more competent students.

In conclusion, the analysis of data evidenced nine types of relationship in the context of the correction of students’ grammatical errors. Five of the relationships indicated congruence between practice and knowledge whereas the other four revealed incongruence, as shown in table 6. 10.

It is worth noting here that a distinction might be made between error correction and feedback, which will be analysed in next section. In the literature, there is no clear-cut distinction between feedback and error correction. The term feedback refers to any information supplied by the teacher concerning the learner’s production of the target language. On the other hand, error correction is seen as the hoped-for result of feedback (Long, 1977; Cook, 2001 & Harmer, 2001).

#### **6.2.4. Issue Four: Teachers’ Practice and Knowledge about Providing Feedback and their Relationship**

This section analyses the data gained from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews regarding providing students with feedback during the teaching of English grammar. The findings related to teachers’ classroom practice and their knowledge are presented in tables 6.11 and 6.12. These findings are integrated at the end of the section to determine the relationships involved, as shown in table 6.13. A summary of the main findings is also provided.



### 6.2.4.1. Providing feedback

The findings of the data analysis from teachers' classroom practice revealed two different types of feedback: positive and negative. The teachers were observed to give feedback using similar methods in some situations while they gave it differently in other situations. Examples and quotations from the actual data are given to support the analysis, and the findings are analysed in more detail below.

**Table: 6.11. Providing feedback**

Action	Providing feedback Action
1	Using questions as feedback
2	Repeating the students' answers
3	Motivating students to participate
4	Rejecting students' answers
5	Punishing students when they made grammatical errors

#### ***Using questions as feedback***

In a few of the classes observed, the teachers applied similar techniques of using feedback. Tariq, Elham and Sami were the only teachers who adopted the use of questions as feedback in their classes when students committed errors. They were assumed to use this method to allow students to think about words or phrases. This is confirmed in the extract from Elham's class shown below.

For example:

T: now who can tell me where is the objective in this sentence (Sami breaks the window)

S: 'breaks' is the objective

T: what?

S: 'the window'

T: 'the window', ok. Now we have to change the whole sentence into passive voice. Who can do it?

S: Ali was broken the window.

T: 'was broken what?

S: 'the window was broken by Ali.'

T: Right now is correct

The teacher's response here was as a sign to the student to inform him that his answer was wrong. This indirect technique seems to be really useful because it leads the students to become more involved in the activity and to give the correct answer. The teacher in the extract above used questioning words such as 'what' as feedback. Her action was assumed to be aimed not only to ask the student a question but also to give him a chance to think again about the correct answer.

### ***Repeating the students' answers***

The findings gained from classroom observations showed two different patterns found in the teachers' strategies. Three teachers, Tariq, Manal and Sami, were observed to repeat the students' answers, whereas the other five teachers, Lila, Karima, Elham, Kalied and Omar, were not noted to use this technique of feedback. Among the teachers who repeated the students' answers, Tariq used this technique regularly, as shown in the extract below.

T: yes

S: number four the boy were not happy

T: the boy

S: was not happy happy

S: the boy was afraid from tiger in the zoo

T: the boy was afraid

S: afraid of of

The extract above shows that the teacher corrected errors of grammar and word meaning by repeating the student's answer. This indicated that this teacher not only focused on grammar errors, as in lines two and seven, but also on word meaning as in line two. The teacher's technique of error correction seemed to present scaffolding which led the students to be more active and encouraged them to participate more.

### ***Motivating students to participate***

The analysis of the teachers' classroom practice revealed that they used different actions in motivating students to participate. Manal, Kalid, Tariq, Sami and Elham were observed to pay more attention to students' ability, as well as their interest and motivation, compared to Lila, Omar and Karima. The former teachers used praise as part of their feedback through utterances such as 'well done', 'thanks', 'thank you', 'good', 'excellent' and 'all right'. Students felt proud when praised by their teachers, and this seemed to encourage them to be more motivated to learn English grammar. The following extract was taken from Sami's class.

T: Students look at the board. I want you to change the sentences from present simple tense into present perfect tense. Who can answer number one?  
SS: I teacher, I teacher  
T: right you Ali  
S: The sentence 'He goes to Tripoli by car' It becomes 'He has gone to Tripoli by car.'  
T: all right thanks it is correct.  
T: Salem can you change the next sentence?  
S: yes teacher. The sentence will change to tourists have visited the museum in Subrata  
T: excellent. Sit down.

The extract above shows that the teacher was happy with the students' answers and that is why they were praised. This kind of technique apparently increases students' self-confidence as a result of the positive feedback. This technique of feedback seemed to provide the students with more energy to learn about English grammar because they saw that their teacher was satisfied with their achievements. This indicated that this teacher used inductive practices where the students become active in their classes.

Furthermore, the findings also demonstrate that encouragement techniques using words and gestures were used to help students to attempt to answer. Teachers used this technique in inductive activities. Some students who were shy, for example, did not like to participate until they received support from their teachers to become involved in the activities. During his lessons, Tariq moved around in front of the class with a broad smile on his face while explaining the activities. One of his actions is presented as an example below.

T: I know you can describe the picture. S: I am not sure teacher. T: try try S: the picture is about the man's house. T: not sure you nearly there. Keep trying. S: ok it described how the old man life in village. T: yes yes good. Sit down.
---

It was very clear that the teacher's feedback was positive when he encouraged the student to describe the picture. This indicates that the teacher was helpful and his plan was to aim to make the class active. This kind of feedback leads to the inductive learning of English grammar. The student was supported by the teacher to achieve the correct answer. This also seemed a useful technique because the students liked it.

In contrast, the findings also demonstrated that the teachers Lila, Omar and Karima paid less attention to providing students with positive feedback, and their students were not so motivated. This was obvious when they were observed. For example, Lila was noted to not consider the students' level of interest or motivation in her classes. The researcher noted that there was usually no response from students at all during some activities, unless if she asked them directly. In this case, the teacher's way of teaching English grammar cannot be assumed to help the students become motivated.

### ***Rejecting students answers***

The analysis of the data found that negative feedback was used in Lila, Karima, Elham and Omar's classes. These teachers used words or gestures of rejection to show their disagreement within their feedback. They used this technique of feedback at slightly different frequencies, and it was clearly excessive in Karima's classes. For example:

T: who can tell me about the past participle of verb 'run'  
S: runed  
T: No wrong. Who else can do that?  
S: ran  
T: No. The right answer is 'run' because there are some verbs take the same form in present simple and in past participle.  
SS: Ok

The extract above indicates that the teacher's feedback was strongly negative towards the student's performance, which might minimise students' self-confidence and self-esteem. This technique might upset students and lead them to be unable to do well, so that, most of the time a student would not attempt to correct his/her own errors after this type of feedback.

However, Elham used this technique in a different way. She seemed more polite than Omar, Lila and Karima who summarily rejected students' answers from the beginning. She seemed to want to give students a chance to get the right answer by themselves. This was noted in her second and third classes, as clearly shown in the extract below.

T: right, the subject in passive voice comes before the object (true or false). Who knows the answer?  
SS: shouted 'I teacher', 'I teacher'  
T: Sami  
S: true  
T: how do you know that it is true?  
S: Because subject comes first.  
T: really no no no that is not the correct. The right answer is false because in English the passive started with object not with subject.

Although the teacher in the extract above may have assumed that she gave the student a chance to think about the correct answer, when she said 'how do you know that it is true?' she rejected the students' answer after that and gave the right answer herself. The teacher's feedback was apparently not positive in the second question when she repeated the word 'no' many times. This is implied that the teacher was angry with the student. This technique of feedback seemed to demotivate the students in learning English grammar.

### ***Punishing students when they admitted grammatical errors***

According to the findings from the classroom observations, only Lila, Karima and Omar punished their students when they did not give the correct answer. This technique of feedback was used when the teachers were checking students understanding or correcting their grammatical errors. It is clearly negative feedback and led to reduced student participation and motivation. For example, Omar asked two students to complete a conversation with the correct form of each verb in brackets. He said 'I want you to speak quickly but before to do that you have to know the correct answers in order to fill the gaps'. The teacher had been correcting the students' grammar orally in order to deal with their errors, and he was very angry because the students performed poorly. The teacher's feedback seemed very negative when he asked the students who had committed the error to stand up and did not allow them to participate in the next activity. These teachers were noticed to be generally very worried about their students' grammatical errors, and they punished their students strongly. They did not give students a chance to think about the correct answer, and this behaviour can be assumed to lead to negative results.

### **6.2.4.2. Teachers' knowledge about providing feedback**

The findings from semi-structured interviews with the teachers revealed several facts. Most of the teachers did not seem to have remarkable knowledge about providing students with feedback during the teaching of English grammar. The

analysis produced five themes as shown in table 6.12. These themes are analysed in more detail below.

**Table: 6.12. Teachers' knowledge about providing feedback**

Theme	Teachers knowledge about providing feedback
1	Teachers' knowledge about using questions as feedback
2	Teachers' knowledge about repeating the students' answers
3	Teachers' knowledge about motivating students to participate
4	Teachers' knowledge about rejecting students answers
5	Teachers' knowledge about punishing students when they made grammatical errors

#### ***Teachers' knowledge about using questions as a feedback***

The analysis revealed that none of the teachers were aware of the use of questions as feedback, including those who were observed doing it in their classes. When asked to answer the question 'why do you use questioning words as feedback in your lessons?' Sami, Tariq and Elham all expressed that they were not aware that they did that. Sami said "*I forget myself when I explain my lessons and I always doing what I believe working with students*". Tariq was surprised and he said, "*really was I? I do not know, maybe*". Elham stated that "*I always use this technique of feedback but I do not know the advantage and disadvantages of using it*". These teachers can be assumed to lack background knowledge about providing students with feedback in their grammar classes. The other teachers, Manal, Kalied, Omar, Lila and Karima, were not observed to apply this technique of feedback, and therefore they were not asked about it.

#### ***Teachers' knowledge about repeating the students' answers***

The data gained from the interviews showed two different findings concerning knowledge about repeating the students' answers as a feedback technique.

Kalied, Lila, Karima, Elham and Omar expressed that they knew about this. These teachers agreed that using repetition of the student's answers confirmed that what they had said was correct, or indicated that there was an error. These teachers also said that they used this feedback technique rarely, except for Kalied who said that.

*I repeat what students said to help them to reach to the right answer as a sign of confirmation to what they said right or wrong. I believe it useful technique because it sends a message to students that they did well or not... they can know my positive or negative feedback according to my way of repeating their words.*

The teacher in the extract above was assumed to be aware of the significance of repeating the students' answers as a feedback technique. This indicated that his aim was to repeat what the student said until they reached the correct answer, which may help students to be more active in class. Engaging students with activities, even by repeating what they say, may lead students to follow the teachers' instructions. The second finding was that three teachers, Tariq, Manal and Sami, expressed that they had no idea about this technique, although they agreed that they may have used repeating the student's answers when they taught English grammar. It is apparent that these teachers were not fully aware about what to do in their classes.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about motivating students to participate***

The analysis of the data reveals that all of the teachers were aware of the importance of encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback. They all agreed that students are engaged more if they are encouraged by their teachers. The findings also showed that these teachers were divided into two groups. Manal, Kalied, Tariq, Sami and Elham said that they knew about motivating students to learn grammar and they were observed to put what they knew regularly into practice. Tariq, for example, said that:

*I always encourage students by say praising words and please students do not be shy if you like to learn English. My students were*



*advised to speak English and practice their language by themselves. I use this as a technique after correcting their grammar errors when they say their answers. I believe it is helpful especially for students who their level of English is low.*

It is understood from the extract above that the teacher knew what words and advice he should use in order to encourage his students to be active. His use of feedback seemed to encourage students to keep trying. This indicated that the teacher had knowledge about providing students with positive feedback. Motivating students means supporting them to reach the lesson's objectives, as the teacher had planned.

The findings also revealed that Lila, Omar and Karima said that they knew about motivating students but they were not observed to do it regularly in their actual classes. These teachers were asked the question, '*why you did not say praising words or encourage your students regularly when they say the right answers?*' Lila and Karima's response were similar, in contrast to Omar's. Lila was in agreement with Karima when she said that "*I do not know the reason, it might be because I do use to do that with people*". Omar, on the other hand, said that "*when I praise students too much, this may stop their improvements because they may believe they are perfect*".

### ***Teachers' knowledge about rejecting students answers***

The interviews findings revealed that the use of rejecting students' answers depended on the objective of the lesson. All of the teachers said that they rejected student answers as a technique of negative direct feedback, but they said that they used it more or less often. Manal, Tariq, Sami and Kalied said that they used it rarely. Sami said that:

*Although I appreciate students and I very quick notices the nature of the activity is changed and the reason might be the students became more motivated but in some situations I have to reject their answers.*

It was clear from the extract above that this teacher was sure that providing positive feedback is essential to encourage students to be more motivated. The teacher seemed to apply what he had found worked with his students. It is apparent that this teacher was keen to use positive more than negative feedback in his practice.

In addition, the findings showed that Lila, Karima, Elham and Omar stated that they regularly rejected their students' answers. For example, Omar said that *"this was happened out of my control"*. In this case, students may come to dislike their teachers as well as the learning of grammar. It was noted that the less experienced teachers were more familiar with this kind of feedback.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about punishing students when they made grammatical errors***

The analysis of the data confirms that the teachers took different positions about punishing students when they made grammatical errors. Some were against it while others supported it. Manal, Tariq, Sami, Elham, and Kalied were in agreement that punishing students is not part of a positive way of teaching English grammar. For instance, Sami said that:

*I did not punish the students when they committed the error but I give them more than one chance to think about the correct answer. Then if they failed to answer, I just blame them.*

The extract above confirms that this teacher did not punish the students until he was sure that they did not know the correct answer when they were supposed to. This indicates that the teacher knew that he may be doing something wrong if he punishes the students the very first time they commit errors. Giving students the chance to rethink may help them to connect their ideas with existing knowledge about the subject they are studying.

In contrast, the findings showed that teachers such as Lila, Karima and Omar were in agreement in supporting the punishing of students when they made

grammatical errors. For example, Omar said that *“I did it in different the situation because students sometimes deserved it. I know it is negative feedback but it is needed by students to avoid it again in future.”* It is apparent that this teacher succeeded in discouraging students from becoming involved in the grammar activities in the class, because this technique of feedback may lead to a decrease in students’ motivation and affect their learning of English grammar.

#### **6.2.4.3. The relationship between teachers’ practice and their knowledge about providing feedback**

The analysis of the data gained from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews showed different relationships between the teachers’ practice and their knowledge related to providing students with feedback in English grammar lessons. These relationships are presented and analysed below.

**Table: 6.13. The relationships between teachers practice and their knowledge about providing feedback**

Relationship			Teachers							
N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Congruence	Incongruence (x)	Manal	Kalid	Tariq	Sami	Lila	Elham	Karima	Omar
1		Teacher used questions as feedback and was not aware about it	-	-	x	x	-	x	-	-
2		Teacher repeated the student's answer and was not aware about it	x	-	x	x	-	-	-	-
3		Teacher knew about repeating the student's answer and did not do it	-	x	-	-	x	x	x	x
4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teacher paid more attention to motivating students through providing them with positive feedback and knew about it	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teacher paid less attention to motivating students through providing them with positive feedback and knew about it	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teacher rejected students' answers regularly and knew about it	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teacher knew about rejecting students' answers and did it rarely	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Teacher punished students when they made errors and knew about it	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
9		Teacher did not punish students when they made errors and knew about it	x	x	x	x	-	x	-	-

***Teacher used questions as feedback and was not aware about it***

There was incongruence between Tariq, Elham and Sami's practice and their knowledge regarding the use of questions as a technique of feedback. These teachers were observed to use the word 'what' when students did not say the correct answer. However, they expressed in the interviews that they had no idea about this technique and that they were not aware that they used it. As an example, although Sami was observed to use this technique several times in his

classes but he was surprised when asked in the interview to give a reason for his behaviour. This indicates that these teachers can be assumed to be unaware of how they taught.

***Teacher repeated the student's answer and was not aware about it***

The findings obtained from classroom observation and semi-structured interviews indicated incongruence between how some teachers provided students with feedback, particularly when they repeated the student's answers, and what they knew about it. These teachers were Tariq, Manal and Sami. These three teachers were all categorized as more experienced teachers (see table 5.1). It was expected that these teachers would use this technique of feedback, but it was unexpected to find that they did not know about it. For example, Tariq said that *“when I teach, I sometimes forget myself, especially when I engage with students.”* This indicated that this teacher used interactive activities, and he did what he thought good for his students.

***Teacher knew about repeating the student's answer and did not do it***

According to the analysis of data, most of the teachers, namely Lila, Elham, Omar, Kalied and Karima, were not observed to adopt the repetition of students' answer as a technique of feedback in their classes. However, they reported that they had knowledge about it. This confirms that there was some incongruence between their practice and knowledge about providing students with feedback by repeating student answers. As an example, Lila stated that *“repeating the student's answer support students to be more confident because it reflected the teacher's positive feedback which gives the students impression that they doing well.”* The teacher seemed to have knowledge of this technique of feedback, although she did not apply what she knew. These teachers were asked to give justifications because they were not observed to use this technique although they had knowledge about it. Kalied, Lila, Karima and Elham were in agreement when they stated that the reason was the students' level of English, whereas Omar complained about limited time in his classes.

***Teacher paid more attention to motivating students through providing them with positive feedback and knew about it***

It is noteworthy that Manal, Kalid, Tariq, Sami and Elham were observed to pay more attention to motivating students when they gave them feedback, and they expressed that they had knowledge about it. These findings evidenced that there was congruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge about providing students with positive feedback, such as encouraging students by using praising words. This can be deduced from Kalied's statement: "*students prefer the teachers who support and appreciate them when they answer their questions. I noted this in my classes. Students become happy when they thanked.*" The teacher here confirmed that, from his teaching experience, providing students with positive feedback is required.

***Teacher paid less attention to motivating students through positive feedback and knew about it***

The findings revealed that there was also congruence between the teachers Lila, Omar and Karima's practice and their knowledge regarding providing students with positive feedback such as praising and thanking them when they gave the right answers. These teachers were observed to rarely use this technique, and they expressed that they did not use it regularly in their classes. In their interviews, they were also unaware of the importance of motivating students. For example, Karima said that: "*I do not care about that issue.*" This indicated that this teacher suffered from a lack of pedagogical knowledge.

***Teacher rejected students' answers regularly and knew about it***

The most apparent congruence among the teachers Lila, Karima, Elham and Omar in their classroom practice and their knowledge as stated in the interviews was identified in terms of regularly rejecting students' answers. Although these teachers emphasised the importance of providing students with positive feedback during the interviews, this practice was observed only rarely in their lessons.

Karima, for instance, held the belief that rejecting students' answers was necessary for the students because she considered it as normal behaviour and that it would not affect the students' reactions. In this case, Karima's practice seemed to be guided by her beliefs.

***Teacher knew about rejecting students' answers and did it rarely***

The process of examining the findings obtained from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews showed congruence between what the teachers Manal, Kalid, Tariq, Sami actually did in their grammar classes and what they stated that they knew about rejecting students' answers as a technique of feedback. These were all categorized as more experienced teachers (see 5.6). As an example, Sami said that *"I rarely rejected students' because by applying negative feedback the students' process of learning will stop and they will feel disappointment about the grammar rules"*.

***Teacher punished students when they made errors and knew about it***

The findings revealed that Lila, Karima and Omar were observed to punish students when they made grammatical errors, although they expressed in their interviews that they all knew about the advantages and disadvantages of doing this. These teachers who were observed to punish students in their classes were in agreement that students should be punished although they knew it could be negative feedback but was thought to be necessary in certain situations. This confirms that congruence existed between what these teachers actually did in the classroom and their knowledge regarding providing students with negative feedback.

***Teacher did not punish students when they made errors and knew about it***

Conversly, Manal, Kalid, Tariq, Sami and Elham avoided providing students with negative feedback, such as punishing them when they committed grammatical errors. However, all of them said in the interviews that punishing students led to poor achievement. Sami, for instance, said that *"If I punish students, they may*

*reduce their contributions in the next activity*". This evidenced that there was incongruence between the teachers' practice and knowledge about providing students with negative feedback when they made grammatical errors. It is interesting that most of these teachers were among the more experienced. This may indicate that their practice was guided by their teaching experience.

In summary, the findings revealed nine relationships in the context of providing students with feedback relating to teaching English grammar. Five relationships indicated congruence between practice and knowledge whereas the other four revealed incongruence, as shown in table 6.13. Various kinds of links between the teachers' practice and knowledge existed in terms of providing students with feedback in grammar classes.

#### **6.2.5. Issue Five: Teachers' Use of and Knowledge about Using Students L1 and their Relationship**

This section analyses the data gained from the classes observed and the semi-structured interviews with teachers concerning the use of the L1 during the teaching of English grammar. The main themes which emerged from the data are given in tables 6.14 and 6.15. The findings from observation and interview are integrated to establish the relationship between practice and knowledge, as shown in table 6.16. A summary of each aspect of this issue is also provided.

##### **6.2.5.1. Using students L1**

The data analysis addressed three main questions relevant to the classroom observations and semi-structured interviews about 'how', 'why' and 'when' teachers used the students' L1 during the teaching of English grammar. From the classroom observation, seven of the eight teachers used L1 in their classes, although they used it at different frequencies while teaching English grammar. These findings are presented and analysed in more detail below.



**Table: 6.14. Teachers' Use of Students' L1**

Action	Teachers Using Students' L1
1	Using L1 to explain new words
2	Utilizing L1 to check students' understanding
3	Exploiting L1 to correct students' errors
4	Adopting L1 to move from one activity to another
5	Resorting to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand

***Using L1 to explain new words***

The data revealed that Lila, Elham, Omar and Karima were the only teachers who stated the meaning of new words in Arabic in their classes, whereas the other teachers did not do this. These teachers used this method with different levels of frequency, and were categorized as among the less experienced teachers (see table 5.1). Lila and Elham used the students' L1 after they had tried to explain the meaning of those new words using English but if the students were unable to grasp what they meant. This perhaps indicates that these teachers were justified in explaining the meaning of the words in Arabic. More to the point, it was clear that Omar and Karima did not give the meanings of new words in English at all; instead they expressed them in Arabic straightaway. For example, Omar was observed writing and saying:

<u>In English</u>	<u>In Arabic</u>
- Diamond	الماس
- Eventually	في النهاية
- Survived	باق

From the extract above, Omar apparently did not even try to give his students the opportunity to think about the meaning of words in the target language. His reason might have been simply to save time, or perhaps he thought that his

students would not understand irrespective of how many times he explained the words in English.

### ***Using L1 to check students' understanding***

The results obtained from the classroom observations showed that three of the teachers who were observed to use L1 adopted it when they were checking the students' understanding. These teachers were Omar, Karima and Lila. This can be confirmed in, for example, Omar's case when he was observed to ask the students in Arabic to arrange puzzle words to make correct sentences. He wrote one sentence on the board as follows.

-                    America / discover / Christopher Columbus.  
-----

T: said (in Arabic) students "Look at the puzzle words. Who can arrange them and make it in passive?"

SS: "I, teacher! I, teacher!" but the teacher said, "Yes Ali, you."

S: went to the board and wrote 'America discovered Christopher Columbus'.

SS: shouted (in Arabic) and they said that it was wrong; then

T: said "OK, no problem. (in Arabic) What is missing in the sentence, Sanad?"

S: said, "The verb 'to be' in the past is missing and the preposition 'by', teacher, and the right answer is 'America was discovered by Christopher Columbus'.

T: said, "That is right. Thanks, Sanad."

The extract above indicates that the teacher was aiming to evaluate the students to make sure that they understood the lesson, but he used their L1 for this purpose. It seemed to be an appropriate technique because using puzzle words may help students to think in-depth and encourage them to interact to produce the language. This finding was evidenced by the students shouting in eagerness to participate. The teacher was apparently used the students' L1 in order to confirm their understanding. On the other hand, there was no evidence that

Kalied, Manal, Tariq, Sami and Elham used the L1 when they checked their students' understanding in their grammar classes.

### ***Exploiting L1 to correct students' errors***

The data gained from the classes observed revealed that certain teachers in this study used the L1 more or less often to correct their students' grammatical errors. Omar, Karima and Lila were observed to use the L1 more than Elham when they corrected errors. For example, Omar asked students in Arabic to change the verbs from the present to the past participle.

T: (in Arabic) ماهو التصريف الثالث للفعل سنبل what is the past participle of the verb 'steal'?  
S: stolen  
T: (in Arabic نعم جيد) yes good  
T: (in Arabic مرة اخرى ماهو التصريف الثالث للفعل يبدأ) again, what is the past participle of the verb 'start'?  
S2: starten  
T: (in Arabic لا هذا غير صحيح الاجابة الصحيحة هي ستارتد هي ستارتد) no, it is wrong; the right answer is 'started'.

The teacher in the extract above seems happy to use the students' L1, which suggested that he was not aware of the disadvantage of using it in the classroom. As shown in lines one, three and six, most of the teacher's words were said in the students' L1.

### ***Adopting L1 to move from one activity to another***

The analysis of data illustrated that most of the teachers who used the L1 in their classes employed it to move from one activity to another. Lila, Karima, Kalied, Elham and Omar used this method during the teaching of English grammar. They were observed to use L1 as a cue to help their students understand that they were now moving on to a new activity or to another key point in the lesson. The following extract shows how Karima operated in this regard:

Karima (in Arabic) said ‘Students, listen. We have finished this activity. Now, let’s move on to the last activity. I want you to read the short texts quickly, and then tell me if you find any difficult words. These texts of course are talking about the rule of ‘the third conditional (3)’.

It is clear from the extract above that Karima seemed to want to help the students to be ready to understand the new activities or she wanted to gain their attention so that they would follow her. This indicates that there was a gap between the teacher and her students, because if the teacher had confidence in her students she would have used English to accomplish this.

### ***Resorting to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand***

Seven teachers from the eight were observed to use the L1 when they found students had difficulties in understanding the lesson’s objectives. Kalied, Manal, Karima, Elham, Omar, Sami and Lila used the L1 to further clarify their explanations. This can be illustrated by the following extract:

Lila said (in Arabic) ‘We use zero conditionals if we always behave in a certain way when something happens. We use first conditionals if something is possible in the future. We also use the second conditionals if something is not very likely, or if it is an imaginary situation’.

The extract above taken from Lila’s practice shows that she used the L1 in order to make her teaching easier to understand. This technique was apparently used when she felt that the students would not understand explanations in English.

In summary, the findings from classroom observation confirmed that Tariq was the only teacher who did not use the L1 in his classes while the other teachers used it in different ways when they taught English grammar. Moreover, similarities and differences in using L1 between the more and less experienced teachers were in evidence in their grammar classes.

### 6.2.5.2. Teachers' knowledge of using the students' first language

The analysis of data gained from interviews with the teachers revealed two different attitudes. Lila, Karima and Omar supported using the L1 in English grammar classes, while Manal, Sami, Elham, Tariq, and Kalied thought it was a bad idea. All of the teachers showed sufficient background knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of using the L1. Five general themes emerged, as identified in table 6.15.

**Table: 6.15. Teachers' knowledge about using students' L1**

Theme	Teachers' knowledge about using the students' first language
1	Teachers' knowledge about using L1 to explain new words
2	Teachers' knowledge about utilizing L1 to check students' understanding
3	Teachers' knowledge about exploiting L1 to correct students' errors
4	Teachers' knowledge about adopting L1 to move from one activity to another
5	Teachers' knowledge about resorting to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand

#### ***Teachers' knowledge about using L1 to explain new words***

In their interviews, they expressed a range of attitudes towards explaining new words to students using the L1. Different reasons were given as justifications for using it for this purpose. Lila and Elham were in agreement that the L1 should only be used after they had tried to explain the meaning of new words in English. For example, Elham said that *"I did not say the meaning of new words straightaway in Arabic, but I did that if I note the students were not able to grasp the words meaning"*. This indicates that the teacher was not satisfied with using the L1, but she felt forced to. Lila was slightly different in that she said that she used L1 to translate and explain the meaning of concrete words, but felt that this was only acceptable when the use of English and gestures had not been successful. She added that:

*Translation is essential to reinforce the understanding of words, so that students can remember them next time without their being translated again. I use L1 because I have noticed that students sometimes misunderstand what I am saying.*

Lila seemed to have the problem of how to explain the meanings of some grammar terms, and this might be related to her knowledge of teaching grammar or to her students' lack of knowledge about the English language. The teacher's response means that translating what has been said in English is a way of making sure that the students get the correct message.

In contrast, the findings also revealed that Omar and Karima disagreed with providing students the chance to think about the meaning of new words in English. Omar said that *"I usually say the meaning of new words in Arabic immediately because there are several difficult words for students in each lesson and students cannot understand the meaning exactly"*. This teacher apparently suffered from a lack of knowledge about language which hindered him from expressing the meaning of new words in English. More to the point, Karima stated that *"I will waste my time if I explained new words in English because I am sure students will not understand me even I explained them in English"*. The teacher seemed to know that the students would not grasp meaning of the words when their meanings were explained in English. This indicates that her students' level of English is low.

Furthermore, the data revealed that Manal, Kalied, Sami and Tariq had similar opinions about using the students' first language. They did not favour its use in teaching grammar in general, especially in translating new words and grammatical terms. For example, Sami said so clearly:

*There are some teachers, including myself, who believe that it is not good for teachers to use the learners' first language when they are teaching a second. This is because the students will base their ideas about the second language and its rules on their first language.*

The extract above indicates that this teacher was completely opposed to using L1 in teaching English grammar. It might be that he was sure that if teachers did that, students would not develop communicative competence. Furthermore, using the students' L1 too much in the second language classroom will not encourage teachers to explain grammar effectively. This means translating each word from the L2 into their L1 is not best practice in teaching English grammar.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about utilizing L1 to check students' understanding***

The data gained from the semi-structured interviews reveal that only Omar, Karima and Lila said that they used the L1 to check students' understanding. These teachers were asked for their reasons for this. All of them answered that using the L1 to check students' understanding is essential in some situations. For example, Karima was in agreement with Lila when she said that *"I know using L1 is not acceptable in L2 classes but I use it because I was forced by the classroom environment."* This indicates that they used it because they felt they needed to. Omar gave a different reason when he said that *"these students become more comfortable when I asked them in English with some explanations in Arabic particularly when I check their understanding"*. In contrast, Manal, Elham, Kalied, Sami and Tariq said that they did not use the L1 to check students' understanding in their classes.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about exploiting L1 to correct students' errors***

The findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews with teachers showed that all of the teachers said that they were aware of the issue of using the L1 when correcting students' grammatical errors, but they had various levels of knowledge about this. Omar, Karima, Lila, and Elham were observed in their classes to use the L1 when they corrected students errors, and therefore they were asked the question, *'Why did you use L1 when you corrected students' grammatical errors?'* Omar said that *"although I knew that the excessive use of Arabic when I correct students' errors is not useful but the reasons for deciding to use Arabic in my English grammar lessons are the learners' level and the time*

*constraints*". Omar seemed to have two reasons for using L1 in his context. He wanted to tell us that he could not use English alone in those circumstances. The students' level of English and the limited time available were both assumed to be serious factors having an effect on the role of the teacher and students in the classroom. Elham's reason was different. She said that *"my using L1 was based on the type of error, if the error was serious I use it otherwise I say it in English"*. This means that this teacher dealt with student errors according to the kind of classroom activity involved. It also indicates that Elham opposed the use of the L1 immediately when students committed grammar errors. Lila and Karima were in agreement when they said that the size of the class was the most important thing that forced them to use L1 when they corrected students' grammatical errors. Lila added that:

*I use L1 to save time because if I gave students chance to think about the correct answer may not know the right answer very quick. It is seemed impossible to take care with each student in the class if they are more than twenty-five students.*

It seems that this teacher was aware of how to correct grammatical errors inductively, but class size was main factor forcing her to use L1 to save time. This indicated that she had knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of using L1 in English grammar class.

However, Sami and Tariq were in agreement that using L1 is not useful for students in any situation. For example, Tariq said that *"using L1 to correct students grammatical errors demotivated students to participate whether they know the right answer or not"*. However, Kalied and Manal were different, and supported the use of L1 to deal with errors. For instance, Manal said that *"this technique may give students the chance to revise what they have learnt very quickly but at the same time it may confuse the students when they interact and that is why I did not use it"*. Nevertheless, although these teachers had different opinions about using the L1 to correct students' grammatical errors, they did agree that using it in class decreases the students' chances of expressing



themselves in English. It means that there is little opportunity for discussion, role play, or other types of group work that would give learners the chance to produce the language.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about adopting L1 to move from one activity to another***

From the analysis of data gained from the semi-structured interviews, Lila, Karima, Kalied, Elham and Omar expressed different levels of knowledge about using the L1 to move from one activity to another. They all seemed aware of the importance of using L1 as a technique of teaching grammar. These teachers expressed different rationales for using L1 when they moved from one activity to another. For instance, Elham's point view was similar to Lila when she said that "*I use it to save time and to confirm their understanding of the activity before to move to the next one*". Karima's explanation was slightly different. She said that "*This might be happened automatically at the end of the activity when I found some students did not understand the activity well*". Kalied's reason was different again, and he mentioned that some exercises in the textbook were not easy for students to follow. He supported this with an example, saying:

*Although all the practice encourages students to participate in class, the activity needs a lot of input from me; for example the instructions ask students to find examples from their own experience, which they cannot always manage. Then they ask me for help. In that situation I have to use L1 to explain the activity again in a different way, to make it more clear.*

The extract above shows that this teacher was having difficulty managing some of the activities, and tried to find his own solutions. For example, he used different ways of explaining difficult points in order to help his students understand the rule, even if this meant using the L1. This indicates that this teacher used his own plan and ignored the textbook instructions. Omar said that:

*I use it for clarification, such as linking the students' ideas with the topic that I have been explaining, and to clarify the form of the rule to help students use it in other examples.*

It is clear from the extract above that this teacher used his students' L1 for two purposes: firstly, to help him to explain the lesson better; and secondly to help students understand the rules more easily. Omar was similar to Lila when he said that using the students' first language would save time and help teachers to keep their lesson plans on schedule.

In contrast, the findings show that there were other teachers who were against using the L1 when they moved from one activity to another. Manal, Tariq and Sami thought that this kind of technique would not help the students' understanding of English. Sami, for instance, said that "*I check my students' understanding and summarize the activity in English to make sure that all the students have understood it or not*".

#### ***Teachers' knowledge about resorting to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand***

The semi-structured interview data indicated that teachers used this technique for different reasons. For example, Omar said that:

*I am sure that using L1 is useful for overcoming problems when learning and teaching English as a foreign language, especially where grammar is concerned. Therefore, I used it in my classes.*

In this extract, Omar explained his thoughts concerning the benefits of using L1 and its possible effect on student achievement. This teacher seemed optimistic when he said that using the students' L1 helps them to overcome problems. This might be true if the aim of the teacher was only to help the students to learn grammar knowledge, but unfortunately this may negatively affect their communicative competence. Manal was in agreement with Karima about using the L1 when students had problems. She said that:

*I use their first language when I find there is some similarity between the rule that the students could not understand and the same rule in their first language, to connect the new rule to the old rule with which they are*

*already familiar. This is a useful strategy for helping students to remember such a rule, and they will not easily forget it.*

The above extract shows how and when Manal used her students' first language in second language classes. This explanation might be justified on some occasions, especially in situations when the two languages have similar structures. However, the use of these rules may be completely different, which in fact would cause problems for L2 learners. Lila added that using the L1 may well increase students' motivation to learn grammar, because there are similarities between the two languages as also stated by Karima and Manal above. However, Kalied and Elham were in agreement that using L1 may resolve some students' difficulties, but they said that it would not help the teacher and students to create new language, nor would it improve either their comprehension or learning of the L2.

Conversely, the findings indicate that Tariq and Sami were in agreement that using the L1 is not beneficial in teaching English as a second language. For example, Sami said that *"I think that even if I used it only occasionally, my students would not learn English properly. I always tell my students it is an English class, and that no Arabic is allowed because it is not helpful to speak Arabic when we are talking about English"*. This shows that this teacher was keen to teach English grammar inductively.

In summary, the findings from the semi-structured interviews confirmed that the teachers had sufficient knowledge of the benefits and disadvantages of using the students' L1 when teaching English grammar in the L2 classroom. They also had different reasons for using their students' first language when teaching English grammar.

### 6.2.5.3. The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge of using students' L1

The data show that there were various different kinds of relationship between the teachers' use of the students L1 and their knowledge about it. Certain teachers used it because they had to when students could not follow the lesson's aims. The teachers also had other reasons for using it. Therefore some of them supported its use and others did not. All of the relationships discovered are presented below.

**Table: 6.16. The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge of using students' L1**

Relationship			Teachers							
N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Congruence	Incongruence (x)	Manal	Kalid	Tariq	Sami	Lila	Elham	Karima	Omar
1	Teacher used L1 to explain new words and knew its effects		-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Teacher did not use L1 to explain new words and knew its effects		x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-
3	Teacher utilized L1 to check students' understanding and knew its effects		-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
4	Teacher did not utilize L1 to check students' understanding and knew its effects		x	x	x	x	-	x	-	-
5	Teacher exploited L1 to correct students' errors and knew its effects		-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Teacher did not exploit L1 to correct students' errors and knew its effects		x	x	x	x	-	-	-	-
7	Teacher adopted L1 to move from one activity to another and was aware of its effects		-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Teacher did not adopt L1 to move from one activity to another and was aware of its effects		x	-	x	x	-	-	-	-
9	Teacher resorted to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand and knew its effects		✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Teacher did not resort to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand and knew about it.		-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-

### ***Teacher used L1 to explain new words and knew its effects***

From the classroom observation and interviews, there was congruence between what some teachers did in their classes and their knowledge about using the L1 to explain new words. The teachers who were observed to use this technique applied it in different ways; Lila and Elham gave students some explanation of new words in English before turning to Arabic whereas Omar and Karima translated new words directly. All of these teachers expressed in their interviews that they were aware of the advantages and disadvantages of doing so. For example, Elham and Lila agreed that new words should be explained in English first, whereas Omar and Karima's points of view were different, and their justifications have been presented above in section 6.2.5.2. It is interesting that all of the teachers who used this strategy were categorized as less experienced teachers (see table 5.1).

### ***Teacher did not use L1 to explain new words and knew its effects***

The analysis of the data revealed that Manal, Kalied, Tariq and Sami did not use the students' L1 in explaining the meaning of new words or grammatical terminology in their classes, although they all said that they knew about it. In this case, the relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge in using L1 to explain new words was incongruence. It is interesting here that these teachers were not in agreement about using the L1 in teaching grammar, although they were all categorized as more experienced teachers. Manal and Kalied thought that using L1 is needed in some situations, whereas Tariq and Sami were completely against it. For instance, Tariq said that "*it was not good for teachers and students to use the first language when the class was about a second language.*" His reason was that "*if teachers use L1, students will never learn anything else because they will build ideas based on their L1, and this will cause problems when they try to communicate*". Tariq avoided using the students' first language wherever possible, which meant that he was not keen to teach English grammar deductively where using it would be allowed. The teacher's justification

seemed to be alright but a question which might be raised concerns whether or not students could understand the meanings of new words and new grammar terms in all activities without using the L1.

***Teacher utilized L1 to check students' understanding and knew its effects***

The findings showed that only Omar, Karima and Lila used L1 when they checked their students' understanding, although they were not happy about using it. They can be assumed to have had sufficient knowledge about using L1. There is thus apparent incongruence between what these teachers actually did and their knowledge about using L1 to check students' understanding of grammar. These teachers were aware that students can understand English grammar but they cannot communicate with each other in English if they do so regularly. For example, Lila said that *"Using the first language in English lessons will lead to poor levels of learning English and students will not be able to improve in such an atmosphere"*.

***Teacher did not utilize L1 to check students' understanding and knew its effects***

There was also incongruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge about using L1 to check students' understanding of grammar, particularly in the cases of Manal, Kalied, Sami, Elham and Tariq. This might have been expected because almost all of these teachers were categorized as more experienced teachers (see section 5.6.). These teachers were found that to teach English grammar both inductively and deductively in their classes. It seemed that these teachers did not use the L1 to check students' understanding because of their inductive practices. Kalied, for instance, said that *"using L1 is important in some cases such as checking students understanding, this might be useful if the teacher was not sure students are understood at least the basic point of the lesson"*.

***Teacher exploited L1 to correct students' errors and knew its effects***

As revealed by the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews, there was congruence between Omar, Karima, Lila and Elham's practice and their knowledge in terms of using the L1 when they corrected their students' grammatical errors. These teachers were observed to use the L1 to correct students' errors, and they clearly knew about this. These teachers justified their application of this technique by saying that they faced problems related to class size and the short duration of lessons. It is apparent that these teachers felt more confident when they taught lessons using the first language. In this case, according to these teachers, using the L1 may make their job easier in being able to control the classroom and attract the students' attention, who can be helped to understand the meaning of new words more quickly.

***Teacher did not exploit L1 to correct students' errors and knew its effects***

There was apparent incongruence between some of the teachers' practice and their knowledge about using L1 to deal with students' grammatical errors, particularly in the data obtained from Tariq, Kalied, Sami and Manal. All of these experienced teachers were not observed to use this technique of error correction. They gave different reasons as to why they did not apply this mode of correction (see section 6.2.5.2), but most concerned doing whatever they thought was useful for their students. They were in agreement that any wider use of the first language does not help students to be more confident.

***Teacher adopted L1 to move from one activity to another and was aware of its effects***

The findings gained from classroom observation and semi-structured interviews reveal congruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge regarding using the L1 when they moved from one activity to another. Omar, Karima, Kalied, Lila and Elham did use this technique in class. In their interviews they all agreed that using the L1 at these stages of the lesson confirmed and increased their students' understanding. Omar, for example, justified his behaviour by

saying that *“the students themselves...I can not move to another activity until evaluate them, if I found their response was weak then I use L1 to make the activity understandable”*.

***Teacher did not adopt L1 to move from one activity to another and was aware of its effects***

The findings showed that only a few of the teachers, Tariq, Sami and Manal, did not use the L1 when they moved from one activity to another in their grammar classes, although they all stated that they knew about the advantages and disadvantages of using the L1. This can be confirmed from Manal's response when she said that *“I do not use L1 before to move to new activity although I know using it may lead to confirm students' understanding of grammar because they understood the activity in that stage”*. This indicates that there was incongruence between the teachers' practice regarding this technique of using the L1 and their knowledge about it.

***Teacher resorted to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand and knew its effects***

The analysis of the data revealed that almost all of the teachers, namely Omar, Karima, Kalied, Lila, Sami, Manal and Elham, were observed to use the L1 when they found their students had not understand what they meant in English. They used the L1 as a technique to sort out their students' difficulties during the teaching of English grammar. What is more, these teachers reported that they knew about using the L1 to explain grammar items to help students to understand them more easily. All of these teachers agreed with the use of Arabic to encourage students to understand difficult concepts. For example, Sami said that *“This is only situation that I believe is appropriate to use L1 in teaching grammar”*. In this case, it could be surmised that there was congruence between what the teachers actually did and their knowledge about using L1 to clarify grammar items.



***Teacher did not resort to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand and knew about it***

The findings from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews showed that only Tariq was observed to not use L1 when students found it difficult to understand grammatical concepts. However, he expressed that he knew about this issue. There is apparently some incongruence between Tariq's practice and his knowledge about using the L1 to clarify grammar items. This teacher was asked to explain his reasons for not using the L1, and he said that "*If I did that, students may feel that learning grammar is difficult and they will not do their utmost to understand the rules in English*". The teacher was not observed use L1 at all in his practice, which confirms that he was keen to use inductive practices more than deductive ones in his classes.

In summary, the analysis of the data evidenced ten types of relationship between the teachers' practice and their knowledge regarding the use of the L1 in teaching English grammar. There were five relationships of congruence and another five of incongruence. Most of the teachers were observed to use the L1 to varying degrees when teaching English grammar, except for Tariq who was not observed to use it at all. It was noted that the L1 was used more by the less experienced teachers. All of these teachers, however, seemed to have sufficient knowledge of the benefits and disadvantages of using the L1 when teaching English grammar in L2 classrooms. They also had different reasons for their decisions to use it or not when they were teaching English grammar.

**6.2.6. Issue Six: Teachers' Practice and Knowledge of Checking Students Understanding and their Relationship**

The analysis of this issue focuses on the teachers' practice and knowledge regarding the checking of their students' understanding of grammar in order to improve their learning of English grammar. Such checking is an ongoing process which may be conducted, as Sutton (1992:3) says, "every few minutes". The main findings obtained from the classroom observations and semi-structured

interviews are presented in tables 6.17 and 6.18. These findings are compared in order to understand the relationship between practice and knowledge as shown in table 6.19.

### 6.2.6.1. Checking students understanding of grammar

The findings gained from the classroom observations revealed that all of the teachers in this study checked students' understanding of grammar in different situations and using various techniques. The table below shows the main techniques the teachers used. These themes reflect how and when the teachers checked their students' understanding.

**Table: 6.17. Checking students' understanding of grammar**

Action	Checking students' understanding of grammar
1	Engaging students in the process
2	Utilizing short quizzes
3	Using feedback from students
4	Exploiting the class vote
5	Using the 'think-pair-share' technique
6	Considering the psychological state of students

#### ***Engaging students in the process***

The findings revealed that all of the teachers engaged students in the checking process but in different ways. Firstly, certain teachers engaged students in discussions about their ideas. Tariq, Manal, Kalied and Sami were observed to ask students to present their ideas to the class and used their ideas as a basis for class discussion. For instance, Sami asked his students in the first observation session to volunteer. Then he chose two students to write two

sentences each on the board about the passive voice. After that he asked the whole class to work in pairs to discuss the sentences. This technique was apparently beneficial to students because it led them to engage actively with what they were studying. It also might help students to enjoy the subject more, understand more, remember more, learn more, and be more able to appreciate the relevance of what they learned.

Secondly, in all the classes observed, the teachers were seen to adopt sentence completion, such as placing verbs in boxes and filling gaps. This was observed particularly when their students did not understand the meaning of words, and the technique was apparently used to identify whether or not their students had understood the activity. For example, Karima asked students to complete sentences related to using the rule of 'used would and a verb form' as follows:

Complete:			
tell	trave	swim	wake up

Example: We would go fishing during the school holidays.

1. In those days, people -----miles to get the nearest school.
2. When I was child, we lived on a farm and I ----- to sound of the animals
3. We -----in the sea and have picnics on the beach.
4. My grandmother -----us stories about her childhood.

The extract above shows that this teacher was apparently aiming to check the students' understanding using the missing words exercise. This kind of practice may improve the students' understanding even though it seems easy and quick to do, because they need to think about which is the most suitable word to put in the right place. It also helps teachers to identify their students' weaknesses and to find out how well their students are progressing.

### ***Utilizing short quizzes***

In Tariq, Sami and Manal's classes the adoption of short quizzes was observed. This technique of checking students' understanding was applied using different kinds of exercises; such as filling-in-the-blanks or open-ended or multiple-choice questions. These quizzes were used informally to gauge what students had learned about the content. Tariq, for example, wrote five uncompleted sentences on the board and asked the students individually to write the full sentences about the future incorporating something about themselves.

The sentences were:
1. I hope.....
2. I expect.....
3. I dread.....
4. I look forward to.....
5. I suspect.....

The teacher's strategy seemed to be aiming to achieve two functions. The first was to assess students informally to check their understanding and to know whether or not they understood the rule, and the second purpose was to encourage students to use the rule in communication. In contrast, this technique of checking students understanding was absent from the practice of Kalied, Elham, Karima, Lila and Omar.

### ***Using feedback from students***

Although the analysis of the data revealed that all of the teachers used student feedback as a sign of their understanding, Manal, Tariq and Sami were observed to try to understand more how their students were interpreting and making sense of what they were teaching. For example, Sami asked students to connect pictures to sentences. He asked students to guess something about the two pictures in the textbook in order to answer the questions that he wrote on the board.

The questions were:

1. Why did the girl throw the shoes away?
2. Was she thinking very clearly when she did this? Why (not)?
3. Does she have the receipt for shoes?
4. Why does the salesman apologize?
5. Why does he want the receipt

The teacher was trying to see his own teaching from his students' perspective. It was observed that this technique was used particularly when students needed a different approach or further instruction, and so the teaching was adjusted accordingly. Employing such a strategy lets teachers know what has been done well, and what needed improvement, and provides specific suggestions for how to improve.

### ***Exploiting the class vote***

During the class, the teachers were concerned to check their students' understanding by asking them to vote, for example saying "How many agree that the following statements are correct or not?" This technique was used by Tariq only after finishing his explanations of the activities in his first class. On the board he wrote:

1. I used to smoke, and I still do.
2. He used to go to Australia for two months last year for his summer holidays.
3. He used to hate carrots, but he likes them now.
4. My sister would work in a hospital.
5. She used to live in Tripoli when she was a child.

Although the teacher wrote the above sentences on the board, he did not ask the students to write their answers on the board, but rather asked them to vote in order to present their answers orally. This teacher seemed to have two aims. The first was to check whether or not students understood the activity and the second was to engage students in communication in making the final decision in their

vote. Thus, this type of technique apparently encouraged students to be more confident about participating in the classroom.

### ***Using the 'think-pair-share' technique***

According to the findings from the classroom observations, only two teachers from eight were observed to use 'think-pair-share' as a strategy to check their students' understanding of grammar. These teachers were Tariq and Sami. This phrase refers to involving students in thinking about the teacher's question, pairing off and discussing the question with a partner, and then sharing their answers with the whole class. For instance, Tariq asked students to work in pairs to write down two or three sentences using the present perfect tense. Then he asked them to share what they had written. The teacher's strategy was assumed to be beneficial for students because it prompted them to explain their thinking to each other. Other examples of showing their thinking might include explaining how someone with a different perspective might answer the question, and generating examples. Furthermore, this technique may help teachers with large classes because it can be modified to fit any class size in any situation. Students do not need to move from their seats and their discussions can still be guided.

### ***Considering the psychological state of students***

Throughout the classroom observation the teachers were observed to deal with the different behaviours of their students, particularly when they checked their students' understanding of grammar. The findings revealed that most of the teachers did not consider their students' personal characteristics. Karima, Kalied, Lila and Omar focused only on specific students and ignored those who were sitting at the back of the class when they were checking students understanding. This behaviour might not lead to effective learning because students who are ignored become demotivated and they might not like the teacher's classes. One of the most interesting findings was that it was observed that some quiet students never raised their hands when their teachers asked questions and did not participate until they were asked directly to do so. This kind of student can be

assumed to be shy, and may have known the answers but were unwilling to participate. However, other students were noted who were participating but failed to answer their teachers' questions when asked to do so. This may indicate that the understanding of a student's personal characteristics is essential for teachers of English grammar in order for them to know how to deal with them in different situations.

In contrast, it was observed that, in Tariq, Manal, Elham and Sami's classes, the teachers did their utmost to engage all students in activities, even those who did not raise their hands. They were apparently more active, pushing students to participate by moving around among the students in their classes.

To sum up this section, the findings indicate that different techniques of formative assessment were used in the teachers' classes. Differences and similarities between teachers in the use of these techniques were observed in terms of checking their students' understanding of grammar items. There was also evidence that these techniques of checking students' understanding were applied in different ways, either deductively or inductively. It was also seen that the teachers would use these techniques of teaching at different times and in different situations during lessons. Furthermore, the data shows that most of the teachers did not move on to another activity until they had asked their students if they had any questions, or if there were any points about which they were unclear.

#### **6.2.6.2. Teachers' knowledge about checking students' understanding**

Although the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews revealed that all the teachers agreed with the importance of checking students' understanding of grammatical items as an important process in the teaching and learning of grammar they expressed various opinions about it. The findings also show that the teachers had their own strategies or techniques for checking their students' understanding. Examples from the data are presented to demonstrate what they

knew in this regard. The main findings are summarised in themes, as shown in table 6.18. All of these are analysed in more detail below.

**Table: 6.18. Teachers’ knowledge of checking students’ understanding**

Theme	Teachers’ knowledge of checking students’ understanding of grammar
1	Teachers’ knowledge about engaging students in the process
2	Teachers’ knowledge about utilizing short quizzes
3	Teachers’ knowledge about using feedback from students
4	Teachers’ knowledge about exploiting a class vote
5	Teachers’ knowledge about using the ‘think-pair-share’ technique
6	Teachers’ knowledge about considering the psychological state of students

***Teachers’ knowledge about engaging students in the process***

The data gained from the interviews showed that all the teachers stated that they knew about engaging students in the process of checking their understanding of grammar. The findings also revealed that the teachers had different aims when they applied this technique. Lila, Karima and Omar were in agreement, when, for example, Omar said that:

*I usually engage my students to the actives I teach. I would say the best method for checking students' understanding is by using gap texts, because it is easy to teach and helps students to check the grammar. I think gap texts are very good at revealing students' ability.*

This teacher used this technique because it is easy and that is why he preferred it to other techniques when he said that it is the best method. However, he was apparently aware that the importance of filling text gaps was that it could be useful for students in using grammar correctly.



The findings also revealed that Tariq, Elham, Sami, Manal and Kalied expressed similar opinions about engaging students when they wanted to check their understanding of grammar. For instance, Tariq said that *“it is my responsibility to make this kind of techniques lead to interactive activity and not just stop at filling the right grammar words”*. This indicated that this teacher knew that engaging students in the lesson process could be applied in different ways.

### ***Teachers’ knowledge about utilizing short quizzes***

The analysis of the interview data reveals two different findings about quizzes. Certain teachers stated that they knew about the use of short quizzes as a strategy to check students’ understanding of English grammar. Tariq, Sami and Manal expressed in their interviews that they used this technique because they knew about its significance. For instance, Sami said that:

*I sometimes conduct a simple quiz at the end of the lesson to check whether the students have understood everything. I considered it as a proof to inform me what I achieved and what I need to improve to help students to understand the lesson.*

This teacher stated that he used this technique as a kind of formative assessment which might be helpful and useful for students in some situations. This technique may also encourage shy students to respond, because such students would not give answers unless they were examined formally or asked directly by their teachers. However, the findings evidenced that Elham, Lila, Kalied, Omar and Karima stated that they had no idea about using short quizzes as a strategy to check students’ understanding of English grammar.

### ***Teachers’ knowledge about using feedback from students***

The analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews confirms that all the teachers stated that they knew about using their students’ feedback as a technique for checking their students’ understanding of grammar. For example, Manal said:

*I use different strategies to check their understanding, such as asking them questions about the rules. If they nod their heads, that gives me a clue that they have understood and that there is no need for repetition.*

Looking at the extract above, the teacher seems to have had her own strategy for checking that her students understood, which was by asking them direct questions. This teacher said that she knew whether or not her students understood the activities according to them nodding their heads. This may be assumed to be a useful technique, but ignores other students who do not use this kind of response. Nodding heads could be considered as an initial cue in feedback, although asking students in a more direct way may work with all students.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about exploiting the class vote***

The interview data revealed that there were two different findings in terms of teachers' knowledge about using the class vote as a strategy in checking their students' understanding in grammar classes. Only two teachers stated that they knew about using this technique. These teachers were Sami and Tariq, who expressed different opinions about it. Tariq said that:

*I use this technique in order to know how much percentage of my lesson that I have achieved. Students' response was used as a cue informing me that they understood the activity or not.*

Sami agreed with Tariq to some extent, giving a slightly different answer when he said that:

*I know about voting class, it is a technique which helps teachers to engage students into the activities to say their point views but I did it rarely I do know why, maybe I used other techniques to check their understanding.*

The two extracts above show that both teachers knew about using class votes as a technique of checking students understanding in teaching English grammar. Tariq can be assumed to have used it more than Sami. This was clear when Sami said he used this technique only rarely. In contrast, none of the other teachers in this study stated that they knew about using class votes at all.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about using the 'think-pair-share' technique***

The findings from the semi-structured interviews with the eight teachers revealed that none of them stated that they knew about using the 'think-pair-share' as a technique to check students' understanding. They all expressed that they might use it in one form or another but they did not know what it is called. This indicates that these teachers suffered from a lack of knowledge.

### ***Teachers' knowledge about considering the psychological state of students***

The analysis of the data gained from the semi-structured interviews with the eight teachers confirms that there were two different patterns. Most of the teachers expressed that they did not have a very good background knowledge about the importance of considering the psychological state of students, such as their emotions and motivation and personal characteristics. They were not aware of the important of such psychological knowledge. Kalied, Lila, Omar and Karima agreed that in the teacher of grammar they should always be serious with students, because if they were too friendly with them, they might not care about what their teachers said. This might be true, but not necessarily with all students. Some students like teachers to be friendly and then they feel more comfortable. In this case, such students would enjoy classes and may participate more in them. These teachers were asked to say why, when they were observed, they did not focus on all the students in a similar way, particularly during checking students' understanding. Omar and Lila were in agreement with Karima when she said that, *"there are students who are happy to be always quiet and isolated, therefore I usually ignored them"*, Kalied's response was slightly different when he said that *"this is always occurred in the classes and I think it is not only the responsibility of the teachers, students also required to push themselves to be engage in the activities"*.

In contrast, the other teachers, Manal, Tariq, Elham and Sami, supported the idea of teachers being friendly and patient with students. The findings showed that these teachers assumed that they had knowledge about the psychological state of students and how they should deal with them. Sami said that:

*I know that students need a teacher with strong character and in the same time flexible with them. It is very easy to make students like the subject you teach and it is also easy to make them hate it.*

In the extract above the teacher seemed to have knowledge about what kind of character the teacher should have. This was clear when he described the teacher's character as an essential factor. He emphasized the teacher's role in the class when he said the teacher is responsible for making students like or hate the subject s/he teaches.

In summary, the findings gained from the interviews revealed that the teachers expressed a variety of opinions in stating their knowledge about using formative assessment in order to check their students' understanding of English grammar. Teachers sometimes agreed and sometimes disagreed in relation to employing each technique for checking students' understanding. The most significant finding was that all the teachers were aware that checking students' understanding led to improvements in achievement and in the teacher's performance.

#### **6.2.6.3. The relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge about checking students' understanding.**

From the classroom observation and semi-structured interview data eleven types of relationship were found between the teachers' practice and their knowledge regarding the checking of students' understanding of grammar. Ten of these relationships involved congruence and the other one incongruence between practice and knowledge. All of these relationships are presented in table 6.19.

**Table: 6.19. The relationship between teachers’ practice and their knowledge about checking students’ understanding**

Relationship			Teachers							
N	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Congruence	Incongruence (x)	Manal	Kalid	Tariq	Sami	Lila	Elham	Karima	Omar
1	Teacher engaged students in the process and knew about it		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Teacher utilized short quizzes and knew about it		✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
3	Teacher did not utilize short quizzes and did not know about it		-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Teacher used feedback from students and knew about it		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Teacher exploited the class vote and knew about it		-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
6	Teacher did not exploit class votes and knew about it		-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-
7	Teacher did not exploit class votes and did not know about it		✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Teacher used the 'think-pair-share' technique and was not aware of it		-	-	x	x	-	-	-	-
9	Teacher did not use the 'think-pair-share' technique and was not aware of it		✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Teacher considered the psychological state of students and knew about it		✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-
11	Teacher did not consider the psychological state of students and did not know about it		-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓

***Teacher engaged students in the process and knew about it***

The results confirm that there was congruence between all of the teachers’ practice and their knowledge in terms of engaging students in the process of the lessons. All of the teachers were observed to engage their students in order to achieve their aims, and they all expressed in their interviews that they knew about this as a technique of checking the students’ understanding of grammar.

Lila, for example, was observed to engage her students by asking them to do various activities and she expressed that she knew about using this technique when she said that *“I engaged my students by asking them some questions in order to enhance their understanding and identifying their learning needs.”*

***Teacher utilized short quizzes and knew about it***

There was congruence between only three of the teachers' practice and their knowledge about adopting short quizzes during the teaching of English grammar as a technique of checking their students' understanding. Tariq, Manal and Sami were observed to use short quizzes when they taught grammar and they used it as a strategy to check their students' understanding. They also stated that they knew about using it. Tariq, for example, said that *“Adopting short quizzes in order to check students' understanding saves time and it helps to introduce the strengths and weakness of students informally in limited time.”*

***Teacher did not utilize short quizzes and did not know about it***

From the analysis of the data, it was clear that there was congruence between the practice of Kalied, Lila, Karima, Omar and Elham and their knowledge about adopting short quizzes as technique for checking students' understanding of grammar. None of these teachers were observed to use them in their classes, and they all stated in their interviews that they did not know about it as a strategy to check students' understanding. Omar said that *“I have no idea about it although I made exams to assess students achievements after each two weeks not in the same day of explain the current lesson”*. This teacher can be assumed to have had knowledge about other types of assessment but suffered from a lack of awareness of the formative type of assessment of using to improve their understanding.

***Teacher used feedback from students and knew about it***

The data gained from the classroom observations and interviews revealed that all of the teachers used their students' feedback as a strategy to check their

understanding of grammar, and they all expressed that they knew about using this method in teaching English grammar. This indicates that there was congruence between what these teachers did and what they knew about this technique.

***Teacher exploited the class vote and knew about it***

From the comparison between the teachers' practice and their knowledge, only one participant, Tariq, used this technique to check his students' understanding in grammar classes and also stated that he knew about using this technique. Thus there was congruence between his practice and knowledge regarding the use of the class vote as a strategy to check his students' understanding of grammar. This may also indicate that this teacher had sufficient knowledge about involving students in formative assessment.

***Teacher did not exploit the class vote and knew about it***

The findings revealed that there was incongruence between Sami's practice and his knowledge in terms of using the class vote as a strategy to check students' understanding of grammar. He was observed to not use class votes, while he stated in his interview that he knew about it. It seems rather serious to find teachers who have knowledge but do not apply it when they teach.

***Teacher did not exploit the class vote and did not know about it***

Most of the teachers in this study, namely Manal, Kalied, Lila, Karima, Omar and Elham, were not observed to use the class vote as a strategy to assess their students' understanding, and they also stated that they did not know about employing this technique when teaching grammar. For example, Karima said that "*this first time to hear about class vote and therefore I did not use it in my grammar classes*". This indicated that there was congruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge regarding asking students to vote in class. This implies that these teachers need to be more up to date with methods of teaching English grammar.

***Teacher used the ‘think-pair-share’ technique and did not aware of it***

The analysis of the data revealed the only Tariq and Sami were observed to use the think-pair-share method when they checked their students’ understanding of grammar; however, they expressed that they were not aware of using it specifically to check their students’ understanding. This means that there was some incongruence between what they actually did and what they stated that they knew about using this strategy. Neither of these teachers gave any information that they knew about this technique of assessment.

***Teacher did not use the ‘think-pair-share’ technique and were not aware of it***

The findings gained from the observation and interview revealed that Manal, Kalied, Lila, Karima, Omar and Elham were not observed to use the think-pair-share strategy to check their students’ understanding in grammar classes, and they also stated that they did not know about it. This congruence between the teachers’ practice and their knowledge was expected, because most of these teachers were categorized among the less experienced teachers (see table 5.1).

***Teacher considered the psychological state of students and knew about it***

It is noteworthy that Elham, Manal, Sami and Tariq were observed to consider the psychological state of their students when they assessed them informally during grammar classes, and they stated that they had knowledge about this. There was therefore congruence between what these teachers actually did and what they stated that they knew about considering the psychological state of students, particularly when they checked their grammar understanding. This was confirmed in several relevant examples as presented in sections 6.2.6.1 and 6.2.6.2.



***Teacher did not consider the psychological state of students and did not know about it***

The findings show that there was also congruence between the other teachers' practice and their knowledge about paying attention to students' emotions, motivation or personal characteristics. Kalied, Lila, Karima and Omar were observed to not consider the psychological state of their students, and they all stated that they did not care about these issues, particularly when they checked their students' understanding of grammar. Although these teachers provided different reasons as justifications for their behaviour, it can be assumed that they suffered from a lack of pedagogical knowledge which informs teachers how to deal with students when they teach English in general and grammar in particular.

### **6.3. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In this chapter aspects of practice and knowledge among the eight teachers have been described and the extent to which the teachers' practices reflected their knowledge in their grammar classes have been identified. The results presented above were obtained from analysis of the data from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Grounded theory was used to inform the analysis was (see section 5.11), and the findings show that most teachers were observed to teach grammar both deductively and inductively, and sometimes the same teachers used both methods in the same classes. That is, they taught grammar eclectically. Moreover, the interviews with teachers showed that they had various levels of knowledge regarding the teaching of English grammar.

This study offers a very complex model of the relationship between EFL teachers' practice and knowledge in teaching English grammar. Each type of relationship found might involve congruence or incongruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge of strategies in teaching grammar. The findings show that more congruent than incongruent relationships between practice and knowledge in teaching grammar were found in this study. This does

not, however, necessarily indicate that the participants taught well in their classes or that they had sufficient knowledge about teaching grammar.

The following chapter discusses the main findings of the study in the light of the existing literature. The results gained from the classroom observation and semi-structured interviews allow the development of a more accurate picture of the teachers' methods in teaching English grammar as a foreign language, and so the discussion in the next chapter draws mainly on the data obtained from the eight teachers.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

As explained in Chapter One, this study set out to find out how English grammar was taught and what teachers stated that they knew about teaching it. It also aimed to discover the relationship between such knowledge and practice. In Chapter Six the results of the analysis of data were provided. In this chapter, the findings which emerged from the analysis are interpreted and discussed. The focus of interpretation is to relate the findings to the original research questions and to the existing literature and previous research studies (see chapters three and four for more detail).

This chapter is divided into three sections according to the aims of the study. It discusses how teachers taught grammar (RQ1). The teachers' knowledge about grammar teaching in the context of a Libyan secondary school is presented in order to answer (RQ2) in section 7.4. A more detailed discussion then follows of the contribution made by this study to a theoretical understanding of teacher cognition and the teaching of grammar, which considers the relationship between practice and knowledge (RQ3). A brief summary of the chapter is also given.

#### **7.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED**

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do in their classrooms in relation to the teaching and learning of grammar?
2. What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar?
3. What is the relationship between what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do and what they state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar?

### **7.3. RESEARCH QUESTION ONE**

*What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do in their classrooms in relation to the teaching and learning of grammar?*

The results in the previous chapter illustrated what the teachers actually did in their classrooms during the teaching of English grammar. Variations in the teacher's role while teaching grammar were observed in this study. The findings revealed that grammar was taught deductively, inductively and eclectically to different degrees in individual classrooms. The following sections discuss the main findings related to teachers' classroom practice as described in Chapter Six in order to answer the first research question.

#### **7.3.1. Teaching English Grammar Deductively**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the teaching of grammar in English as a second language is still a controversial issue (Thornbury, 1999; Hedge, 2000; Huang, 2005; Ur, 2009 & Savage et al., 2010). It was seen that there is no best way to teach grammar which is appropriate for all contexts. The findings reveal that most of the teachers used deductive more than inductive methods when they were teaching English grammar (see sections 6.2.1.1, 6.2.2.1, 6.2.3.1, 6.2.4.1, 6.2.5.1 and 6.2.6.1). Certain teachers, particularly among those categorized as less experienced (see table 5.1), mostly adopted traditional methods in teaching grammar. These teachers taught grammar as a product and focused on giving students a clear and explicit framework for the language, and in this they reflect arguments for teaching grammar in this way (Krashen, 1982; Ellis, 1995; Borg, 1999b; Widodo, 2006 & Ur, 2009). This way of teaching did not lead to interactive practices, because the teachers failed to make connections between language forms such as grammatical terms and structures and communicative skills. They did not create any situations through which grammatical rules might be contextualized, so that their students would be able to use them in similar situations outside the classroom. Consequently, the students' participation was limited to answering questions directly from the textbook or those which were

raised by the teacher. This implies that those teachers were affected by behaviourist views (Derbyshire, 1999) where learners are expected to be more passive (Pollard et al., 2005).

The findings also showed that the teachers who used deductive methods corrected errors in order to emphasise accuracy and the correct form rather than meanings. This goes against Johnson's (2001:39) argument that "we do not need to worry when a learner makes an error". The less experienced teachers were observed to be slightly nervous and anxious; that is perhaps why they responded to errors very quickly. During the classroom observations, these teachers immediately corrected all errors, which means that they did not provide students with any options or enough explanation for them to overcome their immediate difficulties. This technique of teaching decreases the student teachers' exposure to the English language in the classroom, and does not help them to develop communication skills. This indicates that these teachers were suffering from a lack of knowledge of the language. Nevertheless they were not working in line with Lochman's (2002) advice that it is better if teachers do not use direct error correction techniques, because this might help students to be more confident when they are learning grammar.

In addition, when adopting deductive methods of teaching, the teachers were also observed to provide students with feedback. Most of this feedback was negative. For example, certain teachers were observed to reject students' answers and punish them, particularly when correcting their errors or checking their understanding. Motivating students and keeping them interested was ignored and appeared to be the key problem that these teachers faced. Students in this case are unlikely to enjoy learning grammar, and they may say they have understood the lesson just so that their teachers will finish the lesson, and they won't have to do any more grammar. But really they have not understood anything. According to Daines et al. (2006), feedback informs students about their achievements and it can be assumed to be beneficial in learning English.

However, it might lead to undesired results if it is provided in the way that it was observed during the classroom observation. Negative feedback might decrease students' motivation in learning (Deci et al., 1997). Therefore, it is best to use "a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based and output based" (Ellis, 2006:102).

The findings from observations confirmed that the teachers used the L1 to varying degrees when they were teaching English grammar. Similarities between the more and less experienced teachers were very clear in terms of when they found it appropriate to use their students' L1, although there were differences in some situations. It is quite clear from the findings that the more and less experienced teachers differed in their levels of knowledge about the use of students' L1 when teaching English grammar. The interesting point is that their classroom practice indicated that all of the less experienced teachers followed the same pattern of using L1 when they were teaching English grammar, whereas the more experienced teachers worked differently in certain situations, although again they all used L1 when they noticed that students were finding it difficult to understand a point, or were confused about a rule. The reason for this might be that they found "difficulties in using English for communication" (Rababah, 2003:16). Certain of the less experienced teachers were noted to summarize grammar rules in Arabic in order to help the students to understand them more easily. Those teachers considered the use of L1 as an important factor which cannot be ignored and, along with Borg (1998), Berry (2008) argued that teachers' classroom practices are guided by their personal beliefs and attitudes. However, it can be argued that this technique of using L1 has disadvantages, because, for example, helping students to build their knowledge of L2 from their knowledge of the L1 does not help in many situations. Another interesting finding was that one of the more experienced teachers did not use L1 at all in class. This teacher's practice contrasted with that of the other less experienced teachers, who used it rather too much, albeit to varying degrees, when they were teaching English grammar.

The results also revealed that the teachers who used deductive methods used similar strategies for checking their students' understanding. These techniques did not lead to interactive activities, and so may not have helped the students to apply their knowledge of grammar to their language use. This is because the students would tend to pay more attention to memorising the content of these subjects rather than investing this effort in developing their communication skills independently. For example, students were asked to complete sentences in order to investigate whether or not they had learned what had been taught and these sentences were already structured. However, they were also observed to check students' understanding throughout each activity, which is useful for their learning. This can be interpreted as a positive strategy in class. Sutton (1992:3) stated that without continuous assessment teachers could not manage their task effectively. It can also be argued that this kind of activity and its timing helps teachers to become aware of students' errors, and to test how well their students are learning. However, it does not help students to be independent learners (Savage et al., 2010).

### **7.3.2. Teaching English Grammar Inductively**

Grammar and communication complement each other in effective language use (Dickens & Woods, 1988; Celce-Murcia, 1991; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Fotos, 1994b; Ellis, 2006; Brown, 2007; Barnard & Scampton, 2008; Ur, 2009 & Savage, et al., 2010). However the teachers in this study mainly used deductive methods, whereas differences between them were also observed whenever inductive methods were practised. The teachers organized certain classroom activities so as to achieve the objectives of the learning process inductively. This means that they adopted constructivist learning theory where the student would "learn through an interaction between thinking and experience, and through the sequential development of more complex cognitive structures" (Pollard et al., 2005:145). It can be argued that the success of many classroom activities depends on good organization and the students knowing exactly what they are

doing. This can be achieved when teachers tell the students what they are going to talk about, give clear instructions about exactly what their tasks are, get the activity going and then organize feedback when the activity is over. However, this requires students to possess certain qualities and special skills in order to be able to perform these tasks properly (Cotterall, 1995). A lot of time can be wasted if the teachers give students conflicting or confusing instructions. In particular, as with guided practice, certain teachers in this study were observed to avoid interrupting students during teaching, which could reduce the need for students to negotiate and adjust their language when there was a misunderstanding. This leads students to “acquire the skills which they need to communicate effectively outside the classroom” (Brown, 2007: 46). The main purpose of monitoring at the communicative stage is to identify problems students encounter as they do the activity in order to determine the need for follow-up, for example in error correction activities (Savage et al., 2010).

In inductive activities, certain teachers in this study tended to help students not only to develop their knowledge of grammar but also to ease their learning task. For example, they used grammatical terms to describe a process, while others linked grammatical terms with pictures and sought to connect terms with their usage. They focused on the form and its meaning at the same time in some situations. The reason for this might be, as Berry (2008: 19) said, that “there is evidence that one of the major determinants of terminology use is the teachers’ own background”. This might be true here, since the teacher’s background is very important not only when teaching metalanguage but in teaching English in general. This means that these teachers appeared to have adopted more relaxed, informal methods of teaching grammar. This is in accordance with Stern’s (1992) argument that students should discover rules by themselves rather than being told in advance what the rule is. This also gives rise to the implication that these particular teachers were adopting inductive methods in their teaching (Cameron, 2001). Inductive methods usually provide more engagement in classroom activities, which is considered to be essential in L2 classes.



The findings obtained revealed a greater focus on correcting students' errors, which is supported by Savage et al's. (2010) findings in which they recommended correcting students' grammatical errors either overtly or indirectly. However, it is generally better to wait and deal with any problems during the feedback stage. This issue was investigated because "in foreign language learning, error correction has become one of the important teaching processes" (Fang & Xue-mei, 2007:10). In particular, the analysis of the data revealed that more experienced teachers used more varied techniques in the correction of students' grammatical errors while using inductive methods than did the less experienced teachers. These techniques varied from indirect to direct error correction. Both sets of teachers confirmed that they corrected their students' grammatical errors immediately in certain situations, but to do so they used different techniques. The more experienced teachers were observed to be less nervous and anxious, which is perhaps why they gave students more chance to think about their answers. These teachers were more concerned with communication, which can be achieved without linguistic accuracy, and encouraged student participation rather than immediate error correction, whereas less experienced teachers used immediate and direct intervention when errors arose. Brown (2001) considered errors to be a signal for teachers to discover whether or not students understand a rule. They are "windows to a learner's internalised understanding of the second language, and therefore they give the teacher something observable to react to" (p, 66). However, when correcting individual students, we need to consider the background and confidence of the learner in determining whether to correct errors overtly. Therefore, it can be argued that teachers of grammar should encourage their students to interact with them, in order that they might not feel embarrassed or upset when the teacher corrects their grammatical errors.

In terms of providing students with feedback while teaching grammar inductively, the findings revealed that almost all of the more experienced teachers and one

less experienced teacher used three types of positive feedback. They repeated students' answers, motivated them to participate by using utterances such as 'well done', 'thanks', 'thank you', 'good', 'excellent' and 'all right', and used both words and gestures to help them to attempt to answer. These techniques increase the self-confidence of students and provide them with more incentive to learn about English grammar because they see that their teachers are satisfied with their answers. Using these techniques may also help students to learn to correct themselves outside the classroom as well. The findings of this study in this respect concur with those of Muranoi (2000) which indicated that implicit feedback is most likely to be more effective, but conflict with Ellis' (2006: 99) conclusion that "there is some evidence that explicit feedback is more effective in both eliciting the learner's immediate correct use of the structure and in eliciting subsequent correct use".

In order to convey a meaningful message and express their opinions clearly without any ambiguity, students require enough knowledge of grammar to enable them to communicate with others without the need for rule-searching hesitations or pauses. Therefore, students themselves are also a contributory factor in making teachers hesitant to try out the inductive approach. Savage et al. (2010: 23) argued that "while students are working on their own, the teacher circulates to check that students are doing the task correctly and assists them as needed, including correcting individual students' errors in grammar and pronunciation". Certain teachers in this study were observed to check students' understanding of grammar tasks and when they found only one or two students who were not sure of what to do, quietly explained the task to them. However, if a lot of the students were having problems, they stopped the activity and explained it again to the whole class. This tactic was recommended by Hedge (2000), and these teachers applied different techniques, such as using feedback from students, exploiting the class vote, using the 'think-pair-share' technique and considering the psychological state of students. All of these methods were used in order to understand more how their students were interpreting and making sense of what

they were teaching, and students were encouraged to be more confident about participating in the classroom. However, none of the techniques of exploiting the class vote, using the 'think-pair-share' technique and considering the psychological state of students have been reported in previous studies (see sections 3.6 and 4.6). This pattern implies that these teachers created a balance between fluency and accuracy. Furthermore, given all the different techniques that these teachers used, it can be said that they had good background knowledge, such as from their own teaching experience, which was very helpful (Arioğul, 2007). A more detailed discussion of this is provided in sections 7.4 and 7.5.

As mentioned earlier, the findings of this study revealed that the teachers were observed to monitor grammar activities inductively in certain situations by asking the students to work alone, in pairs or in groups. During these activities, the teacher's role was to monitor the class and guide them to achieve the goals. These teachers were also observed to demonstrate the activities and then ask the students if they had understood the task. This means that these teachers were keen to apply constructivist methods, where the teacher is seen as a guide to students showing them the key points of the task (Brown, 2007). Moreover, the teacher's role in class is to stimulate the students to interact with each other as well as with the teacher, in order to improve their comprehension. This means that the students' role, according to the theory of constructivism, is very active, cooperative and independent (Pollard et al., 2005 & Xiangui, 2005). Consequently the class "is then learner-centred, which gives the students more opportunities to learn" (Brown, 2007: 47). After all, "students are the only ones who can actually do the learning" (Griffiths, 2004: 2).

### **7.3.3. Teaching English Grammar Eclectically**

In teaching English grammar, it can be argued that there is no best method which is appropriate in all contexts, so that a combination of methods may often be the right solution (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). The findings of the study addressed the

issues of teaching grammar deductively and inductively. They partly concur with those of Collinson (1996) in that, although teachers may implement different principles of behaviourism and constructivism, one of these paradigms is always more central. These teachers were observed to change their methods of teaching according to the requirements of the teaching and learning task, or to conduct activities such as revising previous lessons or recycling language items that students were used to hearing in class. These teaching techniques may contribute to students' language development (Cameron, 2001). Conducting such techniques is not easy because teaching and learning involve complex role change for teachers and students (Zion & Slezak, 2005).

This study also revealed that certain teachers, particularly among those who were more experienced, were observed to use mentoring activities as scaffolding to make their grammar teaching more effective and useful (Azar, 2007). Such strategies can be used to give students more chance to learn the language successfully by providing them with a productive working atmosphere in the classroom and developing a good relationship with them as well as recognising that they have different problems and needs (Doff, 1997: 283). However, if any of these qualities or skills in teaching grammar inductively are lacking, this will make their facilitator role more complex and demanding. This is because the teachers' communicative competence is a major challenge encountered during their implementation of communicative approaches to ELT (Li, 1998).

Combinations of deductive and inductive methods of teaching grammar can be considered to "result in an eclectic approach that is effective in teaching grammar to adult students" (Savage et al, 2010: 5). The findings indicate that, although certain teachers successfully combined the two types of methods in their grammar classes, others sometimes failed. For example, Manal was seen to face major challenges, although she did her best to apply her prior experience and knowledge of teaching to achieve her lesson aims. She tended to combine deductive and inductive teaching methods in her class, but in some cases she

failed to achieve the intended result. However, the reason for this might be related to students lacking confidence in their communication skills, and they may not have been interested in participating in communication activities or may have perceived these activities as a cause of embarrassment when they engaged in speaking in the English language with their teacher. The findings in this study differ from those of Sysoyev (1999), where integrative L2 grammar teaching using exploration, explanation and expression (EEE) was found to be a good method of teaching grammar. In this case, Manal failed to complete the first and second stages of Sysoyev's model.

It is worth noting that this finding contradicts Huang's (2005) in terms of how to use grammar teaching methods. Huang found that grammar might be taught as a product or as a process; however, the present findings revealed that the teachers here sometimes taught grammar as both product and process in the same class. They gave students a few signs as an explicit framework for the language, and emphasized the use of language by the students as a process to help them discover the rules of grammar by themselves. However, this needs learners to have already acquired some ability to use the language. Borg and Burns (2008: 477) argued that regular phases of explicit practice encourage students to discover rules, even if the use of direct explanation is discounted.

The findings of this study revealed that the choice of whether to use deductive, inductive or eclectic methods of teaching English grammar is a "decision as to the best way to teach grammar" which must "be taken by the practitioner within a specific situation, informed by research and by his or her own professional experience- and reflection-based judgment" (Ur, 2009: 8). However, Fotos (1993) and Mohamed (2001) found that teaching grammar inductively led to higher gains in learning than did deductive instruction. In contrast, Fotos and Ellis (1991), Sheen (1992) and Robinson (1996) found that teaching grammar in a deductive way was more effective. Other findings, such as those of Fotos (1994) and Rosa and O'Neill (1999) indicated no significant difference in effectiveness

between inductive and deductive instruction. Nevertheless, the findings of this study support those of many other researchers “who recognize that language instruction is context-dependent” (Savage et al., 2010:10), and consider that an eclectic approach is the best, particularly for students who have different attitudes towards learning the language.

To conclude, the present study has highlighted typical strategies and techniques used in teaching grammar. It provides evidence that grammar lessons are especially challenging, and grammar was taught deductively, inductively and eclectically. The teachers displayed both commonalities and variations in their teaching practices with regard to the teaching procedures used, the roles they played, and types of teaching and learning activities employed in the classroom. The teachers who used only deductive techniques of teaching grammar may have had little knowledge of teaching grammar, or they may have believed that learning grammar is all that is needed to learn a language.

#### **7.4. RESEARCH QUESTION TWO**

*What do teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar?*

The second research question seeks to establish what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar. The results described in chapter six illustrated both similarities and differences between the participants in terms of what they knew about teaching and learning English grammar. Therefore the focus of the discussion will be on the more interesting findings. Although different studies have been conducted to examine teachers’ beliefs and practice, none have compared teachers’ practice during the teaching of English grammar with their knowledge (see section 4.6). The teachers’ knowledge is discussed below.

#### **7.4.1. Teachers' Knowledge about Teaching Grammar**

The findings of this study revealed that the teachers had different levels of knowledge about teaching grammar deductively, inductively and eclectically. In other words, certain teachers had contradictory knowledge about language learning and the role grammar instruction played in the process, whereas some of them appeared to be aware of these inconsistencies. There was also evidence that their knowledge was derived from different sources, such as previous language learning experience and language teaching experience. For example, Manal said that, *"I am totally dependent upon my prior knowledge of teaching and learning, because all aspects or elements of language were related and complemented each other and needed to be considered when planning my teaching"*. This is supported by Arioğul's (2007) argument that background knowledge affects language teachers' practical knowledge and their classroom practice. The teachers who stated that traditional methods were most suitable for their students had similar justifications for their choice of teaching grammar deductively (see section 6.2.1.2). For example, Lila said that *"I always teach the new grammatical items deductively because they do not lead to worse results, but rather to the same or better outcomes"*. This could be because she was not overly concerned about students' communicative language ability, or because she was unaware of the theoretical debate that has revolved around the issue of whether grammar instruction enhances communicative language use.

Furthermore, it was interesting to find that most of the teachers were aware of the different modern methods of teaching grammar and grammatical terminology, except for some of the more experienced teachers whose training had taken place some time in the past and they had not studied such methods. This was quite surprising given the fact that they were more experienced teachers. This implies that these teachers were not up to date with the modern teaching methods and terminology used in teaching grammar. Andrews (1999:163) distinguished between "the language knowledge/awareness of the educated user of a language and that required by the teacher of that language". Deficiencies in

this area of knowledge may negatively affect their teaching because “bits of knowledge are interrelated in structured ways, and thus...one piece of knowledge cannot be changed without having effects on other pieces of knowledge in the system” (Woods, 1996: 62). However, after the researcher clarified the terminology to them, those teachers stated that they preferred to use inductive and eclectic methods while teaching English grammar, although they added that they used deductive methods in certain situations. In contrast, although the teachers categorized as less experienced were aware that grammatical terminology was not an end in itself, they still preferred to teach it in deductive ways (see section 6.2.2.2). This indicates that these teachers were aware of the importance of the content knowledge they teach, reasoning that this knowledge is exactly what the student teachers themselves will be teaching (Kennedy, 1998).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the teachers in this study also had different levels of knowledge about correcting students’ errors. It was clear that all of the teachers were aware of the importance of correcting grammatical errors as a strategy of teaching grammar. This means that they were able to “identify relationships among concepts in a field as well as relationships to concepts external to the discipline” (Grossman, et al., 1989: 27), although the link between subject knowledge and effective teaching may be less direct where L2 instruction is concerned (Borg, 2006). It could be said that all the teachers in this study agreed with the need to correct students’ grammatical errors, but they expressed that they used that knowledge in different ways while explaining their lessons. The reason was that these teachers considered correction to be useful and helpful and, if it was avoided, the students would believe they were doing everything correctly. It also confirmed students’ understanding and would help to make them more confident. This echoes what Fang and Xue-mei (2007) had to say on the matter: that error correction has become one of the most important teaching processes in foreign language learning.



The teachers in this study also stated that they corrected their students' errors according to particular criteria. For instance, some teachers preferred to correct errors immediately (Johnson, 2001). Their justification was that immediate error correction is useful to improve the language. This can also be attributed to the teachers' worry that errors might become internalised if they were not corrected immediately (Fauziati, 2011). These findings are consistent with McDonough and Shaw's (2003) argument that correcting errors immediately and providing feedback may help students achieve better results. Furthermore, Kelly (2006) stated that correcting errors could be done immediately, after the learner finishes his/her message, or at the end of the lesson. These teachers, and particularly those who were more experienced, confirmed that they used different techniques for correcting students' grammatical errors. They believed in giving students more opportunity to learn more about grammar. These teachers preferred to correct students' errors after making sure that they were unaware of the errors committed. According to their responses, this technique was used to provide chances for peer-correction, which means that they connected their practical pedagogical knowledge to their theoretical knowledge. This knowledge gained in their formal training or their teaching experience would enable them to develop alternative conceptions of grammar teaching and make it more effective.

However, the findings of this study evidenced that most of the teachers did not seem to have sufficient knowledge about providing students with feedback. This was clear when, for example, none of them were aware of the use of questions as feedback, even though some were observed to actually do this in their classes (see section 6.2.4.2). It seems that these teachers suffered from a lack of background knowledge about providing students with feedback in their grammar classes. This could be due to a lack of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which is defined as a "special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding" (Shulman, 1987: 8). However, knowing about different types of feedback is important for teachers in teaching English grammar. "It is best conducted using a

mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based and output based” (Ellis, 2006: 102).

The findings also revealed that the teachers had different levels of knowledge concerning the significance of repeating the students' answers as a feedback technique. Three of the more experienced teachers expressed that they had no idea about this technique, and said that they may have unconsciously repeated the student's answers when teaching. This means that these teachers used this technique of feedback but were not aware of it. Yet this technique gives students confidence, and it can give the teacher a general idea of whether or not the students have grasped the model (Harmer, 1998: 65). This technique of feedback has also not been mentioned in previous studies (see sections 3.6 and 4.6).

Moreover, the findings obtained indicated that all of the teachers were aware of the importance of using positive feedback as a technique to motivate students to participate in class activities. However, there were two different arguments among teachers about providing students with feedback in order to motivate them. Some of the teachers stated that they knew about the importance of this and put what they knew regularly into practice. Other teachers stated that they knew about motivating students but were not observed to put what they knew regularly into practice. These teachers gave various reasons for this. For example, Omar said that, “*when I praise students too much, this may stop their improvements because they may believe they are perfect*”. This conflicts with the argument of Good and Brophy (1994: 215), who proposed that “the teacher should be a patient, encouraging person who supports students' learning efforts. Students should feel comfortable taking intellectual risks because they know that they will not be embarrassed or criticised if they make a mistake”. Therefore, teachers of English grammar should consider students' needs in order to help them to understand and cope with grammar.

Another interesting finding was that all of the teachers stated that they sometimes rejected students' answers as a technique of direct negative feedback, but they said that they used it more or less often. In fact this goes against Cook's (2001) argument that the teacher's ways of motivating students and the ways they are treated are important elements in successfully teaching a language and are strongly related to students' achievements in learning language. According to the data analysis, this type of feedback was practiced more by less experienced teachers. More discussion of this issue is provided in section 7.5. Another interesting issue detected during the classroom observation and then discussed in the interviews was the discrepancies among teachers in their reactions towards errors committed by students in class. While some teachers supported the idea of punishment if students made errors, others strongly opposed this practice. The latter believed that this might create a negative attitude towards the teacher as well as the subject as a whole (Yule, 2006). These disagreements between teachers indicated that some of them may have lacked knowledge of the levels of understanding of their own students which has attracted the attention of researchers such as Shulman (1987) and Marks (1990) as a basic component of pedagogical content knowledge.

The findings also revealed that the teachers in this study were in agreement about the undesirability of using the students' L1 in L2 classes. Yet only one teacher, Tariq, said that he did not use the L1 at all in his classes. This was also a consideration for the teachers, where some supported using the students' L1 when teaching grammar, and others did not (see section, 6.2.5.2). In particular, teachers categorized as less experienced (see table 5.1) stated that they knew about the use of L1 and used it to explain new words, to check students' understanding, to move from one activity to another, to correct errors and when noticing that a student did not understand. Furthermore, it can be argued that it may be difficult to teach as L2 without using the L1, and it saves time that might be wasted trying to enforce a rule prohibiting the use of the L1. In the literature there is also no clear agreement among researchers about the use of students'

first language in L2 classes (Al-Nofaie, 2010). Ellis (1984), for example, believed that the target language should be used more than the first language; whereas others such as Tumbull (2001) suggest using the students' L1 in teaching grammar and vocabulary, but not too much.

Those teachers who supported the use of the L1 said that it is useful when teaching grammar, although some said they used it only when they could see a real need. They thought it helped teachers and students to create new language, and was useful for overcoming problems. Manal added that it helped students to connect ideas, which perhaps shows the similarities between the rule being explained and a rule in their first language. This was supported by Ellis (1997), who also stated that if the structures of the two languages are distinctly different then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in the second language. Although certain teachers in this research opposed using the students' L1, nevertheless they said that they did use it in various different situations. These teachers thought it was not good for teachers and students to use the L1 when the class was about the L2. These teachers disagreed with Burden (2000), who found that L1 use creates a more relaxing learning environment, and they were in line with Cook (2001) when he suggested that first language use should either be completely forbidden or at least minimized in L2 classes. He advocated the more positive view of maximizing L2 use, since the L1 is always present in the learner's mind and so it would be artificial, and sometimes unsuccessful, to avoid its use completely.

No previously published research has specifically investigated the checking of students' understanding in relation to the teachers' knowledge about teaching grammar (see section 4.6). Different interpretations of the findings were gained in relation to employing the techniques of checking of students' understanding in the classes. For instance, the more experienced teachers confirmed that strategy of teaching helped students to work in pairs as well as in groups, and encouraged them to raise appropriate questions during the class, which gives the

implication that these teachers had more practical knowledge of applying different techniques to check their students' understanding than those who were less experienced. In this case, it can be argued that these "teachers had sufficient subject-matter knowledge, which plays a part in shaping what they do in the classroom" (Borg, 2001: 21). This kind of knowledge could concern the "different methods of verification and justification of conclusions" (Schwab, 1978: 246).

The findings also showed that all of the teachers were aware of the importance of checking students' understanding of grammar rules. These findings are in line with those of Wilson (1988), who confirmed that such knowledge is essential for effective teaching, not only for students but also for teachers. When interviewed, both the more and less experienced teachers said that they knew about and used different strategies to check students' understanding in different ways and at different times. These strategies included simple quizzes at the end of lessons, engaging students in the process, using feedback from students, exploiting the class vote, using the 'think-pair-share' technique, and considering the psychological state of students. These techniques are different from those mentioned by Savage et al. (2010), who stated that understanding is checked by having students do the first item in an exercise, or to have a student volunteer explain the task and to ask questions about the process. This indicates that these teachers had sufficient knowledge about students' understanding as a basic component of pedagogical content knowledge. This knowledge refers to the teacher's knowledge of what the students already know about the subject matter, their skills and abilities, and what they still find puzzling about the content (Grossman, 1990).

In summary, this research has highlighted various typical patterns of teacher knowledge about teaching English grammar, even though only a relatively small sample of teachers in the part of Libya has been included in the study. Most of

these patterns have not been mentioned before in the literature (see chapters 3 and 4).

### **7.5. RESEARCH QUESTION THREE**

*What is the relationship between what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do and what they state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar?*

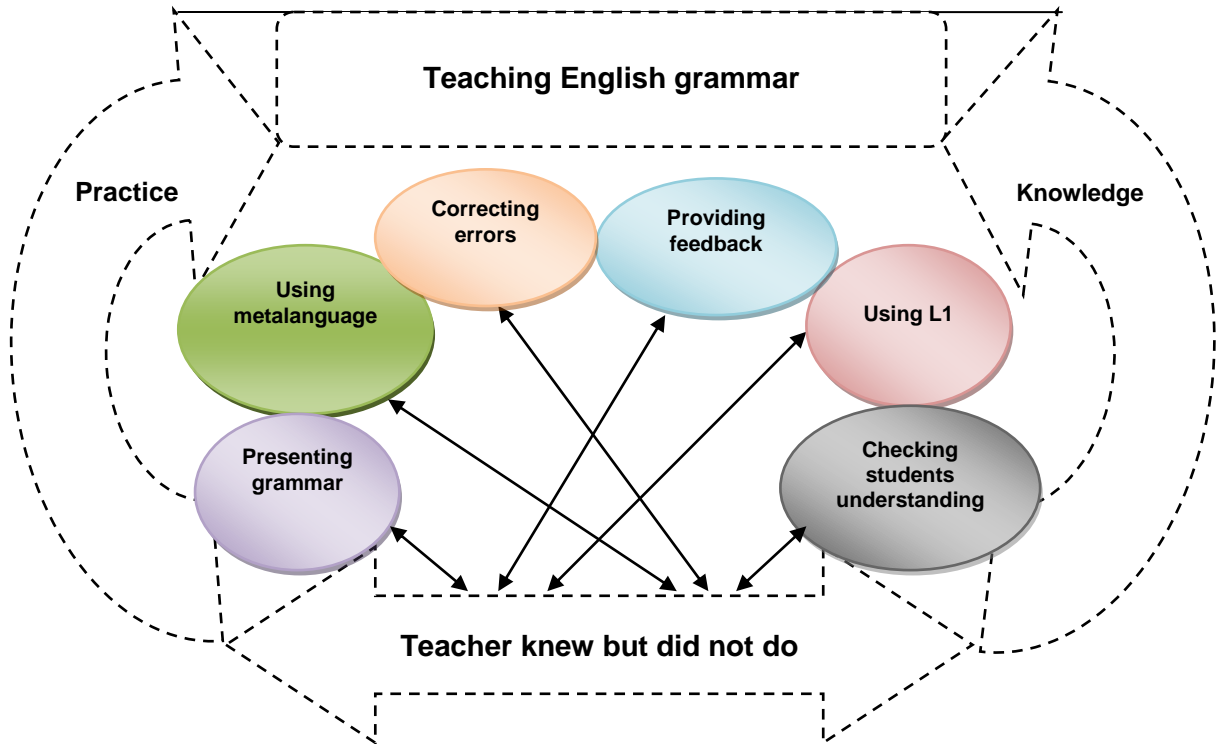
The present research differs from previous studies in that it specifically investigates the relationship between teachers' knowledge, rather than their beliefs, and their classroom practice in teaching grammar (see sections 4.2.2 and 4.6). The findings are also different from those of previous studies in several respects. For example, Borg (2006) found that there was a relationship between what teachers believed and what they actually did in the classroom, where practice was guided by beliefs. However, this study has found several types of relationship between the teachers' practice and their knowledge about teaching. In this section the main relationships of incongruence and congruence which were found are discussed in more detail.

#### **7.5.1. Relationships of Incongruence**

Notwithstanding individual variations in the enactment of their roles, the eight teachers in this study on the whole displayed a fairly consistent relationship between their modes of teaching and what they stated that they knew about teaching English grammar. In this case, although this study investigated teachers' knowledge rather than beliefs, and beliefs can be considered as part of knowledge, the present findings are in line with those of Kennedy (1996), Carless (2003) and Chaves de Castro (2005), who found that changes in beliefs do not necessarily lead to corresponding changes in teachers' practices (see sections 4.2.2 and 4.6).

#### **7.5.1.1. Knowledge and practice: teachers knew but did not do**

There were certain teachers whose statements indicated that they had sufficient knowledge about certain strategies of teaching English grammar, but unfortunately they were not observed to use that knowledge in their classes. This means that there were mismatches between the teachers' knowledge and their perceived pedagogical practice and actual practice. Such mismatches were identified among the teachers in terms of their presentation of grammar, use of metalanguage, correction of errors, provision of feedback, use of L1 and checking of students' understanding. Reviewing the relevant literature revealed that no studies so far have investigated these issues in the teaching of English grammar in terms of what teachers know about such strategies (see section and 4.6). The relationship between knowledge and practice is interesting and deserves deeper investigation as it has potential positive and negative pedagogical implications in the field of teacher cognition and the teaching of grammar. Figure 7.1 below shows in which strategies of teaching grammar incongruent relationships were observed between the teachers' practice and their knowledge.



**Figure: 7.1. Teachers' Practice and Knowledge: teachers knew about teaching grammar but did not act on this knowledge**

The findings of this study revealed that certain teachers were observed to not present grammar inductively, although they stated that they knew about and were aware of the importance of this method (see section 6.2). This means that there was incongruence between the teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge of grammar teaching methods, and it also indicates that the teachers' practice did not reflect their knowledge. These teachers were asked to justify their behaviour, and two of them stated that they were keen to use deductive more than inductive methods. For example, Lila said that using deductive methods *"do not lead to worse results, but rather to the same or better outcomes"*. It can be assumed that these teachers thought that learning cannot be enhanced if students are left to discover grammatical rules by themselves. These teachers might have been influenced by their own teachers who had taught English in a deductive manner. It is likely that these teachers were strongly influenced by their prior experiences as learners during their early years



(Breen, et al., 2001). In this case, the teachers' prior experiences and knowledge of language learning played a significant role in their practices. This may also lead some teachers to recount incidents involving experimentation with new techniques which had led them to change their practices. This was also supported by Borg (2003: 81) when he said that "There is ample evidence that teachers' experiences as learners can inform cognitions about teaching and learning which continue to exert an influence on teachers throughout their careers".

However, the rationale given by a third teacher was different. He stated that the effectiveness of inductive activities required students to have good levels of English language ability. This means that this teacher was aware that using deductive methods of teaching grammar are not effective, but he nevertheless felt forced to teach in this way although his preference would be to use inductive methods. It can be argued that it is difficult for a teacher to teach a class in which students have different mental abilities, levels of intelligence and learning habits; therefore, the methods used should employ various perspectives to meet the learners' needs. Randall and Thornton (2001) argued that teachers need to be aware of the centrality of the learners, and how their behaviour will affect individual learners. It can be argued that this teacher had sufficient knowledge about students' understanding, which is considered to be a basic component of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987; Marks, 1990). This type of knowledge concerns the teacher's appreciation of what the students already know about the subject matter, their skills and abilities, and what they still find puzzling about the content (Grossman, 1990). This type of knowledge about students may offer great insights into the decisions made to use deductive or inductive methods of teaching grammar. However, the teacher may still give opportunities to students to participate, at least gradually, until they have reached the appropriate level of English. These opportunities may then help students to learn a foreign language inductively.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that some of the more experienced teachers were observed to not introduce grammar forms in advance, and they knew about the importance of this strategy. These teachers showed more criticality in their use of teaching methods, in that they concentrated only on what fitted their teaching task and facilitated the process of conveying knowledge to their students. This means that the knowledge held by more experienced teachers was more integrated than that of the less experienced teachers. This can be attributed to the prior knowledge that shapes the teachers' new learning, and eventually influences teachers' practical knowledge (Arioğul, 2007). More to the point, these teachers tended to consider the four stages in the successful transfer of knowledge suggested by Grant, et al. (1998), which are awareness, association, assimilation and application. The reason for this might be that all of these teachers were convinced that teaching metalanguage in advance does not enable students to transfer their grammatical knowledge into language use. For example, Sami said: "*I presented the grammar forms before to students but I found that they understood them but they were unable to use them*". These teachers were observed to teach grammatical terms in a way that helped students to use the language. The patterns observed in these teachers supported the findings of Burns (2008: 479) that "teachers make sense of their work largely in relation to experiential and practical knowledge" and that "formal theory does not play a prominent and direct role in shaping teachers' explicit rationales for their work".

In addition, the findings revealed that the less experienced teachers did not focus on both form and usage together, even though they stated that they knew about the importance of this. Incongruence between the teachers' practice and their knowledge about connecting form and usage was obvious in this case, which indicates a negative pedagogical impact on students being able to transfer their knowledge of grammar into practice. The problem was that these teachers were aware of the inductive teaching of metalanguage but did not practise it. In her interview, for example, Lila considered that teaching grammar by introducing

form and meaning was much better than focusing only on form. This implies that these teachers were not fully aware of how to help students to transfer their knowledge of grammar into language use, as for example in Leech's (1994: 18) suggestion that teachers should understand and implement processes of simplification by which overt knowledge of grammar can best be presented to learners at different stages of learning. However, "the grammar taught should be one that emphasises not just form but also the meanings and uses of different grammatical structures" (Ellis, 2006:102). This is also supported by Azar (2007), who stated that it is very important for students to distinguish between grammatical form and usage if they are to know how to use terms correctly in different situations.

According to the teachers' responses, the lack of relevant reference sources and in-service training courses negatively affected their efforts to deal with the new syllabus successfully. As addressed earlier in section 6.2.2.2, Elham, for example, recounted the sad story of being excluded from training sessions in her school by head teachers and inspectors. They justified this very serious action by arguing that training was only for weak teachers, whose names were listed on the notice board. As she said, "*this indicated that the named teachers were weak and not able to teach properly*". Elham felt very upset about what had happened at her school, and thought that it had definitely affected her performance in the classroom. Both teachers and students would have been made aware that the staff named on the list were not good at their job, putting those teachers in a very difficult situation. Such behaviour could have undesired effects on the teacher's personality as well as his/her attitude towards the teaching process and the school as a whole. The need for regular in-service training courses for all teachers was also recommended by Adey and Hewitt (2004:156), who pointed out that "real change in practice will not arise from short programmes of instruction, especially when those programmes take place in a centre removed from the teacher's own classroom". However, Kennedy (2005) found that teacher training programmes may not be effective if the teachers do not take into

consideration the contexts in which they work. Thus, it can be argued that training sessions are needed for teacher development but these should be focused and organized so as to produce positive outcomes.

In terms of the relationship between practice and knowledge, although some teachers expressed sufficient knowledge about the advantages of correcting students' errors immediately, they did not make use of this strategy. This can be considered as positive, since they considered correcting students' errors while they were speaking would not be useful. This means that these teachers understood that language is above all a means of communication, but their teaching still focuses on accuracy rather than fluency. These findings are in line with the recommendations of Kelly (2006) that correction should be done immediately after the learner has finished his/her message, and again at the end of the lesson. However, this finding does not agree with those of Canh and Barnard (2009), whose participants preferred to correct grammatical errors at any time and emphasised the systematic practice of grammatical terms. In this case, it can be argued that the present study differs from previous research in many respects. For example, although there was incongruence between what teachers did and what they stated that they knew, this could sometimes have positive pedagogical value. As reflected in the teachers' responses, too much focus on accuracy in grammar might discourage students and be unhelpful in developing the fluency which is considered essential in oral communication (Hargie & Dickson, 2004).

A similar type of incongruence was also evident when certain teachers, particularly those who were less experienced, did not put into practice what they knew about correcting students' grammatical errors. This was especially true in relation to giving chances for peer-correction. All of these teachers agreed that the problem was the students' level of English. For example, Karima's justification was that "*this technique will not work with students because they were not linguistically competent enough to do peer-correction*". This type of

thinking is common in Libya, when people often say that teachers rarely commit mistakes and students are always to blame (Tantani, 2005). Since this technique requires the active participation of the students from the beginning of the lesson, teachers foresee its failure to maximise the learning of the students if they find them to be very passive. Although McDonough and Shaw (2003) pointed out that the methods used for and decisions made about error correction depend on the teacher's attitude and the type of error, it can be argued that the incongruence here between what these teachers did and what they said that they knew had a negative impact on the teaching of grammar. This is because ignoring this teaching technique might lead to less engagement in classroom activities.

Another significant finding is that certain teachers in this study did not repeat students' answers in their classes, even though they stated that they knew about this technique for providing students with feedback. This was very surprising given that these teachers expressed a full understanding of the value of using this technique of feedback. Kalied, for example, said that, *"repeating students speech helping them to reach to the right answer as a sign of confirmation to what they said right or wrong...it sends a message to students that they did well or not"*. On the other hand, a number of recent studies on language teaching show that errors sometimes do need correction (Brown, 2000; Gass & Selinker, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Sercombe, 2002; Block, 2003; Hulsterson, 2005). However, it can be argued that the problem here was rather a question of 'when' and 'how' correction should be conducted. When teachers did not repeat students' answers in classes, this means that they did not give them the chance to think again about the correct answer. It also means that the teachers used deductive methods of teaching where the teacher is central (Savage et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be considered to be negative feedback, which has a negative pedagogical impact because it does not encourage students to develop self-confidence. These teachers justified their behaviour in terms of reasons such as lack of time and the students' low level of English (see section 6.2.4.2). But this is not convincing, because they could have done more, at least to try to use this technique of

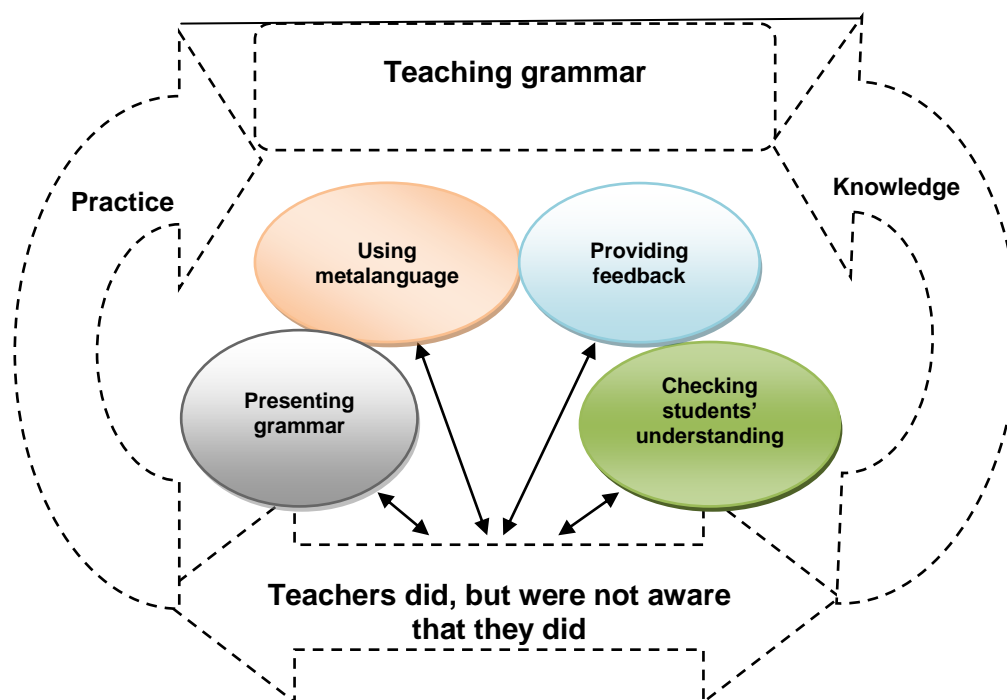
feedback occasionally in their classes. They could also manage activities to allow time for this, as did other teachers.

In addition, this type of relationship between knowledge and practice also emerged when certain teachers were observed to not use the L1 in explaining new words, correcting students' errors and checking their understanding, although they stated that they knew about the effectiveness of this when interviewed. These teachers gave several justifications (see section 6.2.5.2), and clearly disagreed about using the L1. Some teachers opposed its use altogether while others supported using it but only in certain situations. The latter could be justified because, for example, students sometimes could not understand the meaning of new words and new grammar terms without the L1 being used. This is plausible, because students may lose track and be unable to follow their teachers' lessons plans if they do not know the meaning of certain words. This was also confirmed by Atkinson (1987), who found that students felt that they would be unable to understand the target language input until it had been translated into their L1. This does not mean, however, that these teachers used traditional methods of teaching grammar which encourage the use of the L1 in L2 classes, because they translated only certain words. This is supported by Tumbull (2001), who argued that the use of L1 can facilitate the process of teaching grammar and vocabulary but cautioned against teachers relying on it too much. However, researchers such as Al-Nofaie (2010: 65) have suggested that "mixing two languages would not help students to reach fluency; therefore, learners should employ their mental abilities to understand the meaning of the new language".

#### **7.5.1.2. Practice and Knowledge: teachers did, but were not aware that they did**

This type of incongruence relationship is the opposite of that discussed above. The findings revealed that certain teachers in this study applied certain strategies for teaching grammar but were not aware that they did so. This phenomenon was

identified in relation to four main strategies of teaching grammar: presenting grammar, using metalanguage, providing feedback and checking students' understanding. The literature review reveals that no previous studies have discussed this type of relationship (see section 4.6). Figure 7.2 below summarizes the relevant findings.



**Figure: 7.2. Teachers' Practice and Knowledge: teachers did, but were not aware they did**

It is interesting that certain of the more experienced teachers were observed to be already using both inductive and deductive teaching methods, whereas in their interviews they stated that they did not know about these methods and could not distinguish between the different techniques associated with deductive and inductive teaching (see section 6.2.1.3). They did not even know the terms deductive and inductive teaching. This means that there was clear incongruence between their practice and knowledge about teaching English grammar. Again this phenomena has not been investigated in previous studies (see section 4.6). These teachers can be assumed to have suffered from a lack of the theoretical knowledge which would help them to be aware of what should be applied in their

classes. The importance of this lack of knowledge has been identified in many studies, such as those by Wright and Bolitho (1993); Leech (1994) and Thornbury (1997) who found that the lack of teachers' subject matter knowledge had impacted on their practice. Grossman et al. (1989: 28) claimed that "knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of the content can affect how teachers critique textbooks, how they select material to teach, how they structure their courses, and how they conduct instruction".

Furthermore, most of the more experienced teachers did not know the meaning of the term metalanguage, although they were observed to use it in their teaching. This could be simply because the word metalanguage is of recent origin. However, even though these teachers were unaware of the meaning of the term metalanguage, they still taught in such a way that helped their students to understand the rules of grammar in order to use them when they were communicating with others. This mode of teaching was recommended by Freeman (1991), who found that grammatical terms are useful if teachers use them in ways that help to improve and develop their learners' ability to acquire the language. This is supported by Ellis (2006:102), who argued that "A focus-on-forms approach is valid as long as it includes an opportunity for learners to practise behaviour in communicative tasks". However, the present findings in this regard are interesting in contrasting with those of Andrews (1999a; 2006), where teachers had a firm grasp of grammar and linguistic metalanguage, but that did not help them to explain grammatical rules or mistakes. This can be attributed to the fact that his research focus was only on teaching metalanguage as an end in itself, or may be because of the teachers' background (Berry, 2008).

Moreover, this kind of relationship between practice and knowledge emerged when certain teachers were observed to use the questioning word 'what?' as a technique of feedback, especially when students gave the wrong answers. When asked to explain the reasons for this behaviour, the teachers all stated that they were unaware of doing it (see section 6.2.4.2). This behaviour can be interpreted



as explicit negative feedback which might hinder students from participating in further activities. Contrary to this, Muranoi (2000) and Ellis (2006) found that explicit feedback is more influential not only in eliciting the learner's immediate correct use of the structure but also in eliciting subsequent correct use. In this case, the students may have felt as if they had committed a crime, and thus became more hesitant to speak, which would of course affect their learning. What makes matters worse was that these teachers were not even aware that they were performing such behaviour in their classes. Therefore, these "teachers need to acquire the skills and knowledge to implement something, particularly if it is slightly different to their existing methods" (Carless 1999:23).

Furthermore, one of the positive pedagogical influences found in this type of relationship between practice and knowledge was that certain teachers repeated student answers as a technique of feedback despite not being aware of what they had done. These teachers were also among those categorized as more experienced (see table 5.1). For example, Tariq said that "*when I teach, I sometimes forget myself, especially when I engage with students*". Using this strategy as a technique of positive feedback can lead to the inductive teaching and learning of English grammar because students are given the opportunity to participate, and interaction in the language classroom is thus increased (Cook 2001). Giving students more time to think about the right answer may lead to them becoming more confident and more independent in other activities (Daines et al., 2006). However, negative feedback has been found to be more effective in a study by Nassaji and Swain (2000), but only with advanced learners.

The final example of this relationship between practice and knowledge appeared when certain more experienced teachers used the 'think-pair-share' technique to check students' understanding in their classes. Again, surprisingly, these teachers stated that they were not aware that they used this technique. In this case, despite representing incongruence between practice and knowledge, it may have had a positive impact because these teachers can be assumed to be

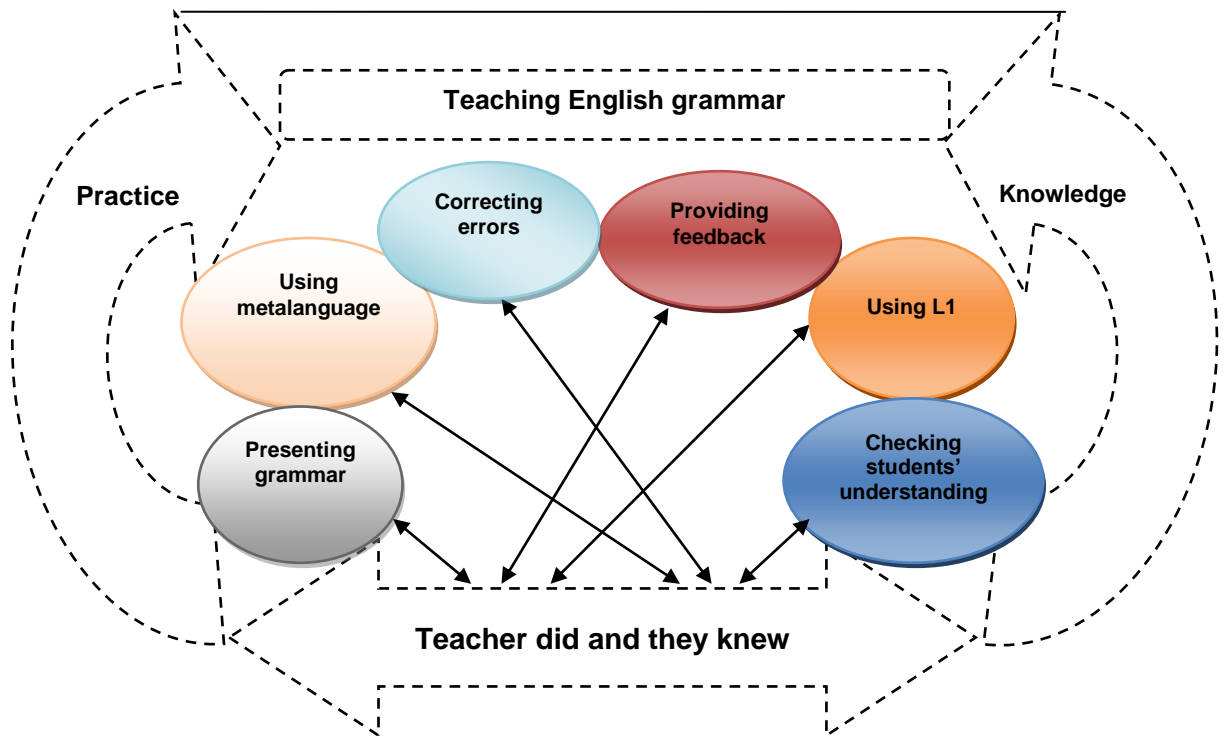
aiming to teach grammar inductively even though they were not aware of it. However, Wright and Bolitho (1993) found that any lack of TLA will impact negatively on teacher performance. These teachers used this technique in order to make decisions about their students (Harlen, 1994). Checking students' understanding of grammar in this way helps students to transfer their knowledge into practice and leads to inductive learning. These teachers used this technique to support students' learning progress as a basis for future procedures (Hedge, 2000).

### **7.5.2. Relationships of Congruence**

In addition to the incongruence found between the practice and knowledge of the eight teachers sampled, congruence was also found. Despite individual diversity in the enactment of their roles, the teachers in the study as a whole displayed a fairly consistent relationship between the ways in which they acted in the grammar classes and their knowledge about their work. The present study has considered teachers' beliefs to be part of their knowledge, and therefore it can be argued that the findings in this study concerning these teachers are also in line with those of Johnson (1992a); Richards et al. (1992); Yim (1993); Smith (1996); Woods (1996) and Ng and Farrell, (2003), who all found that the classroom practices of teachers are governed by their beliefs. Some of the interesting findings in this study which are discussed in this section have not been reported before, and suggest that not all relationships of congruence between teachers' practice and knowledge have positive pedagogical value (see section 4.6).

#### **7.5.2.1. Practice and Knowledge: teachers did and they knew**

Although this situation may seem to be positive, there is evidence in this study that not all relationships of congruence between practice and knowledge lead to positive results in terms of presenting grammar, using metalanguage, correcting errors, providing feedback, using L1, and checking students' understanding. The main issues of interest are discussed below.



**Figure 7.3: Teachers' Practice and Knowledge: teachers did and they knew**

The findings show that the less experienced teachers in particular tended to present grammar deductively, and they had knowledge about this (see section 6.2.1.3). This means that there was congruence between what they did and what they said that they knew. The disconcerting thing here was that these teachers understood the advantages and disadvantages of presenting grammar deductively, but they still used traditional methods of teaching in their classes. In other words, they failed to make connections between the language forms and grammatical structures presented and communicative skills, even though they stated that they knew about inductive methods. Using deductive methods is still considered to be less effective in teaching grammar (Widodo, 2006). This can be expected to have negative pedagogical effects because these teachers were not creating situations through which grammatical rules might be contextualized, and so their students would not be able to use them in similar situations outside the classroom. The problem was that these teachers thought that deductive methods

were effective and do not lead to bad results (see section 6.2.1.2). This indicates that these teachers were acting in line with Borg's (1998) findings that teachers' classroom practices are guided by their personal beliefs and attitudes. However, the findings obtained were not in line with those of Berry's (2008), who stated that certain factors are out of the teacher's control, such as the presence of terminology in textbooks, or its usefulness for students. The practice of these participants was teacher-centred, where they introduced grammar forms in advance and then explained the rules.

Congruence was also found when certain teachers, particularly among those who were more experienced, focused on both form and usage together and knew about the importance of this. It is very important for students to distinguish between grammatical form and usage if they are to know how to use words correctly in different situations (Azar, 2007). In other words, these teachers taught metalanguage in such a way that helped students to use the language. For example, Tariq used the grammatical terms in an inductive way through describing a process to make something. This type of activity encourages students to introduce the grammar items in an inductive way to narrate a story, and at the same time they understood how to formulate grammar to produce new sentences.

Furthermore, certain teachers from both the more and less experienced teachers used direct correction, and corrected errors while students were speaking, although they also stated that they knew about the effects of this. This implies that these teachers did not give enough explanation when dealing with their students' grammatical errors (Lochtman, 2002). Whereas current advice according to researchers such as Ellis (2006) and Barnard and Scampton (2008) and Brown (2007) put emphasises communication in teaching grammar. Therefore, it can be considered that the relationship between practice and knowledge in terms of congruence between what teachers knew and what they actually did can have negative pedagogical effects, as Hargie and Dickson

(2004) concluded. It was also stated by the same authors that correcting grammar in communication activities is necessary and important. However, correcting errors while students are speaking might discourage them and be unhelpful in developing the fluency which is considered essential in oral communication. Students may be more likely to feel disappointed if errors are corrected in such a way that suggests disapproval.

In addition, another area of congruence between practice and knowledge concerned correcting grammatical errors. Certain more experienced teachers corrected errors after students had finished speaking and they stated that they knew about this. This means that these teachers knew that “grammar teaching and communicative teaching both completed each other and he advised teachers to do both” (Azar, 2007: 11). The teachers’ behaviour then can be assumed to have been affected by their own learning and teaching experience. These teachers corrected errors in a supportive manner, which might lead to students being more motivated to learn grammar. The teachers’ response in this case was also in line with Fotos’ (1993) and Mohamed’s (2001) conclusions, who found that inductive instruction has been found to lead to higher gains in learning than deductive instruction. Therefore, it can be argued that not interrupting students and delaying until after they have finished has positive pedagogical effects.

There was also congruence between practice and knowledge when the more experienced teachers tended to provide stimulating feedback in terms of more encouraging words and praises. On the other hand, less experienced teachers did not exploit this tactic in their classes despite the fact that all of the teachers said that they knew about this technique. This mismatch can be assumed to be due to the teachers’ lack of pedagogical knowledge concerning the students’ psychological state, because EFL teachers cannot do their work effectively if learners are not motivated (Dornyei, 2001). Furthermore, this type of feedback can be interpreted as an extrinsic incentive where the students are pushed by their teachers to participate more in learning grammar (Yule, 2006). Although the findings revealed

that different teachers motivated students in this way more or less frequently, it can be argued that motivating students like this provides them with satisfaction and immediate success in developing their learning and responding to the teacher's teaching strategies (Macaro, 1997). This was also confirmed by Cook (2001), who said that the teacher's motivation of the students is an important element in successfully teaching a language. Therefore, it can be argued that success or failure is partly the result of the feedback teachers provide to their students during grammar class.

In addition, all of the teachers used the tactic of rejecting students' answers, again at different frequencies, and they all stated that they knew about this method of negative feedback. The findings also revealed that the less experienced teachers were observed to use this technique more than the more experienced teachers. This indicates that their own teaching and learning experience was the main factor which influenced their practice. One possible reason for this might be a lack of teaching experience, as highlighted by Westerman (1991). However, when asked to justify their behaviour the teachers gave different reasons (see section 6.2.4.2). For example, Karima, one of the less experienced teachers, held the belief that rejecting students' answers was necessary and normal behaviour and that it would not affect the students' reactions. In this case, Karima's practice seemed to be guided by her beliefs. However, Good and Brophy (1994: 215) concluded that "students need both ample opportunities to learn and steady encouragement and support of their learning efforts". Practice may have negative implications, because when teachers reject the students answers they might become demotivated to learn grammar. In this respect these teachers can be assumed to have failed "to find ways to encourage their students to accept the goals of classroom activities and seek to develop the intended knowledge and skills that these activities were designed to develop" (Brophy, 1998: 18).

Furthermore, certain of the less experienced teachers punished students when they made errors, yet they stated that they knew about the effects of this. When interviewed, these teachers were asked to give justifications (see section 6.2.4.2), and all agreed that students should be punished in order to know the right answer the next time. This conflicts with Rivers' (1981: 227) argument, that "new language can be developed only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other". This type of negative feedback may have negative pedagogical effects on student achievement because their emotions are not considered. These teachers did not seem to know that "classrooms are social constructions where teachers, learners, dimensions of the local educational philosophy, and more general socio-cultural values, beliefs, and expectations all meet" (Locastro, 2001:495). Cooper (2006:1-2) also argued that by "understanding the significant role of emotion and empathy in teaching and learning ... we now know that they are central to the fast processing of the brain and are embedded in all our interactions with our fellow human beings and the environment". The recommendations of Good and Brophy (1994: 215) concluded that "students should feel comfortable taking intellectual risks because they know that they will not be embarrassed or criticised if they make a mistake". These teachers did not consider the emotional state of students as highlighted in Rivers' (1981: 227) words: "the emotional and personality factors which are involved in a verbal exchange, expression or personal meaning in a new language can be developed only in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, where students feel at ease with the teacher and with each other".

Moreover, another relationship of congruence was found between practice and knowledge among all of the less experienced teachers who were observed to use the L1 when they explained new words, corrected students' errors, moved from one activity to another, and checked students' understanding, even though they all stated that they knew about its effects. These teachers were happy to use the students' L1 in many situations, although their reasons varied. Some of

them believed that it helped students to achieve the best learning outcomes and increased their motivation to learn grammar, hence leading to the better achievement of the lesson's aims. This is plausible, because students may lose track and be unable to follow their teachers' lessons plans if they do not know the meaning of certain words. This was also confirmed by Atkinson (1987), who found that students felt that they would be unable to understand the target language input until it had been translated into their L1. This finding was also in line with Burden's (2000) argument in which he stated that L1 use creates a more relaxing learning environment. Furthermore, this finding agreed with those of Wells (1999) and Tang (2002) that the occasional use of L1 by both students and teachers increases comprehension. It can be argued that this practice has positive value when students have failed to grasp the meaning of certain words in English, thus helping to improve comprehension. Using the L1 can increase motivation, which can be considered as an internal power source that helps EFL students to achieve their aims, and they cannot do their work effectively if it is missing (Dornyei, 2001). However, it may not work with all students because there will always be some who have no great wish or motivation to learn. Conversely, other teachers said that they felt obliged to use the L1. Whatever the teachers' justifications were, it could be argued that they would agree with Auerbach (1993), who concluded that using L1 reduces anxiety among learners. From the present researcher's experience of teaching English, Libyan students do indeed prefer lessons to be explained in Arabic as it makes them feel more comfortable in the classroom. However, it can be said that using L1 in many different situations may lead to negative outcomes. Translating every word or each sentence must hinder students, as they are not sufficiently exposed to the target language. This is not helpful for students seeking to understand an L2. This was confirmed by Atkinson (1987), who believed that too much use of L1 makes learners feel that they will be unable to understand input in the target language until it has been translated into their L1.



The final incidence of congruence found concerned one teacher (Tariq) who was observed to use the class vote as a technique for checking students' understanding in his grammar classes. He also stated that he knew about it when interviewed, saying that, "*I use this technique in order to know how much percentage of my lesson that I have achieved*". Checking students' understanding was described by Harris and McCann (1994:5) as "a way of collecting information about our students' performance in normal classroom conditions". It can be argued that this technique has a positive pedagogical effect for a teacher in checking students' understanding in an inductive way, asking them to give reasons for their choices. This indicated that this teacher had sufficient knowledge which aimed to help students to create interaction. The use of this technique for this purpose has not been reported in previous studies regarding the teaching of grammar (see sections 3.6 and 4.6).

### **7.5.3. The Relationships between Teachers' Practice and Knowledge and Contextual Factors**

Given the above findings, it can be said that there was a strong relationship between what teachers actually did in their classes and their knowledge. However, the teachers' practice was sometimes guided by their knowledge and in other cases it was more influenced by the context. In other words, the findings indicate that teachers have knowledge about teaching grammar, and they make decisions drawing upon this knowledge in response to the school and cultural contexts. Tudor (2003) argued that the educational process is not only an exchange of information between teachers and students; it also involves a set of conventions which may be decisive in what happens between these parties. Borg (2006) stated that the context in which teachers work has a major impact on their cognition and practice, which may have both a negative and positive effects on their performance in the classroom. This was also confirmed by the teachers themselves, particularly when they explained the reasons behind their behaviour. This means that teachers' reflections on their practices and their context of work informed their understanding of the teaching and learning of grammar, while their

enhanced understandings become part of the context in which they worked. Therefore, these teachers often considered the context as causing problems that they had to deal with.

Furthermore, the teachers in the present study also indicated shortages of contextual knowledge, which may have influenced their practice because they would use this knowledge “to define and articulate their needs and concerns regarding the curriculum” (Sharkey, 2004: 291). This type of knowledge is needed by teachers because the behaviour of students in the classroom is inherited from the culture of the wider community (Shamim, 1996). It is important in any society for teachers to understand the educational culture of the target language, because their teaching is affected by sociocultural factors (Tudor, 2001). Therefore, teachers need to acquire knowledge about the relevant social contexts in order to use their knowledge of teaching effectively. This would mean that knowledge of context is not an addition to content knowledge, but is part of the content that needs to be learned.

The findings revealed that the teachers in this study suffered from a lack of various different resources: For example, certain teachers lacked practical and other theoretical knowledge, which was considered by Kennedy (1998) Tsui and (2003) to be crucial in the process of learning to teach. This was confirmed, for example, when they were not able to transfer their grammatical knowledge in such a way that might help the students to do the same when they wanted to use the language. This implies that these teachers did not have enough knowledge about the language and also lacked classroom management skills. This might be due to their lack of the experience which was considered by McMeniman et al. (2003) to be needed if teachers are to understand the broad principles of teaching and learning, including classroom management. Therefore, “teachers must understand their own beliefs and knowledge about learning and teaching and be thoroughly aware of the certain impact of such knowledge and beliefs on

their classrooms and the language learners in them” (Freeman & Johnson 1998: 412).

In addition, the findings revealed that the teachers complained about shortcomings in school management, which need to be considered carefully by the educational authorities, because dissatisfaction was identified with what the head teachers do in facilitating the teaching and learning process. According to Nunan and Lamb (2001), head teachers are expected to play a more effective role in and out of school to improve the teaching and learning process. All of these limitations should be considered because the school context and the culture of learning contribute to the development of teachers’ knowledge and practices.

Another important issue raised by the teachers was that their classes included students with different levels of English ability intelligence and different learning habits which may have hindered teaching effectiveness. In this situation, the route the teacher follows should be to combine various perspectives to meet the needs of the students. These differences among learners could negatively affect teachers’ performance and student achievement because, the teaching of grammar also changes according to both the educational objectives and the learners’ needs (Celce-Murcia, 1991). In this regard, Breet (2004) stated that when students in one class have different levels of English it is very difficult for teachers to choose appropriate materials to teach. Therefore, this issue should be considered by the head of teachers in schools.

The findings of this study strongly indicate the need for additional training (see section 6.2.3.2). The lack of training leads to incongruent relationships between teachers' practice and their knowledge which have negative effects, as has been found in this study. This accords with Carless’s (1999:23) argument that “If teachers are not equipped to deal with the implications of a new approach, they are likely to revert to the security of their previous behavior and the desired

change may not take place". The educational authorities should require all teachers to attend training sessions, and certainly not only weak teachers. Furthermore, briefing teachers with one-off training sessions is rarely enough to prepare for the demands of changes in policies or curricula (Lamb, 1996). Furthermore, "any training course should make it a priority to teach not only methodology but also a heightened awareness of contextual factors, and the ability to deal with them" (Bax, 2003: 283). Accordingly, this has the implication that training sessions are very important to help teachers become aware of the influence on their classroom practice of their previous experience and knowledge, and this is the responsibility of teacher training and development programmes.

One of the most significant contextual issues in the present study was class size, which many of the teachers complained about. According to the feedback obtained, it was difficult for teachers to manage all their various different activities in classes lasting 45 minutes with more than 27 students. The analysis of the data showed that teachers with less experience in teaching suffered more from both lack of time and the effect of class size. From their responses, these issues need to be urgently considered. Class size can be attributed to the mismatch between their aspirations and what they were actually able to do in the classroom. It can also be argued that class size does not necessarily cause problems in every case; but is more likely to among teachers who lack full knowledge of teaching and learning. Regarding this, Achilles (1999) argued that bigger classes decrease the amount of time teachers spend dealing with individual students. This problem has been acknowledged by other researchers such as Orafi (2008), who pointed out that at the present time greater efforts are made to allow flexibility of classroom layouts. However, one solution to the problem of the class size was offered by certain teachers in this study who employed the 'think-share-pair' technique. This technique worked well in some large classes when the teachers introduced an activity and asked students to

think about it, and to share their answers in pairs (see section 6.2.6.1 for more detail).

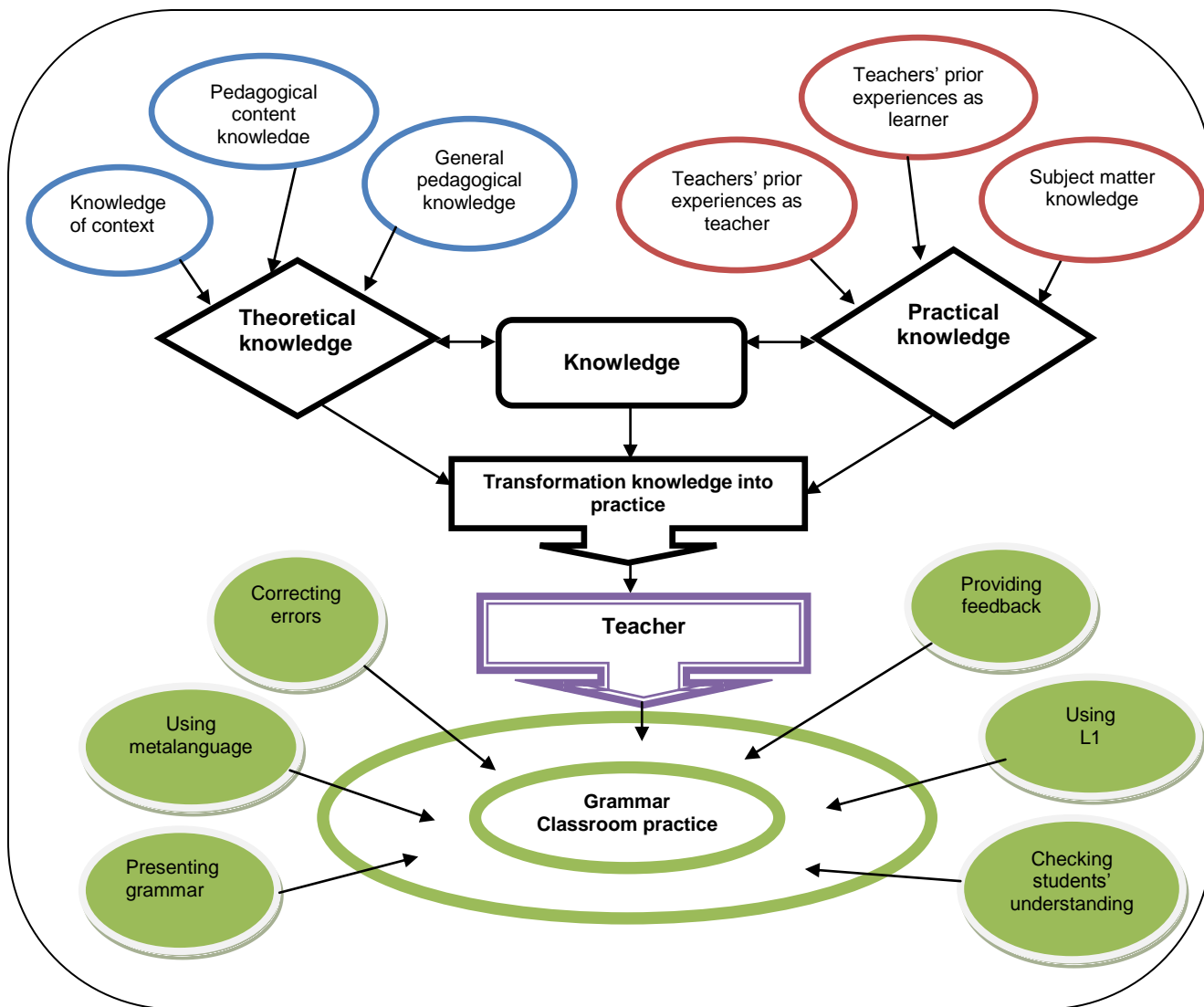
As a result of comparing teachers' practice and knowledge about teaching English grammar, it became apparent that most of the teachers, and especially those who were less experienced, did not have sufficient background knowledge about the culture of the target language. This sort of knowledge was neglected in the context investigated, whereas Genc and Bada (2005:45) stated that knowledge of culture "is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies". This lack of knowledge may lead their teaching to focus on accuracy rather than fluency because they would have no idea about how to use and play with English words in the ways native speakers do. The problem here is that it is not easy to change people's attitudes in a short time. The teachers of English grammar in Libya come from its people, and the culture of teaching is highly salient to their classroom practice. However, Xue-wei and Ying-jun (2006:74) argued that "people need to read a lot to understand the cultural background knowledge of the target language; only in this way can they communicate successfully". It is true that the more we read the more we benefit. This is true not only in teaching the English language, but for achievement in other fields too.

In summary, the issues discussed above show that there was a strong relationship between teachers' practices and knowledge and their context with regard to the teaching of English grammar. The teachers' classroom practices were influenced by the types of knowledge they held and by the context where they lived and worked. This was clear from the teachers' responses in the present study which confirmed that they did not vary the types of knowledge applied in order to overcome their problems, although it can be argued that good learning will not necessarily take place even when there are good teachers, willing students and classrooms conducive to good practice. In this respect, Shulman (1986b, 1987) found that teachers draw upon many types of knowledge

which are needed when making decisions on instructional planning and practice. Therefore, in order to develop practice in teaching grammar, all of the significant issues discussed above should be considered.

## **7.6. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter has discussed the findings of the present study with reference to each of the research questions. The results have also been considered in relation to relevant previous studies. In the first section, methods of teaching grammar deductively, inductively and eclectically were discussed. In the second section, teachers' knowledge about the teaching of grammar was considered. The third section presented two models of incongruence and one of congruence between teachers' practice and knowledge about teaching grammar. It can be argued that these results confirm the value of this study, because any kind of mismatch between what teachers do and what they say they know about teaching grammar is likely to negatively affect both their performance and their students' achievements. The final section then addressed the relationship between teachers' practice and knowledge and contextual factors. Figure 7.4 below summarises the factors that language teachers should be aware of to develop more successful and beneficial teaching and learning tasks.



**Figure: 7.4. Development of teacher's classroom practice in teaching grammar**

The main findings and contributions of the study and its implications for theory, research and teacher education are presented in the following concluding chapter.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **8.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an overall summary of the study and what was involved in this research. Brief answers to the research questions as dealt with in this thesis are given and then the contributions made by the study to the understanding of teacher cognition and grammar teaching are stated. The pedagogical implications of the findings and the difficulties experienced during this research are described. The limitations of the work are acknowledged, and suggestions for further research are provided.

### **8.2. SUMMARY OF WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY**

This study contributes to the existing understanding of teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge about teaching grammar within English as a foreign language. It investigated the relationship between what teachers actually did and what they stated that they knew about teaching and learning English grammar. Eight teachers were observed teaching English grammar lessons in their secondary schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each teacher to gather their views about teaching and learning English grammar. The analysis in this study was based on grounded theory in investigating such hybrid phenomena found in teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge. This theoretical approach was adopted because it was considered to be the most appropriate way to analyse the data obtained. The complexity of the relationship between teachers' classroom practice and their knowledge about teaching English grammar in this context of EFL classrooms has been examined. Recurring main issues related to teachers' practice and knowledge and the relationship between them were found which concern the presentation of grammar, the use of metalanguage, correcting grammatical errors, providing students with feedback, using the L1, and checking students' understanding. These issues were described and analysed in detail in chapter six and discussed in chapter seven, contributing to the overall understanding of patterns of



teachers' classroom practices and their knowledge about teaching grammar. A summary of the findings concerning the research questions asked, the pedagogical implications inferred and suggestions for further research are given in this chapter.

### **8.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

This chapter summarises only the most interesting findings obtained. These findings are presented according to the sequence of the research questions. The first question examined what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do in their classrooms in relation to the teaching and learning of grammar. The second research question aimed to examine what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar. Finally, the third research question examined the relationship between what teachers of English in Libyan secondary schools actually do and what they state that they know about the teaching and learning of grammar. The main answers to these research questions are presented below.

#### **8.3.1. Teachers' Practice of Teaching Grammar**

A number of interesting findings emerged from the observation phase of data collection. Both deductive and inductive methods in teaching grammar were utilized by the participants. The participants employed similar techniques in applying deductive methods, whereas differences between them were observed whenever inductive methods were practised. Another significant finding is that almost all of those who used different inductive techniques were categorized as more experienced teachers. Those teachers who used eclectic methods showed more criticality and flexibility in their teaching as they utilized both deductive and inductive methods according to the requirements of the teaching task.

In particular, it was noteworthy that the teachers were observed to adopt different techniques in correcting students' grammatical errors at different times depending on their use of deductive or inductive methods of teaching. The

teachers who used deductive practice corrected students' grammatical errors immediately and did not offer any solutions or choices to help their students. Nevertheless, there were certain teachers who used inductive methods to correct students' errors after they had finished speaking, giving extra choices and chances for peer-correction. These techniques help students become more comfortable and provided "ample opportunities to learn and steady encouragement and support of their learning efforts" (Good & Brophy, 1994: 215).

Moreover, the observation of the teachers' classroom practice revealed that they used both positive and negative feedback. Teachers were observed to give feedback using similar methods in some situations, while giving it differently in other situations. The classes of teachers who provided students with positive feedback, such as repeating the students' answers and motivating students to participate, were noticed to be more active than others. This indicates that these teachers tended to use inductive practice. In contrast, certain teachers, particularly the less experienced, tended to use negative feedback in their classes. These teachers were observed to reject students' answers and punish students when they committed grammatical errors. This technique might upset students and lead them to be unable to do well, so that, most of the time, a student would not attempt to correct his/her own errors after this type of feedback.

In addition, the findings from classroom observation confirmed that teachers used the L1 to varying extents in different ways, depending on their modes of teaching grammar. Some of them used the L1 almost all of the time, and others used it only occasionally when they taught English grammar. The findings also revealed that only one of the teachers was never observed to use L1 in his classes. Moreover, similarities and differences in using L1 between the more and less experienced teachers were in evidence in their grammar classes. The teachers who were observed to use the L1 used it to explain new words, exploited it to correct students' errors, and resorted to the L1 when noticing that a

student did not understand, in moving from one activity to another and when checking students' understanding.

Additionally, the teachers also used different techniques to check students' understanding in formative assessment in their classes. Differences and similarities in these techniques were found among the more and less experienced teachers in checking their students understanding of grammar items. These techniques involved engaging students in the process, utilizing short quizzes, using feedback from students, exploiting class votes, using the 'think-pair-share' technique, recognizing abbreviations and considering the psychological state of students. It was also seen that they would use these techniques of teaching at different times and in different situations during lessons.

The final interesting finding was that the teachers who adopted deductive techniques did not engage students in classroom activities which could have created a more stimulating and competitive environment. In other words, these teachers did not appear to make a connection between grammar instruction and students' subsequent ability to use language fluently in communication. The problem is that some of those teachers were observed to reject students' contributions, which led students to take a more passive role in subsequent activities and may have had a negative effect on motivation. In this case, these teachers may not have been aware of the influence of affective factors such as students' motivation and emotions on the teaching and learning task. This indicates that these teachers were not overly concerned about students' communicative language ability, or it may have been because they were unaware of the theoretical debate that has revolved around the issue of whether grammar instruction improves communicative language use.

### **8.3.2. Teachers' Knowledge about Teaching Grammar**

It was found that the teachers had different levels of knowledge about teaching English grammar and gave different reasons to justify their practice when they presented grammar. Furthermore, certain teachers held conflicting knowledge about teaching English grammar, whereas other teachers appeared to be aware of inconsistencies between their knowledge and practice. In this regard, the most interesting findings included that certain teachers, particularly those who were more experienced, were not aware of the concepts of presenting grammar items deductively or inductively, and different attitudes were expressed towards teaching grammar in this sample of teachers. They were also not aware of some of the techniques they actually used in their classes. This suggests that these teachers were not up to date with methods and techniques used in teaching grammar in other EFL contexts. However, the less experienced teachers expressed sufficient knowledge about deductive and inductive methods. According to the responses obtained, they had acquired this theoretical knowledge during their university study.

Another important finding is that all of the teachers had some knowledge about teaching metalanguage, but as individuals their knowledge and attitudes were markedly diverse. All of the teachers stated that they used metalanguage because they were aware of its importance in teaching grammar. These teachers also expressed their reasons for why they taught it in the way that they did. Certain teachers, particularly the less experienced, said that they started with the form, and then went through the functions. This way of teaching would not help students to understand meaning by themselves. Furthermore, certain teachers who were among the more experienced did not know the term 'metalanguage' itself, although they were observed to use grammatical terms when they taught grammar. This implies that these teachers were not up to date with the vocabulary and terminology used in teaching grammar.

Furthermore, the findings also evidenced that all of the teachers' stated that they knew the importance of correcting grammatical errors. They had different understandings and reasons, particularly when they said they used direct correction, offering students another solution to correct their own errors, correcting students' grammar errors while and after they were speaking, and giving the chance for peer-correction. Moreover, certain teachers struggled to balance their knowledge that errors need to be corrected so as to maintain accuracy with their view that error correction by the teacher can negatively impact on the student's language production and confidence. There was some evidence that such contradictory knowledge existed as a result of knowledge derived from different sources, such as teachers' prior teaching and learning experience related to this complex issue, and that contextual factors may also act as heavy constraints.

Unfortunately, the findings evidenced that most of the teachers did not appear to have comprehensive knowledge about the significance of providing students with appropriate feedback, particularly when they said that they knew about using questions as feedback, repeating the students' answers, motivating students to participate, rejecting students' answers and punishing students when they made grammatical errors. What makes this issue more complex was that some of these teachers expressed a full awareness of the importance of a range of these strategies while others were only aware of some of them.

Another interesting finding was that all of the teachers had sufficient knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of using the students' L1 when teaching English grammar in L2 classrooms. They had different ideas about this; some teachers supported using the L1, while others preferred to use English to help their students to improve their awareness of the language. The teachers who used the L1 were asked to justify their use of it in their classes, particularly when they had been observed to do this to explain new words, correct students' errors, check students' understanding and when noticing that a student did not

understand the task. The teachers' responses varied widely although there was also some agreement about using the L1 in certain situations. The teachers who opposed using the L1 stated that is not beneficial in teaching English as a foreign language because the students' speaking skills may not improve if their teachers use their L1 in second language classes. Conversely, the teachers who supported using the L1 seemed optimistic when they said that it helps students to overcome problems even though they also complained about their students' low levels of English language proficiency.

All of the teachers agreed that student understanding needs to be checked regularly, because any shortfall here frequently leads teachers to omit certain classroom activities which they believe are hindering their students. They were asked about the techniques that they used in their classes, and some of these teachers said that they knew about these techniques, while others were not conscious of what they actually did and certain teachers stated that they had no idea about some of the techniques. Teachers sometimes agreed and sometimes disagreed in relation to employing techniques for checking students' understanding. This confirmed that they had different levels of knowledge about this strategy in teaching English grammar.

In addition, teachers often had negative attitudes toward the contexts in which they worked, which they felt imposed on them when teaching English grammar. Various constraints were mentioned by the teachers which related to class size, school management, and the lack of training. All of these issues led the teachers to become more sensitive to how their knowledge and perceptions about teaching grammar can be shaped by their working environment.

### **8.3.3. The Relationship between Teachers' Practice and Knowledge**

It was found that the participants in this study varied individually in the enactment of their roles, although a fairly reliable correlation was found between their methods of teaching and what they stated they knew about teaching English

grammar. The findings revealed a range of interesting relationships between teachers' practice and knowledge (see chapter 6). These relationships could be classified as congruent or incongruent, which could have positive and/or negative pedagogical impacts on teaching and learning English grammar. The most interesting finding was that not all relationships of congruence between practice and knowledge have positive pedagogical value, and not all incongruent relationships have negative value (see chapter 7 for more details).

### ***Incongruent relationships***

Among the relationships of incongruence between teachers' practice and their knowledge, two main types were found. The first was that 'teachers knew but did not do'. Here, the teachers did not apply what they knew when they taught English grammar. This mismatch was acknowledged among the teachers in their presentation of grammar, use of metalanguage, correction of errors, provision of feedback, use of L1 and checking of students' understanding (see section 7.5.1.1). The interesting thing here was that by no means all of the relationships of incongruence between teachers' practice and knowledge have negative pedagogical value.

Regarding incongruent relationships with negative pedagogical value, for example, certain teachers were observed to not present grammar inductively, although they stated that they knew about and were aware of the importance of this method. The teachers' rationale was that they thought that using deductive methods could also lead to good results, while one teacher considered that the effectiveness of inductive activities required students to have good levels of English language ability. This suggests that these teachers were not really aware of what they were doing in their classes and failed "to find ways to encourage their students to accept the goals of classroom activities (Brophy, 1998: 18), as a result of a lack of theoretical knowledge about teaching English grammar.

In contrast, some incongruent relationships between practice and knowledge could have positive pedagogical value. For example, the findings revealed that none of the more experienced teachers taught grammar forms in advance, although they knew about this. These teachers showed more critical awareness in their use of teaching methods, in that they concentrated only on what fitted their teaching task and facilitated the process of conveying knowledge to their students. These teachers were convinced that teaching metalanguage in advance would not help students to transfer their grammatical knowledge into language use. Students in this case may learn to distinguish between grammatical form and usage and can then use words correctly in different situations (Azar, 2007). However, other teachers did not focus on both form and usage together even though they stated that they knew about this. These teachers were usually less experienced. They justified their behaviour by saying that they lacked the practical knowledge which could have been gained by attending training sessions.

The second main type of incongruence between teachers' practice and knowledge was when certain 'teachers did but were not aware that they knew' related to teaching English grammar. The teachers applied certain strategies for teaching grammar but were not aware of what they were doing (see section 7.5.1.2). This was acknowledged in relation to four main strategies of their teaching: presenting grammar, using metalanguage, providing feedback and checking students' understanding. The findings revealed that this type of relationship between practice and knowledge can have positive pedagogical implications, for example, when certain teachers from the more experienced group repeated student's answers as a technique of feedback even though were they not aware of what they had done. In this instance, this type of positive feedback leads to good results because it gives students the opportunity to think about the right answer. In this case, this type of feedback is in practice an inductive technique because it lets students participate and interact in the



language classroom. These teachers gave students the chance to become more confident and more independent (Daines et al., 2006).

### ***Congruent relationships***

Congruent relationships between teachers' practice and knowledge occurred when certain 'teachers did and they knew' about methods of teaching grammar. The interesting thing here was that by no means all of the relationships of congruence between teachers' practice and knowledge have positive pedagogical value. This type of relationship appeared when certain teachers were presenting grammar, using metalanguage, correcting errors, providing feedback, using L1 and checking students' understanding (see section 7.5).

The best example of this type of congruence concerned teachers correcting students' grammatical errors. There were two different types of relationship between practice and knowledge regarding correcting students' errors, both of which were congruent but could have negative or positive value. The first was when certain teachers from both more and less experienced groups used direct correction, and corrected errors while students were speaking, although they also stated that they knew about the effects of this. This has the implication of leading to negative pedagogical effects because the teachers in this case did not give enough explanation when dealing with their students' grammatical errors (Lochtman, 2002). However, certain teachers among those who were more experienced corrected errors after students had finished speaking and they stated that they knew about this. This has positive pedagogical effects because the teachers in this case did not interrupt students and delayed until after they had finished speaking.

Furthermore, an unexpected congruent relationship between practice and knowledge which also has negative pedagogical effects was found when certain of the less experienced teachers punished their students as a form of feedback when they made errors, although they stated that they knew about its effects.

Some teachers justified their behaviour by saying that if they did not punish students, they may have thought that they had done the right thing. Others said that they had to punish students in certain cases otherwise they may not care about what they were asked to do. This means that these teachers did not use this technique of feedback as an extrinsic incentive where the students were pushed by their teachers to participate more in learning grammar (Yule, 2006). Whatever the teachers' justifications were, it can be argued that these teachers did not apply empathy and consider the students' emotions, which are widely considered as "central to the fast processing of the brain and are embedded in all our interactions with our fellow human beings and the environment" (Cooper, 2006: 2).

### ***Relationship between practice, knowledge and context***

The findings provided substantiating evidence regarding the complexity of the interaction between teachers' knowledge and behaviour and the context. These relationships might lead to negative pedagogical effects. In most instances, although teachers had varying levels of teaching English experience and most of them stated that they preferred to teach grammar inductively, in reality their practices were teacher-centred and grammar-focused, with little opportunity for students to use the language. Teaching grammar purely deductively has been criticized by many researchers (see section.3.4), because by adopting these methods of teaching, teachers are not creating situations through which grammatical rules might be contextualized, and so their students will not be able to use them in similar situations inside or outside of the classroom (Pollard et al., 2005). This indicates that there may be various different inconsistencies between practices and knowledge, relating mostly to how grammar should be taught. Some of these phenomena were affected by contextual factors such as insufficient time provided, class size, low levels of student skills and so on (see chapter 6 for more detail), while others were a result of the teachers' beliefs and lack of theoretical as well as practical knowledge. All of these types of constraints were considered by the teachers as justifications for their practices.

The findings also revealed evidence that a teacher's level of confidence in their teaching, particularly among those who were less experienced affected the extent to which they engaged in professional development activities. This issue was also related to contextual factors such as lack of training and the institution where the teachers worked. Lack of confidence may lead to attributing the low level of student achievement to external factors such as the lack of exposure to the language outside the school. This factor did play a part in the process of teaching and would change the teachers' own teaching and thus have a direct impact on the students' learning. Thus, this study has revealed that the significance of the relationship between teachers' practice knowledge and context in teaching grammar, as shown in the above mentioned points, confirms how mental, behavioural processes and context complement each other, because good practice needs not only appropriate knowledge but also a suitable environment in which teachers work.

#### **8.4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

There has been a growing interest in teacher cognition, teaching in general and the teaching of grammar in particular in recent years. This study was conducted partly to answer the calls of researchers in the literature, and particularly those of Borg who emphasised that "the relationships among teacher cognition, classroom practice and learning have not been studied" (Borg, 2006:133). Borg also highlighted that "further studies into the full range of teacher knowledge that informs grammar teaching practices are thus also required" (ibid: 133). Thus, the current study investigated the relationship between what teachers actually did and what they said that they knew about teaching English grammar in Libyan secondary schools. This study was conducted in order to better understand the teaching of grammar, how teachers come to know about it, and how they draw on their knowledge and beliefs in their work. This study contributes in a number of ways to the field of teacher cognition and teaching and learning English grammar as a foreign language.

#### **8.4.1. Contributions to Developing Classroom Practice in Teaching English Grammar**

A general contribution of this study is to offer a clearer picture for EFL teachers to understand the main methods to follow when examining their practice in teaching English grammar. Such points have been absent from previous studies, particularly in terms of how teachers present grammar, use grammatical terminology, correct errors, provide feedback, use the L1 and check students' understanding as part of the whole package of teaching English grammar as a foreign language (see section 4.6). This study shows that grammar is taught in different ways in the same class and even in the same lesson. This was observed in certain teachers' classes when they were dealing with the different needs of students as a result of their different levels of English.

This study also provided a springboard for discussion and an impetus for teachers' critical self-inquiry on the topic of teaching grammar to intermediate level English language students. It points out the importance of professional development directed toward helping the teachers learn about the process of the teaching and learning of grammar. In particular, an important contribution was to show that certain teachers were observed to use various different techniques which have not been described in previous studies, such as the 'think-pair-share' technique, in teaching grammar. This technique aims to involve students in thinking about the teacher's questions, pairing off and discussing the question with a partner, and then sharing their answers with the whole class. This technique has not been described in previous studies in the grammar teaching field (see sections 3.6 and 4.6). The findings of this study evidenced that this technique was used successfully, particularly for checking students' understanding of grammar rules. This technique of teaching helped teachers to engage students in interactive practice.

Another contribution of this research adds to the findings of previous studies (Dunze, 2003 & Cooper, 2006) that considerations of motivation and emotion are important in professional teaching development not only in terms of teaching in general but in the field of teaching and learning English grammar, particularly when providing students with feedback. The findings revealed that teachers sometimes could not translate their knowledge of teaching into practice, which might be a result of their lack of knowledge about the importance of or full awareness of the role of motivation and emotion in learning grammar. Ignoring these factors may have an influence on students' progress in learning (see section 3.3). This was evidenced in the techniques used by certain teachers which did not appear to motivate students to learn grammar well or lead to engagement in literacy.

Moreover, this study shows different techniques that may help teachers to use their theoretical knowledge of teaching in their classes. Consequently, this can lead EFL teachers to come to recognize the theoretical level of their output, which will encourage them to review their practice. It also provides significant insights especially concerning the more experienced EFL teachers' knowledge about teaching and learning English grammar, which could be used to support and improve teachers' activities in classes.

#### **8.4.2. Contributions to Developing the Teacher's Knowledge about Teaching English Grammar**

The present research into teachers' knowledge has contributed to our current understanding of EFL grammar teaching by investigating what teachers say they know about teaching English grammar. The study has brought to light some significant findings concerning the complex nature of teachers' knowledge, which may well be responsible for the ineffectual instructional practices that the teachers exhibited during their teaching grammar. The reason for this might be that teachers' knowledge can be so embedded that they can act as barriers to change and to the selection of appropriate methods for grammar instruction.

Teachers' knowledge about teaching grammar in general has not been investigated in detail before, as the literature review evidenced (see chapter 4). In particular, this study revealed that the teachers had different levels of theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching grammar. All of the teachers had theoretical knowledge about some aspects of teaching grammar and they had different levels of practical teaching knowledge. It was not surprising that teachers found themselves teaching in the way that they were taught, because they lacked experience to do otherwise, and less understanding of alternative instructional practices. Thus it can be argued that this study reminds us of the importance of professional development directed toward helping such teachers learn about teaching and learning grammar to intermediate level students.

#### **8.4.3. Contributions on Teacher Cognition and Teaching English Grammar**

The main contribution of this study in terms of the relationship between practice and knowledge was to illustrate the complex relationship between what teachers actually did and what they stated they knew about the teaching and learning of grammar. The complexity of the relationship between practice and knowledge is reflected in the fact that certain teachers knew about theories of teaching and did not apply what they knew in their classes, some teachers taught grammar in different ways but were not aware of what they were doing, and other teachers said that they knew about theories of teaching grammar and what they did in their classes was appropriate. Interestingly, not all the relationships of congruence between teachers' practice and knowledge have positive pedagogical value and not all relationships of incongruence have negative value (see chapter 7). Previous studies in the literature have alluded extensively to the complex relationship between beliefs and practice, but not in detail and not involving teachers' knowledge over a general range of specific subjects similar to that in this study (see section.4.6).

The current study also offered a clear picture of whether or not and how EFL teachers were able to put their knowledge about teaching grammar into practice. Of course, this study was conducted in one part of Libya and the findings may not be generalisable to a wider population; however, research like this one can also serve in adding to our understanding of EFL teachers' practices and knowledge in the area of teaching grammar and thus move forward knowledge of how teachers act. In other words, the findings of this study have identified important aspects of teachers' classroom practice and the limits of their knowledge. It offers various strategies of teaching for EFL teachers, from which to choose a route to follow when examining their practice and knowledge in teaching English grammar. No previous studies have investigated all of these strategies for teaching grammar and compared them with what teachers state that they know about them within one thesis (see section 4.6).

This research also supports the conclusions of previous research (e.g. Borg 1999; Lamb, 1995) by providing detailed knowledge and insight into a range of factors which influence teachers' classroom activities. EFL teachers' abilities to take action to change their practice depended on a number of different contextual factors which mediated the teachers' decision making in teaching grammar (section 4.6). Certain teachers appeared hesitant to apply practices that were in conflict with institutional norms and knowledge. Thus, it is suggested that, for successful change to occur, the school should create a supportive environment, which values the continuous professional development of English grammar teachers. Although the findings of this study relate particularly to teacher development in Libya, where the study was conducted, many of these implications may be relevant to other educational contexts and to professional development in general. This means that the current study makes a contribution to understanding the relationship between teachers' practice, knowledge and the contexts involved when teachers teach grammar in different ways.

#### **8.4.4. Contributions to Methodology**

This study has also contributed to the field of research methodology. Consistent reference has been made in the literature review to the methodological gaps which this study was intended to fill (section 5.3). First, the research design used in this study has promoted deeper investigation into teachers' classroom practices and their knowledge in order to gain insight into the way grammar instruction unfolds in their classes. Integrating grounded theory with a small sample is also original in the field of teacher cognition and teaching grammar because no previous research has used methods similar to those in this study (see section 4.6). Using grounded theory in an inductive approach to data analysis allowed the researcher to evaluate the teachers' practices and their knowledge in more depth.

Finally, as pointed out at the outset of this thesis, this study has been carried out in a context which has not been explored at all, to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Thus it could serve as a starting point for further studies undertaken in this and other different contexts.

#### **8.5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS**

This study offers many implications for teaching English as a foreign language in general and teaching grammar in particular. One implication is that teaching grammar traditionally as an end in itself does not help students to transfer their knowledge of grammar into practice. In order to resolve this issue, teachers should adopt enjoyable activities where students do not get bored or lose concentration, which is otherwise easy for some students. Using many activities in teaching grammar can help students to understand better because they may have different proficiency levels, talents, and desires. Therefore, teachers should include a variety of activities to attract students' attention to make their teaching task more interesting and beneficial. Moreover, teachers of grammar should create appropriate environments that work for learning and not against it (Halliwel, 2002). This could be achieved through establishing appropriate



exercises that help students understand the target language. In other words, teachers should be fully aware of what they actually do in classrooms when they teach grammar because their knowledge of what they do in the classroom may not always be reflected in their actions. To be more beneficial for students, teachers should know why, when and how to conduct any activity in teaching grammar. Thus, lessons teaching grammar should be well structured and prepared in advance.

The second implication concerns the fact that some teachers were observed to focus on form more than on meaning, which does not help students to learn how to transfer their knowledge of grammar into language use. Therefore a primary focus should be on meaning rather than form. Students must understand the target language in order to learn it, so meaning must come first. Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories of development state that, through experience in the environment, learners can construct meaning (see 3.2 and 3.3). Teachers should use the target language in context to help learners grasp meaning. They could learn language features best when their attention is focused on meaning before being engaged in any structure-production activities. Thus, students should be taught in such a way that enables them to negotiate meanings and achieve knowledge of grammatical features through communication.

The findings revealed that using direct correction, especially while students were speaking, in grammar classes did not always help students to learn grammar inductively because in this case the teachers did not give students any opportunity to think about the right answer or involve them in peer-correction. Thus, the teachers should be tolerant with students' errors during the use of new language items, and the four language skills should be interactively taught and assessed. Teachers should also not insist on their students using fully grammatical answers during their responses. This in turn will encourage student interaction inside the classroom.

Furthermore, another implication was related to providing students with negative feedback, where the teachers were observed to reject and punish their students when they committed errors. Therefore, students should be rewarded by the teachers in order to encourage their participation, spending more time in helping students to understand and use basic principles and asking students to explain answers to questions rather than just accepting the correct answer. Punishing students should be completely avoided because it could lead to negative consequences such as anxiety and demotivation. In order to help teachers to create appropriate environments for their students to learn grammar, the educational authorities should provide training sessions regularly for all teachers and not only those reported by the educational inspectors to need it (section 4.5.6).

As a result of evaluating the teachers' knowledge about using the L1 in L2 grammar classes, this study's findings revealed that using the first language too much does not lead to communicative practice, while avoiding its use at all sometimes causes problems for some teachers and students. Therefore, lessons should be conducted in the L2 as much as possible. We already know that students do not need to understand every individual word to grasp meanings. Moreover, they respond very well to context and facial expressions in spite of their limited linguistic understanding. It can be argued that using the L2 depends on factors such as the learners' proficiency level and the topic to be taught. It is not easy for students with low levels of English to understand a topic that contains abstract terms. In this case the L1 may be used to check learners' understanding. However, with appropriate teaching aids, it is possible for teachers to use the L2 as long as students' understanding is achieved.

The findings of this study evidenced that using different techniques for checking students' understanding helps teachers to combine different activities in teaching English grammar which may lead to creating a stimulating classroom environment to produce new language. For example, using feedback from

students, class votes and the 'think-pair-share' technique can be seen to lead to interactive activities which help successful learning, because they promote an increase in the range of language functions used when students share their ideas and enjoy the activity of group work. Practising group work through interaction also leads to reductions in the psychological problems involved in class. Therefore EFL teachers should manage their classes in order to apply such techniques if they want to demonstrate successful learning.

This study offers a close look at how EFL teachers were able to put their knowledge about teaching grammar into practice. It shows that, in order to improve professional development in teaching grammar, teachers do not need to see grammar mainly as a unitary object, whose component parts have to be learnt; but, rather, as a device to translate experience and knowledge into communication. Traditionally, when developing their grammar instruction, teachers have training sessions to improve their practice. Therefore, in training sessions teachers should also learn about the culture of the context and the values it upholds and should focus on teaching grammar inductively or at least eclectically in order to contribute to the more effective teaching of grammar. This is because many of the teaching problems the present teachers faced were found to be due to their lack of contextual understanding.

Another implication was that certain teachers in this study were observed to fail to translate their knowledge of teaching into practice. For example, one individual tried many times to help students to learn grammar inductively, but she often failed. One reason for this could be that she did not illustrate her language teaching with objects, pictures, actions, and gestures. In order to avoid this situation, teachers should be aware when they teach English grammar that learners are learning something new, the L2. It is not easy for some students to learn without appropriate teaching aids that facilitate understanding and to demonstrate what teachers mean. According to Brewster, et al. (1992), students are very good observers and can grasp meaning through many sources such as

intonation, gestures, facial expressions, actions, and language itself without understanding every individual word. Therefore, using teaching aids is very helpful for students to understand the L2.

Furthermore, the findings of this study provide significant implications for and insights into the relationship between what EFL teachers do and what they know about teaching English in general, and grammar in particular. This may lead to changes in teachers' existing knowledge in order to contribute to their professional development. Much of what has been explored in this study, especially concerning the more experienced L2 teachers' knowledge and practice in the teaching and learning of English grammar, could be used to support and improve teachers' activities in classes. This knowledge may help Libyan educators interested in the teaching and learning of English grammar so that they can know to what extent their recommendations are valid at the present time before suggesting essential changes and organizing training for secondary school teachers. This may help both the educational authorities themselves and teachers to develop.

The findings of this study revealed that certain teachers lacked different types of knowledge which affected their practice as a result of their lack of experience. Thus, this type of knowledge is required to teach grammar because it leads not only to developing the teachers' abilities in teaching but also helps them to know how to motivate the students to learn English grammar. Motivation is crucial for learners of second or foreign languages if their learning is to be effective. In this regard, John (cited in Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998) argued that leading a horse to water is easy, but making it drink is a more difficult matter. The same is true with learners, in terms of how to find a way to motivate them so that they learn effectively. If teachers do not have the ability or awareness gained from their experience of the strategies which should be followed, then it could be argued that motivating students will be difficult if not possible, which in turn will have negative consequences for their learning.

In addition, teachers may need to give learners extra time spent in activities to increase fluency. I have noted that most of the observed teachers did not take into account the time factor when preparing their lessons (45 minutes). When the teachers got into the class it took them quite a long time seating the students and taking the register. Teachers can save time by adopting certain techniques such as assigning one of the best and most disciplined students to help in such tasks as monitoring attendance, writing the date on the board and collecting homework. This may save considerable time and motivate learners to compete to play the role of teacher's assistant. Selecting the best learners and giving them the chance periodically to play the role of teacher's assistant will encourage students to use the language without hesitation, because if the students are stressed, made uncomfortable, self-conscious or unmotivated, they are unlikely to learn grammar.

The teachers of this study complained about the lack of facilities in their schools and students who were not highly motivated to learn English grammar. These phenomena can be assumed to cause problems in the learning process and influence students' results at the end of the year. Sources such as these will help teachers to choose what is most suitable for their students. Providing teachers with appropriate materials leads to effective teaching through explaining words, concepts or grammatical rules simply and easily. Learners receive good instruction and practise regularly, then grammar will be quickly and successfully acquired.

Moreover the findings evidenced that certain teachers in this study always used the same techniques of teaching, particularly when they taught English grammar deductively. Therefore, teachers should use a variety of activities, so that students do not get bored or lose concentration. Using many activities can help learners understand better because they may have different proficiency levels, talents, and desires. For some, understanding a lesson does not require more

than listening to their teacher, while others may need to perform tasks in order to understand. Therefore, a good lesson should include a variety of activities to attract learners' attention more of the time and to be more interesting and more beneficial. Teachers should be aware that students are learning something new when they teach English grammar. It is not easy for some students to learn without appropriate teaching aids that facilitate understanding and demonstrate what teachers mean.

Thus, teachers should create appropriate environments for their students to learn grammar. This could be achieved through being aware of exactly what they are doing in the classroom. Before beginning any activity, teachers should know its purpose and how and when it should be performed to work best for learning. This requires good lesson planning, which helps both learners and teachers to achieve their goals. This can be achieved, for example, when the teacher gives a task to the students. In order to motivate students he/she should be aware of how to structure this task according to certain criteria such as having clear goals, using varied topics, tasks, visuals, tension and challenge; for example in games, entertainment, play-acting, information gaps, personalization and open-ended cues. That is, "such strategies are used to increase student involvement and to 'save' the action when ongoing monitoring reveals that progress is slowing, halting, or backsliding" (Dornyei, 2001: 117). Libyan teachers should also consider situations which might positively affect the students' progress in order to help them to apply their knowledge of grammar in the real life.

A final implication of this study is that the findings revealed that certain negative relationships between practice and knowledge resulted from certain contextual factors such as lack of time allotted for teaching English grammar, class size, inadequate training and weaknesses in school management. Therefore, all of these issues should be urgently considered. For example, head teachers of schools should arrange meetings for language teachers so that views could be exchanged about their teaching. They could also assign a coordinator for

teachers of English grammar, whose first priority would be to hold meetings in which teachers could discuss administrative, classroom and methodological issues. Moreover, teaching aids which contribute to the teaching of grammar could be emphasized to show the teachers that they will allow them to explain words, concepts or grammatical rules in a simple manner. This will help the teachers to cover all of the activities in the textbook inside the classroom and help the students to interact and discuss their learning in class.

### **8.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study has limitations, just like any other. Most of the limitations in this study are methodological. The first was related to the observation of teachers in their classes. Although the researcher visited each teacher three times in order to establish a good relationship with them, and to allow them to feel comfortable with his presence in the classroom, it was difficult to know whether the teachers were following their normal practice or were acting as they did because he was there. Additional insight has been gained by more observations with each teacher. It was intended to video record the classroom observations; however, the head teachers declined to grant permission for this as the sample included female participants.

The second limitation relates to sampling (see section 5.8). Eight is only a small number; however, the teachers studied here are believed to be typical in terms of their qualifications and educational background. Furthermore, the schools examined were similar in terms of the populations they served and the curricula they used (see section 2.4). Thus, teachers' practices and their knowledge as uncovered by this study were often very similar. Nevertheless this research was based in a particular context, which means that only cautious claims can be made about the generalisability of the findings to all teachers and contexts. However, the rich description of the data and its triangulation increase the validity of the analysis presented in this thesis, and make it possible for other

researchers to judge to what extent the findings may be appropriate to their own contexts.

The third limitation relates to translating interview data from Arabic into English. It can be argued that no-one could deliver a perfect translation, but the researcher did his best to translate every single word of whatever was said. The transcriptions were also checked by an experienced translator to achieve more precision. The process was not without shortcomings, however, and further study is recommended in order to construct a more complete picture of teachers' cognition and their practices when teaching English grammar.

The final limitation related the Libyan war which has affected the process of finishing this research. I was very worried about my family and friends who were under fire in Libya in 2011. Moreover, changes in the system in the Libyan embassy in London also bothered me because I did not know what would happen to Libyan students in the UK. I did not know whether or not the new embassy would meet all our needs and whether or not I would be allowed to complete my PhD. However, all of these challenges can be considered part of my research process, and I have still done my utmost to conduct this study as required for a PhD thesis.

## **8.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Given the contributions and implications of this study as presented above, it is clear that there is a need for further research in this area. Although this study highlighted the role of EFL teachers' practices and knowledge in the Libyan context, further qualitative and quantitative study is needed to identify the impact of EFL teachers' practices and knowledge on their EFL students' learning outcomes.

In addition, further research is still needed which might be helpful in overcoming some of the problems that face teachers of English grammar in EFL contexts



around the world. Such research would concern the extent to which official inspectors of English language teaching can help teachers of grammar to overcome the problems inherent in their work. The findings of this study also reveal that there is a need to improve teachers' knowledge about the cultures associated with the English language and about the language itself, because both are required if teachers are to apply all that they know in teaching grammar.

Similar studies to this one on teaching language skills could be conducted using different methods in order to explore the extent to which different aspects and methods of teaching are influential in different types of teaching. Comparable studies could be conducted with teachers in other educational settings, such as primary schools or universities and in countries other than in Libya in order to better understand the teaching of English grammar.

Finally, this study offers a glimpse into teaching and learning practices in Libya. It has always been the researcher's main intention to improve teaching performance in Libya as well as student achievement in learning English grammar. The findings of this study could be also used for developing training programmes which concentrate on what EFL teachers should know and how this knowledge can be transferred into practice. It could be also used as a resource for developing research tools to investigate EFL teacher cognition and practice. Useful guidelines could be provided using the material in the current study to inform researchers interested in working in the teaching of EFL in other contexts.

## **8.8. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In conclusion, the study has made a significant contribution to the state of knowledge about what EFL teachers actually did and what they stated that they knew about teaching English grammar. It has also provided a clearer picture of the relationship between teachers' practice and their knowledge regarding the teaching English of grammar. It is hoped that further studies such as this can expand our knowledge of foreign language grammar teaching.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Factual Questionnaire

The information gained from this questionnaire will be used as a part of a PhD thesis in the Faculty of Education and Society at the University of Sunderland in the UK. Thus, your participation by answering the questionnaire will help with the success of the study. Could you please complete the questionnaire below; it should take approximately five minutes. Your views are valuable to me and are appreciated.

#### ***Background information***

Please tick the appropriate information.

1. Gender Male  Female

2. Age: 23-30  31-36  37-42  43-49  50 and above

3. First language: Arabic  English  Other

4. Nationality: Libyan  Other

5. Qualifications: BA  High institute  Med institute  Other

6. What level do you teach? First year  Second year  Third year

7. Which subject do you teach? Grammar  Other Language Skills   
Both

8. Have you taken any international exams, such as:

IELTS  TOEFL  Others  None of them

9. School's name: -----



10. How many years have you been working as a teacher of English?

-----

11. How long did you study English as a second language before becoming a teacher?

-----

12. Did you study teaching methodology as a subject when you were a student in the university or institute? -----

13. Have you studied English abroad? If yes, how long did you stay abroad, and where/why? -----

Note: Please indicate if you are interested in participating in the next phases: (Observation and Semi-structured interview).

Name: ---- -----

Mobile phone number: -----

***Thank you for your participation***

## **Appendix B: Semi-structured interview questions sample**

### **Section one: Questions about learning grammar**

1. Can you please tell me, what is your own experience of learning grammar as a learner?
2. How do you know the best method for learning English grammar and whether it is suitable for your students?
3. What do you think of the statement that students will learn a grammar point only if they are developmentally ready for it?
4. To what extent do you agree that knowledge of grammatical rules helps learners to use the language?
5. Is it difficult for learners to transfer their grammatical knowledge into communicative language use?
6. Do you think learning occurs best if learners discover rules by themselves, or if the rules are presented by the teacher?
7. To what extent does your knowledge about learning affect your teaching of grammar?
8. Is there any other further information about learning grammar that you want to add?

### **Section two: Questions about teaching grammar**

1. What do you know about teaching English in general?
2. What do you know about deductive and inductive teaching grammar methods?
3. Which do you prefer to use when you teach grammar?
4. Do you think teaching grammatical terminology or metalanguage is important for learners seeking to learn grammar?
5. Do you agree with those people who say that students will learn grammar better if they understand grammatical terminology?
6. What do you think about the grammar knowledge in the textbook?

7. Do you follow the course book instructions, or do you use some other way of deciding?
8. To what extent do your knowledge about language and your experience as a teacher help you to teach grammar well in the classroom?
9. When do you correct your students' errors?
10. What do you know about correcting students' errors while speaking?
11. What do you know about providing students with feedback?
12. What do you know about repeating the student's answers as a feedback technique?
13. What do you know about using L1 to correct students' errors?
14. Do you know about using students' L1 to check students' understanding?
15. What do you know about checking students' understanding?
16. What do you know about the importance of the relationship between teacher and students in the classroom?
17. What do you know about the factors which hinder teachers to teach grammar?
18. Do you have any other further information you wanted to add?

## Appendix C: Semi-structured interview questions sample Arabic copy

الجزء الاول: اسئلة عن تعلم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية.

1. هل من الممكن ان تخبرنى عن خبرتك عن تعلم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية كا متعلم؟
2. كيف تتعرف علي لطريقة الافضل لطلابك لتعليم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية؟
3. ما هى وجهة نظرك عن المعلوم التى تقول بان الطلاب يتعلمون القواعن الا عندما يكونون جاهزون لذلك؟
4. الي اى مدى انت موافق علي ان معرفة لقواعد تساعد المتعلمين علي استخدام اللغة؟
5. هل المتعلمين يجدون صعوبة في استعمال معرفتهم القواعدية الي استخدام اللغة؟
6. هل تعتقد بان التعلم يحدث افضل اذا الطلاب هم من يكتشفون القواعد بانفسهم ام ان القواعد تعرض عن طريق المعلم؟
7. الي اى مدى معرفتك حول التعلم اثرت في تدريسك الي قواعد اللغة الانجليزية؟
8. اى معلومات حول تعليم قواعد اللغة الانجليزية تريد ان تظفيها؟

الجزء الثاني: اسئلة عن تدريس قواعد اللغة الانجليزية.

1. ماذا تعرف عن تدريس اللغة الانجليزية بصورة عامة؟
2. ماذا تعرف عن طرق التدريس deductive and inductive ؟
3. ماذا تفضل منهم ولماذا؟
4. ماذا تعرف عن طرق التدريس metalanguage ؟ وهل تعتقد تدريسها مهم لطلاب؟
5. هل انت توافق القول الذي يقول بان الطلاب يتعلمون افضل عندما يفهمون المصطلحات القواعدية للغة الانجليزية؟
6. ما رايك في المعلومات القواعدية التي فى الكتاب المدرسي الذي انت تدرسه؟
7. هل انت تطبق في التعليمات ا لموجودة فى الكتاب المدرسي؟
8. الي اى مدى معرفتك حول اللغة و خبرتك تسعد فيك عندما تدرس قواعد اللغة الانجليزية؟
9. متى تصحح اخطاء تلاميذك؟
10. ماذا تعرف عن تصحيح اخطاء التلاميذ فى اثناء الكلام؟
11. ماذا تعرف طريقة ردت فعل المعلم مع الطلاب عندما يرتكبون اخطاء؟
12. ماذا تعرف عن اكرار اجابة الطلاب كا اجراء لمساعدة الطلاب الي اكتشاف اخطئهم؟
13. ماذا تعرف عن استخدام اللغة الاولى عند تصحيح اخطاء الطلاب؟
14. ماذا تعرف عن استعمال اللغة الاولى عندما تتفحص فهم طلابك؟
15. ماذا تعرف تتفحص فهم الطلاب؟
16. ماذا تعرف عن اهمية العلاقة ما بين الطالب والاستاذ داخل الفصل الدراسي؟
17. ماذا تعرف عن العوامل التي تؤثر فى المعلمين عندما يدرسون قواعد اللغة الانجليزية؟
18. اى معلومة اضافية تريد ان تزودنا بها عن تدريس قواعد اللغة الانجليزية؟

## Appendix D: Interviews Analysis Sample

Teacher: Manal Interview Transcript	Open Codes
<p><b>Researcher:</b> Well, let's go back to your educational background. Can you please tell me, what is your own experience of learning grammar as a learner?</p> <p><b>Manal:</b> In my experience, learning any language in general is not easy. This is because people need to learn each aspect of the language, including grammar. Concerning that subject in particular, people should learn grammar if they are motivated or have a desire to learn the language, because your language must improve if you develop your knowledge of grammar.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> How do you know the best method for learning English grammar and whether it is suitable for your students?</p> <p><b>Manal:</b> Actually, I think there are no best or worst methods of learning grammar because each of us has different views; this way to learn and that method may be good for me and not for you, so it must depend on the learner. Thinking about myself as a learner, the best way to learn English grammar, I think the person who wants to do so should read appropriate textbooks or find someone who can explain it properly in Arabic. I also believe it is best for students if they simply follow their teachers' instructions in class. This is because learners look to their teachers as professionals, and always believe them.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> And what do you think of the statement that students will learn a grammar point only if they are developmentally ready for it?</p> <p><b>Manal:</b> Yes, in this case learners cannot learn grammar until they are developmentally ready for it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning is difficult.</li> <li>• Because language has different aspects including grammar.</li> <li>• Grammar should be learned and needs learners who are highly motivated.</li> <li>• Because knowledge of grammar develop learners' language.</li> <li>• The best way depends on the learner him/herself.</li> <li>• Because each learner has his/her own ways of learning.</li> <li>• The best way is to read textbooks and ask for help.</li> <li>• Because learners believe their teachers.</li> <li>• Learners learn English grammar when they are ready to learn it.</li> </ul>

**Researcher:** To what extent do you agree that knowledge of grammatical rules helps learners to use the language?

**Manal:** I cannot say that it definitely does not help them to use the language, but it must help learners who are highly motivated to learn English.

**Researcher:** And is it difficult for learners to transfer their grammatical knowledge into communicative language use?

**Manal:** As for transferring their grammatical knowledge into communicative language use, of course it is very difficult for them and as I have said before, not all of them can do that.

**Researcher:** Do you think learning occurs best if learners discover rules by themselves, or if the rules are presented by the teacher?

**Teacher MA:** In general that is true. The problem is that most learners cannot discover too much for themselves, because some difficult rules need explanation by a teacher. Naturally they prefer the rules to be presented by the teacher, as that will make it easier for them to understand.

**Researcher:** To what extent does your knowledge about learning affect your teaching of grammar?

**Manal:** I would say that it has perhaps on 80% effect on my teaching, because I always put myself in the students' place and remember my own experience as a student. That has helped me a lot in teaching, although people are not all the same. In general I would say that knowledge of learning is important for teachers.

- It may help the learners in general, and those who are who are highly motivated to learn English in particular.

- transferring their grammatical knowledge into communicative language use

- Learners discovering a rule by themselves is better but it is difficult.
- It is difficult for some of them.

- Teachers' teaching grammar is affected by their prior experience and knowledge.
- Because she always puts herself in the students' place.

**Researcher: Is there any other further information about learning grammar that you want to add?**

**Manal:** Well, learning English grammar is sometimes easy and sometimes not. There are some important factors that teachers should consider when they teach grammar; the first being the students' level and the second, the difficulty or simplicity of the rules themselves. Teachers will be lucky if they can discover the weaknesses and strengths of their students from the first lesson, because after that they will know how to deal with those students. Furthermore, the motivation of the students is important because the teacher's task will be much easier if the students are highly motivated, and vice versa.

**Researcher: The next questions will be about teaching English grammar.**

**Researcher: What do you know about teaching English in general?**

**Manal:** Teaching English is not easy, because teachers are dealing with a foreign language. At the same time it is interesting and enjoyable, but sometimes I feel disappointed when I explain a lesson twice or more yet my students still do not understand what I mean. In this event I have to use some words in Arabic, and then return to explaining it in English. That has happened to me many times. Teaching English language needs qualified teachers who have a good knowledge of modern classroom methods, plus some knowledge of the target culture, in order to know how to deal with some of the expressions in the textbook.

- Teachers' use of grammar should consider the students' level and the difficulty or simplicity of the rules.

- Because it makes the teachers' job much easier.

- Teaching English is difficult and interesting at the same time.

- Use students' L1.

- Because students' level of English is low.

- Teaching English requires qualified teachers who are armed with teaching knowledge.

- Because the expressions in the textbook are not easy.

**Researcher: What do you know about deductive and inductive teaching grammar methods?**

**Manal:** Actually, I had never heard these two terms before. But thanks to your clarification I understand them now, OK.

**Researcher: Which do you prefer to use when you teach grammar?**

I prefer inductive teaching methods, but I sometimes use deductive ones.

**Researcher: Why?**

**Manal:** That is out of my control, because if I use inductive methods the students may not understand what I do or say. I use my previous knowledge of learning and teaching about grammar rules and the methods of teaching it to find solutions to some activities in teaching certain inductive tasks.

**Researcher: Do you think teaching grammatical terminology or metalanguage is important for learners seeking to learn grammar?**

**Manal:** I did not understand the meaning of the word metalanguage because I had never heard this word before today. About teaching grammatical terminology, I think it is very important to learn grammar because learners need to know the parts of speech and the form of English sentences if they are to build something similar when they are writing or speaking.

**Researcher: And do you agree with those people who say that students will learn grammar better if they understand grammatical terminology?**

**Manal:** Yes, I agree with those who say that students will learn grammar better if they understand

- not aware of its meaning
- interested in teaching grammar inductively because beneficial for students
- prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach grammar

- prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar
- grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

- not aware of the term metalanguage,



<p>grammatical terminology, because they will know how to connect words to create sentences full of meaning that they can communicate to others. I use grammatical terminology in grammar teaching as you noted. I do not necessarily expect the learners to use those grammatical terms, only to recognize them; they may also be able to use them when speaking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>necessary to teach it because learners need to know the parts of speech</li> </ul>
<p><b>Researcher: Why did you change your method of teaching metalanguage in your class?</b></p> <p>Because it is difficult to use only one way of teaching. I change my method of teaching according to the class situation because in some cases I cannot push students to certain activities and they do not understand the grammatical items. Furthermore, some other problems I face related to the context where I teach such as mismanagement in the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teach it deductively and inductively but focus on form and function rather than meaning</li> <li>mismanagement in the school</li> </ul>
<p><b>Researcher: What do you think about the grammar knowledge in the textbook?</b></p>	
<p><b>Manal:</b> The knowledge in the textbook is adequate and useful, but I have found some lessons difficult for students to understand even if I explain in their first language (Arabic). In general it is interesting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The textbook is useful and difficult.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Researcher: And do you follow the course book instructions, or do you use some other way of deciding?</b></p>	
<p><b>Manal:</b> It depends; sometimes I will follow the textbook instructions and sometimes not, but I will not stray away from the lesson's aims. In other words I will use different procedures or techniques, while retaining the same lesson aims. I do sometimes decide to find some other means to help me explain the lesson; by the end all students should understand the topic, which is what the education authority expects and all teachers aim to achieve.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher follows the textbook instructions, but not always.</li> <li>The teacher creates other activities in order for students to understand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Researcher: To what extent do your knowledge</b></p>	

<p><b>about language and your experience as a teacher help you to teach grammar well in the classroom?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> Everything that I know about teaching and learning English has helped me in my task as a teacher of English grammar, because all the aspects or elements of the language are related and complement each other. It has helped me 100%. <b>My previous knowledge helps me to cover all my lesson aims.</b> Teachers of English grammar should have knowledge of the language, knowledge of the textbook and understand their students' English level if they are to know how to deal with them, otherwise the teacher will not be able to achieve their lesson aims. In fact, before starting, teachers should know several different and important things: they should understand what they are going to teach, have experience of using the language, and knowledge of teaching and learning grammar. They also should be up to date about the methods and means of teaching the subject.</p> <p><b>Researcher: When do you correct your students' errors?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> <b>I correct their errors immediately but not always. It is necessary to do this in certain situations.</b> Students sometimes could not know the right answer in some activities. <b>This technique I think is important</b> because it encourage students to not panic about their language use. However, this technique of correction is very easy. Therefore, I do not like it, it wastes time. If I gave students some choices, that means I told them the right answer.</p> <p><b>Researcher: What do you know about correcting students' errors while speaking?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> I am sure correcting students' errors while speaking activities <b>is not useful.</b></p> <p><b>Researcher: Why?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> Because <b>students do not like to be interrupted while speaking.</b> They may lose their self-confidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her previous teaching and learning knowledge has helped her to teach English grammar.</li>   <li>• direct correction is important but not always</li> <li>• technique of providing some solutions to their errors was helpful and useful for students</li>   <li>• correcting students' errors while speaking is interrupting their speech</li>   <li>• correcting students'</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Researcher: What should teachers do, then?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> They should <b>leave students to speak as much as they can and</b>, when they finish, teachers inform them of their errors.</p> <p><b>Researcher: Great, what do you know about peer-correction as a technique?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> I sometimes involve students to work in pairs but <b>not when I check their understanding</b>. In general, It is <b>not always difficult</b> for them to do such this technique.</p> <p><b>Researcher: Good, and what do you know about providing students with feedback?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> In fact, <b>feedback is important for students because it helps them to become more confidence</b>, especially if they received the positive type. Therefore, I <b>use positive feedback more than the negative type</b>.</p> <p><b>Researcher: what do you know about repeating the student's answers as a feedback technique?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> I have <b>no idea</b> about repeating the student's answers as a feedback technique. I always <b>encourage students to participate</b> in the class. I also <b>offer advice</b> to them, because <b>motivating students to learn grammar in essential</b> especially in this context where students find difficulties to learn the target language. Some teachers use negative feedback in their classes too much and some of them <b>punish students when they made grammatical errors</b>. This is not the right solution because students need support to learn grammar.</p> <p><b>Researcher: Right, I observed you using students' L1 in your classes, why?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> <b>Yes I did, but not always</b>. I used it only when I saw a real need. For example, If <b>the students do not understand my explanation of some rule</b>, I use their first language to give additional information to help them understand it. I use it sometimes to explain to help students to understand the meaning of some words. I also use their first language when <b>I find there is some similarity between the rule that I am explaining and the same rule in their first language, to connect the</b></p>	<p>grammar errors after speaking activities led to more independent learners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peer-correction is possible but difficult in certain situations</li> <li>• aware of the importance of encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback</li> <li>• rejecting student answers is negative direct feedback and used it rarely</li> <li>• not aware of repeating the student's answers as a feedback technique</li> <li>• offer advice to help students to participate</li> <li>• does not support the punishing of students when they make grammatical errors</li> <li>• tried to do my best to explain new words in English many times but if students were not able to grasp the meaning used their L1</li> <li>• It is useful to use L1 when</li> </ul>
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<p>new rule to the old rule with which they are already familiar. This is a useful strategy for helping students to remember such a rule, and they will not easily forget it.</p> <p><b>Researcher: What do you know about using L1 to correct students' errors?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> I am not sure if this happens but I tend to avoid using L1 as possibly can because using it in this case may not help students to understand the correct answers in English. Using L1 may confuse students.</p> <p><b>Researcher: Do you know about using students' L1 to check students' understanding?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> I have no idea about this.</p> <p><b>Researcher: Ok, then do you agree with teachers who use L1 when they move from one activity to another?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> No I am against using the L1 when moving from one activity to another because it gives me indication that I teach Arabic not English. I use it only when students can not understand the main ideas of the task.</p> <p><b>Researcher: What do you know about checking students' understanding?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> It is always required. How could I move on to another lesson or rule if I were not sure that the students have understood what I have just told them? I do that before I move to another practice topic, and I do it using different techniques that will maintain their interest and wanting to answer my questions. I have to check their understanding regularly and often. The frequency depends on the rule itself, because some rules are more difficult to grasp. In those cases I must check the students' understanding from time to time as we go along, otherwise everything runs as normal.</p> <p><b>Researcher: I observed you using short test, what is the importance of it?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> Yes it s important at least to know what you</p>	<p>similarity between the rule that the students could not understand and the same rules in their first language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using L1 to correct students' errors may confuse them when they interact</li> <li>• no idea about using L1 to check students' understanding</li> <li>• against using the L1 when moving from one activity to another</li> <li>• aware of engaging students in the process of checking their understanding of grammar</li> <li>• this technique gives clues that they have understood and that there is no need for repetition</li> </ul>
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<p>should do next and I like this method. I use it sometimes when I <b>set a competition through using short quizzes between students</b>, and tell them that whoever can complete this practice best will receive a present. They like that strategy for checking. I check their understanding of grammar in groups and in pairs sometimes, and among the two sexes, male and female. While explaining the rule I <b>check their understanding to know their feedback</b>, and <b>again at the end of the lesson to make sure that all the students have understood</b>. Their feedback is important to me to know if students completely understood the task.</p> <p><b>Researcher: right, some teachers use the class vote as a technique, do you know about it?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> Sorry <b>no idea</b> about it.</p> <p><b>Researcher: Ok then do you know about using ‘think-pair-share’ as a technique to check students’ understanding?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> As the name I <b>never heard</b> about it but as the function I may use it in different situations.</p> <p><b>Researcher: What do you know about the importance of the relationship between teacher and students in the classroom?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> The relationship should be fine. I feel more confident about teaching methods and the reasons for teaching grammar, because previously I knew very little about teaching methods of any kind. I enjoy teaching grammar and I am happy to do so. Therefore, I always <b>patient with students and encourage them to learn more even they committed errors</b>.</p> <p><b>Researcher: What do you know about the factors which hinder teachers to teach grammar?</b></p> <p><b>Manal:</b> To be honest, and more specifically about myself, I go to school every day, where I teach English grammar to second year. <b>I am not happy with the system in school, because the head does not consider my personal circumstances when he gives me the timetable for my lessons</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of short quizzes as a strategy to check students’ understanding</li> <li>• aware the importance of using students’ feedback to check understanding of grammar</li> <li>• no idea about using the class vote as a strategy in checking students’ understanding in grammar classes</li> <li>• no idea about ‘think-pair-share’ as a technique to check students’ understanding</li> <li>• supported the idea of teachers being friendly and patient with students</li> <li>• Complaints from the school management.</li> </ul>
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**Researcher: Do you have any other further information you wanted to add?**

**Manal: No, thanks.**

**Researcher: Many thanks for your time.**

## Appendix E: First Step Identifying Range of Responses

### Teachers' knowledge about presenting grammar

#### Text: interview data\Manal interview

**Code:** not aware of its meaning, interested in teaching grammar inductively because beneficial for students, prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach grammar, prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

#### Text: interview data\Kaliad interview

**Code:** not aware of its meaning, preferred to adopt deductive methods because it is more useful for students, prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach grammar, prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

#### Text: interview data\Tariq interview

**Code:** not aware of its meaning, interested in teaching grammar inductively because it is beneficial for students, prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach grammar, prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

#### Text: interview data\Sami interview

**Code:** aware of its meaning, interested in teaching grammar inductively because it is beneficial for students, prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach grammar, prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

#### Text: interview data\Elham interview

**Code:** aware of its meaning, interested in teaching grammar inductively because it is beneficial for students prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach

grammar, prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

**Text: interview data\Karima interview**

**Code:** aware of its meaning, preferred to adopt deductive methods because more useful for students, prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach grammar, prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

**Text: interview data\Lila interview**

**Code:** aware of its meaning, preferred to adopt deductive methods because more useful for students, prior knowledge teaching and learning had helped me to teach grammar, previous grammatical knowledge did not have too much of an effect on my teaching of English grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

**Text: interview data\Omar interview**

**Code:** aware of its meaning, preferred to adopt deductive methods because inductive methods need more time, prior knowledge of teaching had helped me to teach grammar, prior knowledge of learning had helped me to teach grammar, grammatical knowledge helps me to teach

**Teachers' knowledge about teaching metalanguage**

**Text: interview data\Manal interview**

**Code:** not aware of the term metalanguage, necessary to teach it because learners need to know the parts of speech, teach it deductively and inductively but focus on form and function rather than meaning, mismanagement in the school

**Text: interview data\Kalied interview**



**Code:** not aware of the term metalanguage, students would understand grammar better if they learned grammatical terminology, teach it deductively and inductively and focus on form rather than meaning because lack of school facilities, the head of school has no idea about English as a subject and what teachers of English in the school need

**Text:** interview data\Tariq interview

**Code:** not aware of the term metalanguage, it is important for student to know, teach it deductively and inductively and focus on meaning rather than form, mismanagement in their school

**Text:** interview data\Sami interview

**Code:** were not aware of the term metalanguage, understanding it leads to active learning, teach it deductively and inductively and focus on meaning rather than form and function, mismanagement in the school

**Text:** interview data\Elham interview

**Code:** aware of the term metalanguage, teaching grammatical terminology is useful for students because it helps students to use grammatical rules when they speak, teach it deductively and inductively and focus on form and function rather than meaning, disappointed about head teachers and inspectors' behaviours when they excluded staff from training sessions

**Text:** interview data\Karima interview

**Code:** aware of the term metalanguage, it provides students with grammatical terms which are essential for students to learn English, focus only on form because of the lack of teaching materials

**Text: interview data\Lila interview**

**Code:** aware of the term metalanguage, it helps students to build their sentences in English, teaching it deductively only because of lack of facilities, lack of training sessions

**Text: interview data\Omar interview**

**Code:** aware of the term metalanguage, it is good for students to know because it helps them to understand the language, teaching it deductively only because of books with a teaching guide and videos or TV learning programme

**Teachers' knowledge about correcting errors**

**Text: interview data\Manal interview**

**Code:** direct correction is important but not always, technique of providing some solutions to their errors was helpful and useful for students, correcting students' errors while speaking is interrupting their speech, correcting students' grammar errors after speaking activities led to more independent learners, peer-correction is possible but difficult in certain situations

**Text: interview data\Kalied interview**

**Code:** direct correction is essential in some situations, It is useful for students to find other answers, suggestions with options to correct their grammatical errors, correcting students' errors while speaking is not useful, correcting students' grammar errors after speaking activities make them more confident, giving a chance for peer-correction does not work with all students

**Text: interview data\Tariq interview**

**Code:** direct correction has negative effects on students' achievements, providing the students with options to correct their grammar, correcting students' errors while

speaking is not good within inductive activities, peer-correction increase students' motivation for learning

**Text: interview data\Sami interview**

**Code:** direct correction may not help students to learn grammar, providing students with possible solutions increases their understanding, correcting students' errors while speaking is not helpful but necessary in certain cases, correcting students' grammar errors after speaking activities has benefits for students, giving a chance for peer-correction means making indirect competition between them which is good

**Text: interview data\Elham interview**

**Code:** direct correction is good for teachers and students, offer other answers to students saves time, correcting students' errors while speaking is needed. correcting students' grammar errors after speaking activities gives them chance to speak without hesitating, peer-correction is not helpful especially with students who have low level of English

**Text: interview data\Karima interview**

**Code:** using of direct correction is important for students, choosing one answer from list is helpful, correcting students' errors while speaking is necessary, no idea about how to correct students' grammar errors after speaking activities, peer-correction technique may not work in some classes

**Text: interview data\Lila interview**

**Code:** direct correction not always helpful, providing students with different answers is good for them, correcting students' errors while speaking is important, correcting students' grammar errors after speaking activities encourages them to interact more, it is difficult to ask students to work in pairs to correct their errors

**Text: interview data\Omar interview**

**Code:** direct correction is not beneficial for students, students like choosing among answers, correcting students' errors while speaking is not useful but I have to do it, no idea about correcting students' grammar errors after speaking activities, giving a chance for peer-correction is important but impossible with these students

**Teachers' knowledge about providing students with feedback**

**Text: interview data\Manal interview**

**Code:** not aware of repeating the student's answers as a feedback technique, aware of the importance of encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback, offer advice to help students to participate, rejecting student answers is negative direct feedback and used it rarely, does not support the punishing of students when they make grammatical errors

**Text: interview data\Kalied interview**

**Code:** repeating the student's answers as a feedback technique helps them to reach to the right answer and confirms their understanding, aware of the importance of encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback, rejecting student answers is not good and used it rarely, it demotivated students to participate more, does not support the punishing of students when they make grammatical errors

**Text: interview data\Tariq interview**

**Code:** not aware of using of questions as feedback, not aware of repeating the student's answers as a feedback technique, aware of the importance of encouraging students to participate as positive feedback, praising students, advised them to speak English and practice their language by themselves, encouraging students is helpful especially for students whose level of English is low, rejecting students' answers is negative feedback which does not lead to

successful learning and used it rarely, does not support the punishing of students when they make grammatical errors

**Text: interview data\Sami interview**

**Code:** not aware of using questions as feedback, not aware of repeating the student's answers as feedback technique, aware of the importance of encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback, uses completion between students, rejecting students' answers is negative feedback reflected in students' achievements and used it rarely, does not support the punishing of students when they make grammatical errors as it reduces their contributions in the next activity, gives student chances to think about correct answers

**Text: interview data\Elham interview**

**Code:** no idea about the advantages and disadvantages using of questions as feedback, uses repetition of the student's answers to confirm students' understanding, encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback is needed, rejecting student answers is negative direct feedback but is necessary and used it regularly, does not support the punishing of students when they make grammatical errors

**Text: interview data\Karima interview**

**Code:** using repetition of the student's answers gives chance for students to think about the right answer, using techniques of positive feedback such as encouraging students to participate is essential for students to learn, did not know why she did not say praising words or encourage students regularly, regularly rejected students' answers, supported the punishing of students when they made grammatical errors because sometimes the situation forced her to do it

**Text: interview data\Lila interview**

**Code:** using repetition of the student's answers is helpful because it indicates an error, encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback is

important, did not know why she did not say praising words or encourage students regularly, rejecting student answers is not positive technique of feedback but is essential in certain classes therefore used it regularly, supporting the punishing of students when they made grammatical errors

**Text: interview data\Omar interview**

**Code:** using repetition of the student's answers is a technique which sends a signal to students that there was an error, aware of the importance of encouraging students to participate as a positive technique of feedback but did not use it because he thought that if he praised students, they may not improve because they may believe they are doing perfectly well, rejecting student answers is negative direct feedback but use was out of his control, supported the punishing of students when they made grammatical errors because students sometimes deserved it.

**Teachers' knowledge about using L1**

**Text: interview data\Manal interview**

**Code:** tried to do my best to explain new words in English many times but if students were not able to grasp the meaning used their L1, no idea about using L1 to check students' understanding, using L1 to correct students' errors may confuse them when they interact, against using the L1 when moving from one activity to another, It is useful to use L1 when similarity between the rule that the students could not understand and the same rules in their first language

**Text: interview data\Kaliel interview**

**Code:** always say the meaning of the new words in English and rarely translate them in Arabic, no idea about using L1 to check students' understanding, using L1 to correct students' errors not always helpful, support using the L1 when moving from one activity to another, because some exercises in the textbook were not easy for students to follow, using L1 may resolve some students' difficulties but not always

**Text: interview data\Tariq interview**

**Code:** completely rejected the use of students L1 in L2 classes, no idea about using L1 to check students' understanding, using L1 is not useful for students in any situation because it demotivates them in participating whether they know the right answer or not, against using the L1 when moving from one activity to another

**Text: interview data\Sami interview**

**Code:** not useful to use L1 when teaching a second language even when explaining new words, no idea about using L1 to check students' understanding, using L1 is not helpful for students in any situation, against using the L1 when moving from one activity to another

**Text: interview data\Elham interview**

**Code:** L1 should only be used after teachers had tried to explain the meaning of new words in English, giving students chance to know the meaning of new words in English before translating then into Arabic, no idea about using L1 to check students' understanding, using L1 to correct students errors, using L1 was based on the type of error, support using the L1 when moving from one activity to another, using L1 saves time and confirms their understanding of the activity before moving on to, using L1 resolves some students' difficulties but hinders the creating of new language

**Text: interview data\Karima interview**

**Code:** explaining the meaning of new words in English is a waste of time, use L1 to check students' understanding, using L1 is not acceptable in L2 classes but use it because forced to by the classroom environment, using the L1 to correct students' errors, use of L1 saves time, support using L1 when moving from one activity to another, using L1 is useful especially when rule is similar in first language

**Text: interview data\Lila interview**

**Code:** using L1 to explain the meanings of new words in English is helpful but after the teacher used English, translation is essential to reinforce the understanding of words, did not give the meaning of new words straightaway in Arabic, used the L1 to check students' understanding to confirm their understanding, using the L1 to correct students' errors, support using the L1 when moving from one activity to another, using L1 saves time and helps teachers to keep their lesson plans on schedule, using the L1 may increase students' motivation to learn grammar, because there are similarities between the two languages

**Text: interview data\Omar interview**

**Code:** usually say the meaning of new words in Arabic immediately because students could not understand explanations in English, using L1 to check students' understanding, is essential in some situations, using it is not good but forced to do it, use the L1 to check students' understanding because students were happy with this technique of teaching, use the L1 to correct students errors, the reasons for using Arabic are the learners' level and time constraints, support using the L1 when moving from one activity to another, helps students to link their ideas with the topic that being explained, using L1 helps teachers to keep their lesson plans on schedule, using L1 is useful for overcoming problems

**Teachers' knowledge about checking students' understanding**

**Text: interview data\Manal interview**

**Code:** aware of engaging students in the process of checking their understanding of grammar, use of short quizzes as a strategy to check students' understanding of English grammar is useful for teachers and students, aware the importance of using students' feedback to check understanding of grammar, this technique gives clues that they have understood and that there is no need for repetition, no idea about using the class vote as a strategy in checking students' understanding



in grammar classes, no idea about 'think-pair-share' as a technique to check students' understanding, supported the idea of teachers being friendly and patient with students

**Text: interview data\Kalid interview**

**Code:** knows about engaging students in the process of checking understanding of grammar, no idea about using short quizzes as a strategy to check students' understanding, aware of the importance of using students' feedback to check students' understanding, no idea about using the class vote as a strategy in checking understanding, no idea about 'think-pair-share' as a technique to check should always be serious because students sometimes do not care about what their teachers said, shy students required to be pushed to engage in the activities

**Text: interview data\Tariq interview**

**Code:** aware of the importance of checking student' understanding of grammar, techniques could be used to help student to engage in interactive activities, use of short quizzes as a strategy to check students' understanding of English grammar is interesting and important, understood the value of using students' feedback to check understanding of grammar, used class vote as a strategy in checking their students' understanding in grammar classes in order to know how many of lesson aims have been achieved, used as a clue without understanding the activity, was not aware of the 'think-pair-share' as a technique to check students' understanding, supported the idea of teachers being friendly and patient with students

**Text: interview data\Sami interview**

**Code:** knows about engaging students in the process of checking their understanding of grammar, using short quizzes as a strategy to check students' understanding of English grammar informs whether or not students understood the lesson, had knowledge about using students' feedback to check understanding of grammar, had knowledge about using class votes as a strategy in checking their students'

understanding, it helps teachers to engage students into activities, rarely used it, no idea about the 'think-pair-share' technique of checking students' understanding, students need a teacher with a strong character and at the same time being flexible with them

**Text: interview data\Elham interview**

**Code:** aware of the advantages of checking understanding of grammar, no idea about using short quizzes as a strategy to check students' understanding, understood the importance of using students' feedback to check her students' understanding, no idea about using the class vote as a strategy in checking understanding, never heard of the 'think-pair-share' technique of checking students' understanding, agreed with the idea of teachers being friendly and patient with students

**Text: interview data\Karima interview**

**Code:** aware of the importance of engaging students in the process of checking their understanding of grammar, no idea about using of short quizzes as a strategy to check understanding, no idea about using the class vote as a strategy in checking understanding, no idea about the 'think-pair-share' technique of checking, teacher should always be serious with students, ignores quiet and isolated students

**Text: interview data\Lila interview**

**Code:** knows about checking understanding of grammar, no idea about using of short quizzes as a strategy to check students' understanding of English grammar, using students' feedback as to check her students' understanding of grammar is essential, no idea about using the class vote as a strategy in checking understanding in grammar classes, no idea about the 'think-pair-share' technique of checking understanding, teacher of grammar should always be serious with students, ignores quiet and isolated students because they are happy to be like that

**Text: interview data\Omar interview**

**Code:** aware of the importance of engaging students in the process of checking their understanding of grammar, no idea about using short quizzes as a strategy to check students' understanding of English grammar, understood the importance of using students' feedback to check understanding, no idea about using the class vote as a strategy in checking understanding, no idea about 'think-pair-share' technique to check students' understanding, teachers of grammar should always be serious with students, ignores quiet and isolated students

## Appendix F: Focused Codes

Teachers' knowledge about Teaching Grammar Strategies	Focused Codes
<p>➤ <b>Presenting Grammar</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of presenting grammar items deductively and inductively</li> <li>• Deductive and inductive teaching methods and teachers' preferences</li> <li>• The effect of teaching and learning experience in presenting English grammar</li> <li>• The effectiveness of grammatical knowledge and experience in presenting English grammar</li> </ul>
<p>➤ <b>Using Metalanguage</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing the meaning of metalanguage</li> <li>• Awareness of the importance of teaching metalanguage</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about using metalanguage deductively and inductively</li> <li>• Rationales of using metalanguage and of their ways of teaching it</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about using direct correction</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about offering students another solution to their error</li> </ul>

<p>➤ <b>Correcting students' errors</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about correcting students' grammar errors while they were speaking</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about correcting students' grammar errors after speaking</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about giving the chance for peer-correction</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about the timing of correcting students' grammatical errors</li> </ul>
<p>➤ <b>Providing students with feedback</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about using questions as feedback</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about repeating the students' answers</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about motivating students to participate</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about rejecting students answers</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about punishing students when they made grammatical errors</li> </ul>
<p>➤ <b>Using student' L1</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about using L1 to explain new words</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about utilizing L1 to check students' understanding</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about exploiting L1 to correct students' errors</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about adopting L1 to move from one activity to another</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about resorting to L1 when noticing that a student did not understand</li> </ul>
<p>➤ <b>Checking students' understanding</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about engaging students in the process</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about utilizing short quizzes</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about using feedback from students</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about exploiting a class vote</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about using the 'think-pair-share' technique</li> <li>• Teachers' knowledge about considering the psychological state of students</li> </ul>

## Appendix G: Interview Selective Codes

### Interview Selective Codes

- Teachers' Knowledge about Presenting Grammar
- Teachers' Knowledge about Using Metalanguage
- Teachers' Knowledge about Correcting students' Errors
- Teachers' Knowledge about Providing students with feedback
- Teachers' Knowledge about Using Students' L1
- Teachers' Knowledge about Checking Students' Understanding

## **Appendix H: Description of the Teachers' Profiles**

### ***Manal***

Manal is a female teacher, between 37-42 years old. Her first language is Arabic. She has a BA in English. She graduated from Zawia University in Libya in 1994; she learned English for 7 years before becoming a teacher, and had been teaching in the secondary school in Zawia for 14 years. She did not study teaching methodology when she was a student. She was teaching second and third year students in grammar. She had taken training sessions once. She had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.

### ***Kalied***

Kalied is male teacher and his age was between 37-42 years old. Her first language is Arabic. He has a BA in English. He graduated from Zawia University in Libya in 1995. He had 13 years' experience teaching in the secondary school in Zawia, and spent 8 years learning English before becoming a teacher. He did not study teaching methodology when he was a student. He was teaching second years in grammar only. He had not taken any training sessions. He had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.

### ***Tariq***

Tariq is male teacher and his age was between 43-49 years old. His first language is Arabic. He has a BA in English. He graduated from Zawia University, Department of English in Libya in 1992. He had 16 years experience in the secondary school in Zawia and spent 7 years learning English before becoming a teacher. He did not study teaching methodology when he was a student. He was teaching second and third year students in grammar. He had not taken any training sessions. He had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.



### ***Sami***

Sami is male teacher and his age was between 37-42 years old. His first language is Arabic. He had a BA in English and he graduated from the English Department, Faculty of Arts, University of Sebha in Libya in 1993. He had 14 years' teaching experience in the secondary school in Zawia and spent 7 years learning English before becoming a teacher. He did not study teaching methodology when he was a student. He had not taken any training sessions. He was teaching second and third year students in grammar. He had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.

### ***Lila***

Lila was female teacher and her age was between 23-30 years old. She gained a BA in English from Zawia University in Libya in 2000. She had 8 years teaching experience in the secondary school in Zawia and had 7 years learning English before becoming a teacher. She studied teaching methodology when she was a student. She was teaching second years in grammar only. She had taken training sessions twice. She had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.

### ***Karima***

Karima was female teacher and her age was between 23-30 years old. She gained a BA in English from Zawia University in Libya in 2001. She had 7 years teaching experience in the secondary school in Zawia and had 7 years learning English before becoming a teacher. She studied teaching methodology when she was a student. She was teaching only second year in grammar. She had taken training sessions twice. She had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.

***Omar***

Omar was Male teacher and his age was between 37-42 years old. His first language is Arabic. He had BA in English from Tripoli University in Libya in 2002. He had 6 years for teaching in the secondary school in Zawia and had 7 years learning English before been a teacher. He studied teaching methodology as a subject when he was a student. His first language is Arabic. He was teaching second year in grammar. He had taken training sessions. He had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.

***Elham***

Elham was female teacher and her age was between 31-36 years old. She had BA in English. She graduated from the department of English, faculty of Arts, Zawia University in Libya in 1998. She had 9 years for teaching in the secondary school in Zawia and had 7 years learning English before been a teacher. She did not study teaching methodology when she was a student. She was teaching second year in grammar. She had taken training sessions once. She had not taken any international examinations or studied abroad.

## Appendix I: Letter Permission from Supervisor for collecting Data



**University of  
Sunderland**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIETY**

FORSTER BUILDING  
CITY CAMPUS, CHESTER ROAD  
SUNDERLAND SR1 3SD  
UNITED KINGDOM

TEL: (0191) 515 3192  
FAX: (0191) 515 2628  
WEBSITE: <http://www.sunderland.ac.uk>

September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2008

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that Abdussalam Tantani, working with me as a PhD student, will soon need to travel to Libya to collect his data from Libyan teachers' secondary schools.

Whilst he is in Libya I will be supporting him by email so he can keep me up to date with his progress and collect enough rich data before he returns to University to begin his data analysis.

Yours sincerely


Dr F G Breet  
Head of the Department of Culture  
Faculty of Education and Society



DEAN  
PROFESSOR GARY HOLMES  
BA MSc

VICE-CHANCELLOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
PROFESSOR PETER FIDLER  
MBE DL MSc DipTP DipSoc MRTPi MInstD CCMi

**Appendix J: Letter Permission from Libyan Authority of Education**

  
THE PEOPLE'S BUREAU  
For Legal Translation  
English - French - Italian - German  
IBN KALDOUN ST - ZAWIA - LIBYA

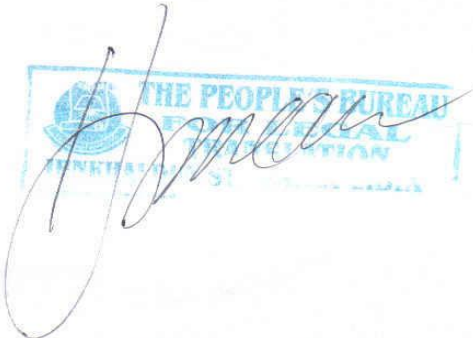

**المكتب الشعبي**  
**للترجمة القانونية**  
انجليزي - فرنسي - ايطالي - الماني

**The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**  
**General People's Committee for Education**  
**People's Committee for Education at Shabiyat Zawia**  
Ref. No : 11\2008 Date : 08-11-2008

**To \ Directors of intermediate education**

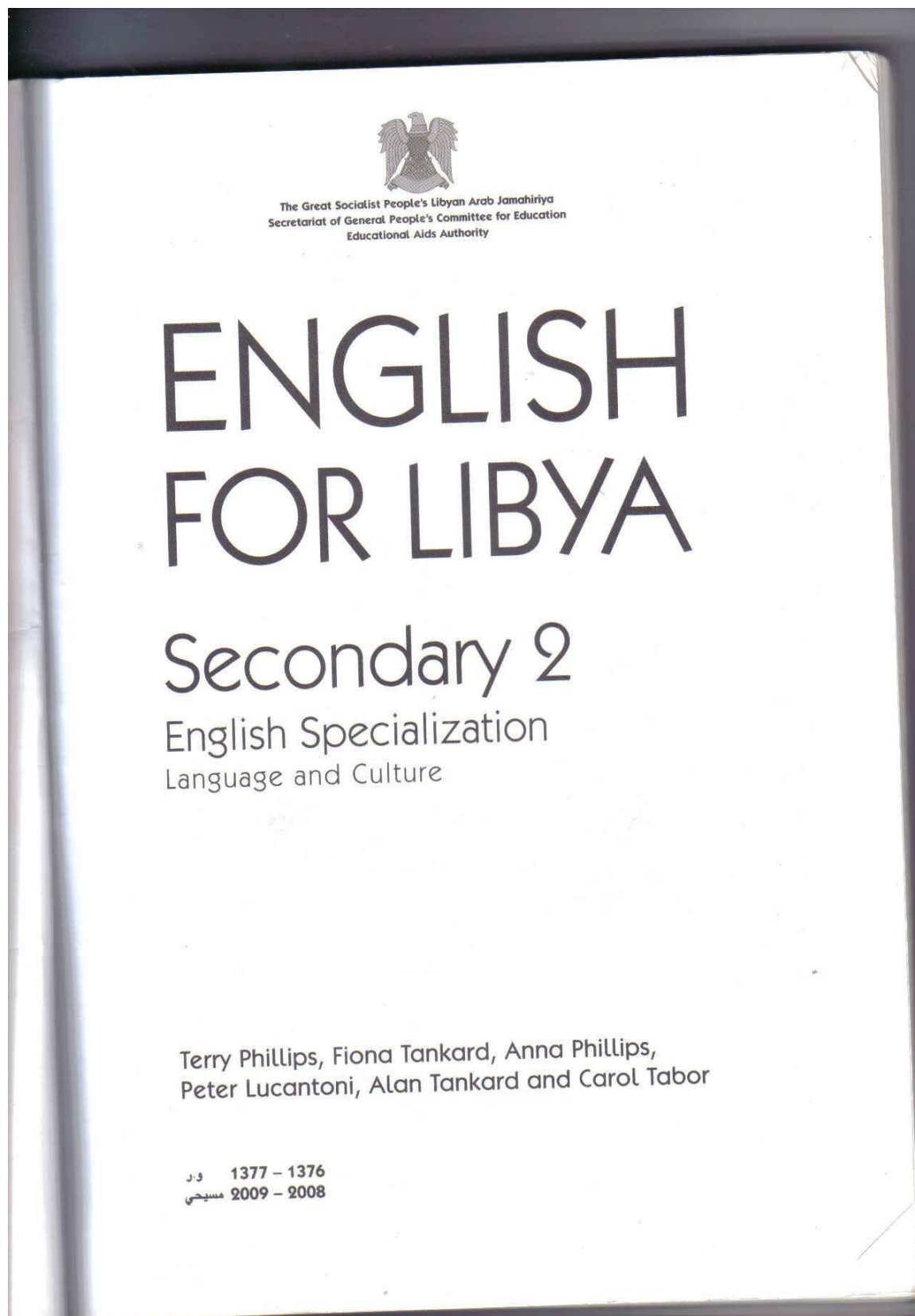
It is allowed to Mr. **Abdussalam Saleh TANTANI** , student in postgraduate studies , preparing research or doctorate thesis in English language to meet school administration , teachers of English language and students to enabling him to check the followed teaching methods and problems encountered by students when they receive courses .

**Signed and attested by**  
**Naji Muftah Alazreg**  
**Director of intermediate education affairs office**

.Mail : The\_Peoples\_Bureau@yahoo.com قرب المصرف الزراعي وبنك مصر الوحدة والمصرف الاهلي - زقاي شارع ابن خلدون المتفرع من شارع النهضة  
TEL-fax : 023 630327 023 6230327 091 3716022 092 7210798 ( 16144 ) ص.ب

Appendix K: Extracts from the textbook



# Unit 5

## WB5.1

**A** When we create sentences, we can choose the active or the passive form. Read these facts about the passive.

1. We use the active form to say what the subject does.

Example: I am a meteorologist. Every day I check the air pressure.

2. We use the passive form to say what happens to the subject.

Example: Air pressure is important for meteorologists. It is checked every day.

3. We use the passive when the person or thing doing the action is unknown or unimportant.

Example: The air pressure is checked every day. (Someone checks it, but we're not interested in who checks it.)

We often use the passive in scientific texts and reports because we are not interested in who does the work.

4. If we want to add who or what does the action to the sentence, we use by ...

Example: The air pressure is checked by computer.

5. We also use the passive when it is obvious who or what does the action.

Example: Planes are flown into storm clouds. (We know that a pilot flies a plane so we don't need to add by pilots.)

6. We form the passive in this way:

verb *to be* + past participle

**B** Look at the text. How many examples of the present simple passive can you find and underline?

### Eight Things You Didn't Know About the Weather Forecast

Professional weather forecasters, called meteorologists, use very large computers, because they have to make millions of calculations.

The weather forecast is made by taking information from different sources: satellites, ships, aircraft, weather balloons and weather stations on the ground. Satellites send weather information every half-hour, weather balloons measure the upper atmosphere, and ships, aircraft and weather stations send information from lower levels.

The weather map you see on television is a simplified version of the one that is used by professional meteorologists. A weather map starts as a normal map, showing coastlines, rivers, cities, international borders and the position of all the weather stations.

The stations which show the same air pressure are all joined together with lines called isobars. The meteorologist looks for areas of high and low pressure. Where an area of high pressure meets an area of low pressure, there will be a front.



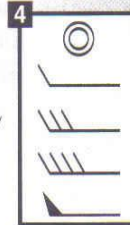
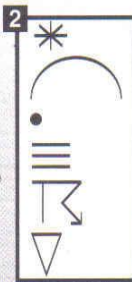
These fronts are also drawn on to the weather map. Fronts move according to wind direction and wind speed, and they are named after the mass of air that they carry behind them. A front which is followed by cold air is a cold front, and one which is followed by warm air is a warm front. (See diagram 1.)

Meteorologists use international symbols on their weather maps so that they can understand the weather in other countries without having to use translations. (See diagram 2.)

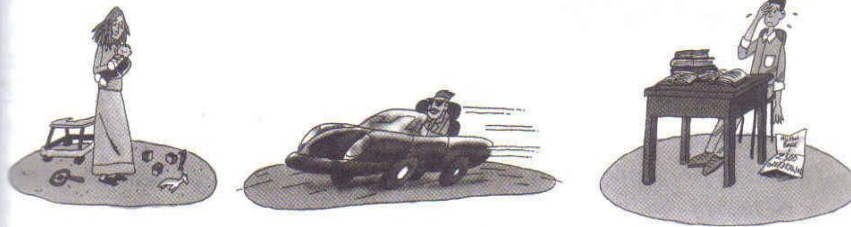
The type of clouds and the amount of cloud cover is included on weather maps. The amount of sky which is covered by cloud is measured in eighths or oktas. (See diagram 3.)

Wind speed is measured in knots, or nautical miles per hour. One knot is 1.85 km / hour. (See diagram 4.)

There are planes which are specially designed to fly into storm clouds and send back information. The wings and bodies of these planes are very strong to resist the hail, wind and ice they will find on their journey. This is a dangerous job, and most normal planes avoid storm clouds!



Look at the three people. What kind of problems do they have?



- Write a sentence about each picture.
- Read the ads for different services below. Choose one service to help each person.

**Carey's Babysitting Service**

Are you tired and fed up? Do you need some time off? Why not give me a call? I'll look after the kids for you while you go shopping, have your hair done or go to the cinema. Fully qualified. Very reasonable rates. Tel: 9865-764539

**Student Counselling Service**

Is your college work getting you down? Have you got money problems? Are you worried about your future? Call us now for a confidential chat about how we can help. Free Service. Tel: 98764-5674989

**Ray's Car Cleaning Service!**

Keep your car in tip-top condition. Have a complete clean and wax from Ray's specialist team of cleaners. We give your car the star treatment! We pick it up and drive it back to you. 24-hour service. Call 7685-0285637 for details.

**High-Interest Savings Account**

We offer the best rates in the country! You have easy access to your money and can be confident it's in safe hands. Invest with us today and earn money for all life's little luxuries. Tel: 9765-749859

**HAVE YOU GOT TOO MUCH HOUSEWORK?**

Call Jane on 200958 and I'll solve all your housework problems. I love the jobs you hate! Low hourly rates. Call me today!

**Essay-Writing Service**

We specialize in writing and rewriting course notes and coursework essays. Any subject. Quality guaranteed. All work written by university graduates and teachers. Reasonable prices. Tel: 9850-3452098 for details.

- Write a first conditional sentence for each person, saying what will happen if they use this service.
  - Write a second conditional sentence for each person, saying what would happen if they used this service.
- What service could you offer your school friends?  
Write an ad for it similar to the ones you have just seen in Exercise B.

**C** Read the text and correct the mistakes.

**USE IT OR LOSE IT!**

If a shop doesn't have customers, it ~~closed~~<sup>closes</sup>, and it's the same for our High Street banks. If people don't use the banks, there was no reason to keep them open. Imagine a High Street with no banks. Already many banks have started to shut down some of their smaller branches, and experts predict one day soon there will be no High Street banks left. If people continued to change over to the Internet and telephone banking, there was no need for offices in town centres. Already, more and more banks are offering these services to their customers.

If customers will want to, they can access their accounts 24 hours a day and talk to a personal advisor on the phone. But are you ready for the changes? If all the High Street banks will close today, how did it affect your life? For those of us who have phones and computers, it might not mean a big change, but if we didn't have them, we will have problems. So, we have two choices – we can get ready for the changes or, if we wanted our High Street bank to stay in the High Street, then we must do something about it now, before it's too late!

**WB7.3: Financial vocabulary and conditional sentences**

**A** Complete these words connected with finance with the correct vowels.

1. cr \_ d \_ t \_ c \_ rd
2. \_ ns \_ r \_ nc \_
3. b \_ lls
4. b \_ nk \_ m \_ n \_ g \_ r
5. \_ nt \_ r \_ st
6. r \_ p \_ ym \_ nt
7. m \_ rtg \_ g \_
8. f \_ n \_ nc \_ \_ l \_ \_ dv \_ s \_ r

**B** How many other words connected with finance do you know? Make a list in your notebook. Then compare your list with your partner. Explain any new words to your partner.

**C** Match the two halves of these conditional sentences.

1. If I take the new job,
2. If I were at college,
3. If your bill in a restaurant is too high,
4. If I worked in a bank,
5. If your credit card spending is out of control,
6. If you open an account with Milton Bank,
7. If I get a bill,
8. If my bank moves out of the High Street,

- a) we can help.
- b) I pay it immediately.
- c) I'll probably change to Internet banking.
- d) you get a free CD player.
- e) I'll earn more money.
- f) I'd get a cheaper mortgage.
- g) I wouldn't open a bank account.
- h) complain!



**D** Read the grammar rules and find examples for each in e-mail 2.

We can talk about changed plans like this:

a) *I was going to* = The plan was in my head.

b) *I (had) planned to / I (had) intended to / I (had) meant to* = but now these plans can't happen.

To: Aisha al-Fayturi  
From: Nisrin al-Hadi  
Subject: Weekend plans - changed, I'm afraid

2

I'm sorry to mess you about, but I've had to make some changes to our plans at the last minute. Firstly, I was going to meet you at the bus station, but I'm afraid you'll have to get a taxi. I have to wait in for some last-minute deliveries for the party. They were meant to come at 5.00, but they won't be here until 6.00 now. Typical! Secondly, you know we had planned to go to *The Diary* on Saturday afternoon? Well, I thought it started on Saturday, but in fact it doesn't start until Sunday, so shall we go Sunday afternoon instead? You'll still have time to catch your bus. I know you were hoping to spend a lazy day on the beach on Sunday, but the weather forecast is terrible, so it's probably just as well. We'll have to think of something else for Saturday afternoon.

See you soon. No more changes, I promise.

**WB17.2: Talking about plans and changed plans (2)**

**A** Complete Nisrin's e-mail with the correct form of the verbs 1-11.

I'm sorry to mess you about, but I've had to make some changes to our plans at the last minute. Firstly, I was ① *going to* (go) meet you at the bus station, but I'm afraid you ② \_\_\_\_\_ (have to) get a taxi. I ③ \_\_\_\_\_ (have to) wait in for some last-minute deliveries for the party. They ④ \_\_\_\_\_ (mean) to come at 5.00, but they ⑤ \_\_\_\_\_ (not be) here until 6.00 now. Typical! Secondly, you know we ⑥ \_\_\_\_\_ (plan) to go to *The Diary* on Saturday afternoon? Well, I thought it ⑦ \_\_\_\_\_ (start) on Saturday, but in fact it ⑧ \_\_\_\_\_ (not start) until Sunday, so ⑨ \_\_\_\_\_ we \_\_\_\_\_ (go) on Sunday afternoon instead? You ⑩ \_\_\_\_\_ still \_\_\_\_\_ (have) time to catch your bus. I know you ⑪ \_\_\_\_\_ (hope) to spend a lazy day on the beach on Sunday, but the weather forecast is terrible, so it's probably just as well. We'll have to think of something else for Saturday afternoon.

See you soon. No more changes, I promise.

**B** Check your answers with the e-mail 2 in WB17.1.