

The Influence of Teachers' Practices on English Grammar Teaching at First and Second Year Levels in Yemeni Colleges: An Investigation"

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Abstract

The history of language teaching is essentially the history of the claims and counter-claims for and against the teaching of grammar. It has always been the central debate in foreign language teaching for many decades. There is no well-defined approach to teaching grammar because of the different views of teaching grammar in English language. The choice of grammar as the focus of investigation in this research is triggered by the controversies and paradoxes that surround the conflict views about how grammar should be taught. The current research attempts to investigate the influence of teachers' practices on grammar teaching whether they help Yemeni students to acquire the knowledge of grammar or not. The quantitative analysis of the results of the teachers' questionnaire by using SPSS programme, and the qualitative analysis of the classroom observation checklist indicate that English grammar teaching in Yemeni colleges has been dominated by outdated methods of teaching practices such as that of the Traditional Grammar-Translation Approach. As a result, the traditional methods produced unsatisfactory teaching results and students lacked the ability to speak and understand English grammar. By using SPSS programme to analyse the results of the five groups of the students' grammar tests, the mean and standard deviation were ranged between 52 to 55 and 15 to 18 respectively. The results indicate that the students have no enough knowledge regarding their grammar courses.

Keywords: Teachers' Practices, Grammar Teaching, Methods of Teaching Grammar

1. Introduction: The status of English and Grammar Teaching in Yemeni Colleges

English is a global language and it is difficult to think of a country where English is not being taught. In Republic of Yemen the demand for EL has been growing dramatically. Yemen desperately needs English for its development in all aspects of life. In present days there is a great demand for English as it is seen as a key language to serve as a medium of international communications. It is used to a considerable extent in tourism, education, trade, politics, science, mass media and international relations. For many Yemenis knowledge of English is regarded as a way to gain prestige and a key to success. It ensures a better career, a chance of higher education and access to contemporary information and communication with the outside world. The status of English grammar teaching in the Departments of English in Yemeni Colleges is as follows: three courses of grammar are taught in the Departments of English in the Colleges of Education, i.e. Essentials of English Grammar 1 at the first level in the first semester, Essentials of English Grammar 2 at the first level in the second semester and Communicative Grammar in the second semester of the second year of the diploma programme. The major aims of Grammar 1 course are to give students grounding in grammar of English. It will provide them with a description and understanding of word classes: nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, etc. Grammar 1 will also highlight the various grammatical forms and their grammatical functions. The content of the syllabus focuses on the structure of sentences and specific grammar terminology forms. The teaching methodology which is recommended to adopt by teachers of Grammar 1 involves: lecture, group work and pair work. Grammar 2 is a continuation course of Essentials of English Grammar 1. The content of the syllabus focuses on the sentence process. The teaching methodology which is recommended to adopt by teachers of Grammar 2 is the same methods of teaching in Grammar 1. Communicative Grammar is a course in the Departments of English, diploma programme. The

major aim of this course is to help students develop the skills that they will need in coping with grammar requirements in their respective fields of research. The focus of the content of this course is on the teaching of communicative aspects. The teaching methodology which is recommended to adopt by teachers of Communicative Grammar involves: lecture, group work and pair work.

2. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been set for this research to address: 1. Teachers are influenced by various pedagogical factors that guide them in determining their practices for teaching grammar. 2. The weakness of students at grammar in the Departments of English is due to the outdated teaching methodology which adopted by teachers of grammar and the qualifications of these teachers.

3. Research Objectives and Questions

The research aims at investigating the influence of teachers' practices in relation to the English grammar teaching in Yemeni colleges. It aims: 1. To identify the actual practices followed by teachers in teaching grammar in Yemeni colleges. 2. To identify to what extent teachers' practices influence on the process of teaching grammar whether they help students to acquire the knowledge of grammar or not. 3. To reveal how teachers of grammar are influenced by several factors that determine their choice of various practices ways in teaching. This research tries to answer the following main questions: What are actual teachers' practices of English grammar teaching in classroom? How do teachers' practices influence on students whether they help students to acquire the knowledge of grammar or not? It is hoped that this research will render research findings in a form that would help to improve the current teachers' practices and to offer a clear vision of the teachers' practices that whether help students to acquire knowledge of grammar or not.

4. Review of literature

4.1 Definition of Teaching Grammar

Singh (2008: p. 98) points out that the teaching of grammar is the teaching of the rules of grammar as part of language education. In the context of the second language instruction, the teaching of grammar is generally aimed at imparting the learners' knowledge and ability to use the language grammatically correctly. Larsen-Freeman (1991: p. 280) also defines the teaching of grammar as 'enabling language students to use linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately'. Azar (2007: p. 3) has explained that one important aspect of grammar teaching is that it helps learners discover the nature of language, i.e., language consists of predictable patterns that make what we say, read, hear and write intelligible. Without grammar, we would have only individual words or sounds, pictures, and body expressions to communicate meaning. Grammar is the weaving that creates the fabric.

4.2 Views on Teaching Grammar

The teaching of grammar has been a vexed question for a very long time. There has been an on-going debate about grammar teaching in ESL/EFL and in studies of Second Language Acquisition. The inconclusive debate about the best way to teach grammar has a significant influence on the development of language teaching practices. Different views, practices and methodologies to grammar teaching have appeared for teachers to choose to suit their own learners and classroom environment. Corder (1988: p. 127) states that 'the methodological proposals in pedagogical grammar for teachers are often implicit rather than explicit'. Nespore (1987: p. 324) points out that 'the absence of clear guidelines about grammar teaching particularly in situations when the context and environment within which teachers work and many problems they face are ill-defined and deeply entangled, has led teachers creating their own personal practices about how to teach grammar'. Teachers of adult English language learners vary in their views on how, to what extent, and even whether to teach grammar or not. Researchers have contributed much to grammar teaching especially during recent decades. More and more controversies or arguments on grammar teaching have appeared. Some argue that if you want to learn English well, you should never think about grammar. Because grammar is too complex and even if learners have been given the rules, they will not be able to apply them in real situations. Newmark (1979: p. 165) as cited in Ur (1991: p. 77) has reported that 'the important point is that the study of grammar as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning to use a language'. However, other researchers replying by saying that grammar plays a very important role, perhaps the central one, in teaching EFL. Thornbury (1999: p. 15) states that 'teaching of

grammar offers the learner the means for potentially limitless linguistic creativity'. Thornbury (2001) asserts that in fact, no other issue has so preoccupied theorists and practitioners as the grammar debate. Roughly, the debate has brought about an extreme split of attitudes, namely, those who hold that grammar should receive a central attention in language teaching and those who hold that grammar should not be taught at all. The former is reflected in the Grammar Translation Method and the Cognitive Code Learning and the latter is applied in Natural Approach and deep end or strong version of the Communicative Language Teaching. The other methods, fall on somewhere in between. People have begun to realize that the debate has never really been about whether grammar competence is important but rather on how to teach grammar. A wide variety of methods of teaching have resulted from the influence of the changes in the fields of Linguistics and psychology. Here are the views of major methods of teaching English language in the light of their approach to grammar teaching:

Grammar-translation Method (nineteenth–mid twentieth centuries) emphasized the explicit teaching of grammar rules; attention paid to language forms. Thornbury (1999: p. 21) reveals that the Grammar Translation Method, as its name suggests, took grammar as the starting point for instruction. The Grammar Translation Method courses followed a grammar syllabus and lessons typically began with an explicit statement of the rule, followed by exercises involving translation into and out of the mother tongue. Absence of communicative practice is the major limitation of this method. Yule (1996: p. 193) has described the Grammar Translation Method as a method where many grammatical rules are to be learnt by heart. There is also a focus on written language rather than on spoken language.

Direct Method (first part of twentieth century), with reference to this method grammar is taught inductively. Larsen-Freeman (2000: p. 28) indicates that one principle of the Direct Method is that 'grammar should be taught inductively. There may never be an explicit grammar rule given'. In supporting this point of view, Mohammed Aslam (2008: p. 40) points out that some objectives of the Direct Method are the use of every day vocabulary and structures, and grammar is taught inductively.

Audiolingual Method (ALM) (1950s–1970s) indicted the use of drills to reinforce grammatical patterns. Larsen-Freeman (2000: pp. 35-46) has revealed that the audio-lingual approach is like the GTM, accuracy is considered very important but unlike the GTM that students are not asked to memorise grammar rules but they are expected to induce them from provided model sentences. One of the characteristics of the ALM is that grammar is induced from the examples given; explicit grammar rules are not provided.

In many parts of the world the most common way to teach languages nowadays is probably the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which aims at giving the students a communicative competence Brown (2007: p. 18) suggests that the CLT is many teachers' catchphrase when it comes to language teaching. The CLT is mainly a reaction against the methodologies predominating in 1960s, the Grammar Translation Method, and is to some extent a blend of previous language methods, Howatt (1984). The (CLT) (1970s–today) conceives of the communication as the goal of instruction, it emphasized on meaningful interaction and its course syllabus includes language functions by use of authentic texts and contexts. Focus on communication can result in ignoring grammar and emphasis on fluency at the expense of accuracy can result in many students never attaining correct grammar. Johnson and Morrow (1981: p. 64) have revealed that one of the criticisms to the CLT is that the students are encouraged to communicate, even if it is not correctly done. To conclude, Larsen-Freeman (2000: p. 121) explains that the CLT is based on the belief that a language is learned best when it is not treated as an object of study but as a medium of communication. So the goal of the CLT is to learn the language itself rather than learning about the language as was the case in traditional grammar.

4.3 Teachers' Practices on Teaching Grammar

English language Teaching is interested with a task of helping students to acquire grammatical knowledge. The teachers have the responsibility to develop the students' knowledge and skills of grammar by using appropriate strategies and effective methods to teach grammar. But what is considered appropriate and effective remains elusive as teachers are not given well-defined guidelines to teach grammar. Therefore, the absence of any clear guidance on how to approach grammar necessitates teachers making their own interpretations and following various methods in teaching grammar and different views of grammar in language teaching methods. 'Teachers practices' in this research means the study of customary actions or

ways of teaching in classroom. Singh (2008: p. 182) defines teaching practices as 'a systematic organized activity under the guidance of experienced monitors supervisor'. 'Practice' means what actually happens in classroom rather than what should happen'. Here are some methods of teaching adopted by teachers of grammar in their practices of teaching in classrooms.

4.3.1 Teachers Teaching Grammar Deductively

Thornbury (1999: p. 29) states that 'deductive approach to grammar teaching, which is often called rule-driven learning starts with presentation of rules and is followed with examples'. This is the approach used in the Grammar Translation Method where teaching begins with presentation of grammar rules and proceeds to practice of the rules involving the translation into and out of the students' first language. Dealing with the teaching of grammar, the deductive approach maintains that a teacher teaches grammar by presenting grammatical rules, and then examples of sentences are presented. Once learners understand rules, they are told to apply the rules given to various examples of sentences. Giving the grammatical rules means no more than directing learners' attention to the problem discussed. Nunan (1991: p. 158) reveals that in dealing with any grammatical point in English, two basic approaches are possible. One of them is a deductive approach in which teachers give explicit attention to the differences in form.

4.3.2 Teachers Teaching Grammar Inductively

Singh (2008-p 109) indicates that in this approach learners are exposed to a lot of language data but are not given explicit rules. According to Thornbury (1999: p. 29), 'this approach can be called a discovery learning approach since it starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred'. Richards et al (1985: p. 73) as cited in Nunan (1991: p. 156) indicate that 'with inductive learning or learning by induction, learners are not taught grammatical or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induced rules from their experience of using language'.

4.3.3 Teachers Teaching Grammar Focusing on Form or Focusing on Forms

It is necessary to define as clearly as possible exactly what these terms mean, form and forms. Long and Robinson (1998: p.23) explain that focus on form as 'an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features by the teacher and one or more students triggered by perceived problems with comprehension or production'. Ellis (2001: pp. 1-2) defines focus on form as 'any planned or incidental instructional activity that is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form. This attention to form should take place within a meaningful communicative context'. Long and Crookes (1992: p. 43) emphasize that focus on form 'draws students' attention to aspects of the target language code'. Long (1991: pp. 45-46) indicates that a communicative task, with incidental focus on form '... focus on form... overtly draws students' attention to linguist elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication'. Carter & Nunan (2001: p. 37) point out that focus on form instruction may enhance learners' ability to notice aspects of English that might otherwise escape their attention while engaged in communication. It helps students to notice the gap between new features in target language's structure and how they differ from the learners' inter-language. Another role of focus on form may be to fill in the gaps in the input since classroom language will not necessarily be representative of all grammatical structures that students need to acquire. Proponents of Focus on forms maintain that FL should be taught on the basis grammatical parts and learners have to put each part together by deductive learning then apply these rules into real situations. The Grammar Translation and the Audiolingual methods are typical examples. To compare focus on form and focus on forms, according to Long (1991), focus on form refers only to those form-focused activities that arise during, and embedded in, meaning-based lessons; they are not scheduled in advance, as is the case with focus on forms, but occur incidentally as a function of the interaction of learners with the subject matter or tasks that constitute the learners' and their teacher's predominant focus. Focus on form occurs just when learner has a communication problem, and so is likely already at least partially to understand the meaning or function of the new form, and when he or she is attending to the input.

4.3.4 Teachers Teaching Grammar Focusing on Meaning

Focus on meaning is an approach where the main concern is the communication of meaning without any attention given to the forms used to convey this. The Natural Approach of Krashen and Terrell (1983) and

other so-called noninterventionist approaches are examples of this option. The idea is implicitly involved in Prahbu's procedural syllabus and in French immersion programmes in Canada, (Doughty and Williams, 1998). The starting point of focus on meaning is not the language, but the learner and the learning processes. It is believed that second language acquisition is essentially similar to first language acquisition; therefore, creating similar conditions should be necessary and sufficient for second language acquisition. Focus on meaning classrooms is highly communicative, learners are presented with examples of communicative language use and they are expected to analyse the language at a subconscious level and induce grammar rules simply from exposure to the input. Grammar is considered to be learnt implicitly and incidentally. The characteristics of this method maintain focus on meaning and natural communication itself rather than on grammatical forms. In addition, teachers are able to be tolerant of learners' linguistic errors.

4.3.5 Teachers Teaching Grammar by Combining Forms and Meaning Based Instruction

There are clear advantages and disadvantages of the above mentioned approaches to an extreme focus on either instruction, i.e. focusing on forms or meaning. According to Van Lier (1988: p. 276).), the traditional grammatical pedagogy is out-of-date and teaching grammatical forms in isolation does not lead to successful development in using forms communicatively. The middle way, covering form and meaning, accuracy and fluency, would seem to be the most sensible way to proceed, and indeed there currently appears to be a general consensus that it is unwise to neglect either area. According to Fotos (1998, p. 302), that early communicative approaches to foreign language teaching for such instructions can be conducted in two main ways: The first one is based on the fact that '... learners should be able to notice, then process linguistic structures which have been introduced to them within purely communicative contexts'.

4.3.6 Teachers Teaching Grammar Using Consciousness-raising (C-R) Approach

Ellis (2002) as cited in Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 168) indicates that consciousness-raising involves 'an attempt to equip learners with an understanding of a specific grammatical feature, to develop declarative, i.e. describing a rule of grammar and applying it in pattern practice drills rather than procedural, i.e. applying a rule of grammar in communication, knowledge of it'. A consciousness-raising task is defined by Ellis (1997: p. 160) as "a pedagogic activity where the learners are provided with L2 data in some form and required to perform some operation on or with it, the purpose of which is to arrive at an explicit understanding of some linguistic property or properties of the target language. Richards et al (1992: p. 78) also define consciousness-raising as follows: 'It is an approach to the teaching of grammar in which instruction in grammar (through drills, grammar explanation, and other form-focused activities) is viewed as a way of raising learner's awareness of grammatical features of the language. This is thought to indirectly facilitate second language acquisition'. A consciousness-raising approach is contrasted with traditional approaches to the teaching of grammar in which the goal is to instill correct grammatical patterns and habits directly.

4.3.7 Teacher Teaching Grammar Using Task-based Approach

Task-based approach to grammar instruction that is more meaning-focused than rule-focused has been appeared in the field of teaching. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001: p. 151), "task-based teaching can be regarded as a recent version of communicative methodology". This method is a learner centered approach. According to this approach, the need for introducing a certain grammatical rule arises in the first place because of the need of the learner to communicate. This model of teaching grammar, as Thornbury (1999: p. 129) explains, adopts a fluency to accuracy sequence, put simply the learning cycle begins with the meanings that learners want to convey. Nunan (1989: p. 10) defines a communicative task as 'a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form. Thornbury (1999: p. 129) reveals that task-based approach has its own problems such as the selection of tasks, the ordering of tasks and the evaluation of tasks. Due to these problems task-based teaching has had a mixed reception. Nevertheless many teachers are finding ways of marrying elements of a task-based approach with traditional syllabus. Larsen-Freeman (2007) states that grammar is a dynamic system, which needs to be taught as a fifth skill, if teachers understand this, they have to get students to use grammatical

structures accurately, meaningfully and appropriately , then the students have to use grammar structures in meaningful and engaging activities. Carter and Nunan (2001: p. 174) point out that in task-based approach language development is prompted by language use, with the study of language form playing a secondary role.

5. Method

It has been mentioned that the major aim of this research is to investigate the influence of teachers' practices on teaching grammar at first and second year levels of the Departments of English in Yemeni colleges. This section summarizes the methods and framework employed to conduct the research. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted in this research based on reviewed literature. The qualitative data was gathered by using a classroom observation and the quantitative data was collected by using a teachers' questionnaire and students' tests administrated to students based on their courses of grammar. By using a questionnaire, a classroom observation and students' tests, the researcher has adopted a triangulation procedure to collect the required data to achieve the objectives of the current research and answer the related questions.

30 teachers of grammar (one female and 29 males) have participated to answer the items of the teachers' questionnaire distributed to them in the Departments of English in eight Colleges of Education, University of Aden. The teachers' questionnaire of this research is designed in a semi-structured way, with great degree of explicitness. The items of the teachers' questionnaire include short answers and simple phrasing to make them understandable. The teachers' questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section one is designed to acquire background information about the respondents. Section two is designed to attain knowledge about the teachers' practice and perspectives on grammar teaching.

The second instrument used to collect the fundamental data is a classroom observation. 10 Observations were conducted in the field of the research to check what is actually being happened in teaching grammar classes. The classroom observation checklist includes four sections. Section one is designed to obtain background information, section two is designed to record the teacher's practice in teaching grammar in the observation session, section three is about the teaching style and section four is prepared to observe the activities which are used by teacher in grammar classes. The same procedures of designing the teachers' questionnaire are followed in designing the classroom observation checklist. The classroom observation checklist was developed based on the relevant literature of the research and it is prepared to sustain the teachers' questionnaire to achieve valid information. In addition to this, the researcher has referred to several sources in order to design an appropriate classroom observation checklist. In brief, it is planned to account for objectives of the present research.

The third instrument used to collect the required data for this research is students' tests. Two grammar tests were designed; one for the students of the first level of B. Ed. programme, English major and the other is for the students of the second level of Diploma programme, English major. The participants of the second year students' test were 50 students, in the academic year 2008-2009 (i.e. 22 males and 28 females) of the Department of English in the College of Education, Tor Al-Baha, University of Aden, who were selected in a random way to behave as the participants of the test. The participants of the first year students' test were 200 students, in the academic year 2009- 2010 (i.e. 145 females and 55 males). They were 50 students from each first level of the four Departments of English in the Colleges of Aden, Saber, Zingebbar and Radfan who were selected randomly. The rationale behind implementing such tests on the grammar courses is to investigate to what extent the students understand the different parts of their grammar courses after being exposed to various teachers' practices. Davies and Pearse (2000: p. 181) explain that "learners' tests are one way to evaluate teaching. Good results should reflect good teaching". A test is any device utilized to gather data for assessment and evaluation purposes. Davies and Pearse (2000: p. 171) state that "tests continue to be the main instruments for evaluation of learning in most teaching situations".

6. Data Analysis

In the design of this research, elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined. When selecting methods for data analysis, and seeking for explanations of the results variety of techniques were used. The data obtained by the teachers' questionnaire and the students' test was processed statistically and

analysed by using SPSS programme. In this research, an observation instrument has been used in the scope of qualitative approach. The data obtained from the classroom observation checklist has been described qualitatively.

7. Findings and Discussion

To investigate the objectives of this research, three instruments were used to collect the required data. They are teachers' questionnaire, classroom observations and students' tests. A total of 30 questionnaires were distributed to the teachers of grammar in the Colleges of Educations, University of Aden. All the thirty responses of teachers' questionnaire were collected, representing a response rate of 100 %. Ten observations were implemented with ten teachers of grammar of those who have responded to the teachers' questionnaire. Two grammar tests, one for the first level students and the other for the second level students of English in five Colleges of Education, have been conducted to measure the level of students in the grammar courses which they have studied. The sample was 250 students, 200 students of the 1st level, and 50 students of the 2nd level in the Departments of English in five Colleges of Education. On the basis of the results obtained from the teachers' questionnaires, the classroom observations and the students' tests, the hypotheses of the research have been confirmed. The objectives of the research have been attained. Moreover, the major findings of the research have answered the research questions. The following findings have been drawn as a result of the analysis and interpretation of the data.

The findings of the current research present that the majority of teachers of grammar (16/53 %) in Yemeni colleges have a B.Ed. degree major in general English, (figure 1). This indicates that the majority of teachers of grammar who hold the responsibilities of teaching grammar in Yemeni Colleges of Education have no enough training and qualifications. They have little theoretical background in teaching grammar and English language teaching methods. Thus, they lack the awareness of the various trends in teaching grammar, as the B.Ed. degree in English does not qualify them to teach grammar to university students.

The findings of the teachers' questionnaire also show that the majority of teachers of grammar (19/63%) are inexperienced teachers as their experience only ranges between 5 to 10 years, (figure 1). Findings from classroom observations support this fact where it was observed that most of the teachers of grammar had no awareness of the various techniques of various methods of teaching grammar, since they had only been observed disposed to read the lectures from prepared notes or reference books and students listened passively. They inclined to explain some rules then gave examples on board.

The research indicates that the goal of teaching grammar, as teachers considered, is to help students gain information about the structures of language. The findings also show that the majority of teachers of grammar (24/80%) believed that students want to know grammar in order to use language accurately.

Additionally, the research reflects that most of teachers of grammar (18/60 %) looked at grammar as a set of rules which we must follow in order to use the language correctly. These opinions about grammar influence on the choice of teachers' practices in grammar teaching. In actual teachers' teaching practice, the researcher observed that the vast majority of teachers of grammar (8/80 %) in the Departments of English in Yemeni colleges presented grammar structures at the sentence level focusing on forms. They did not use a meaningful context to present grammar structures. Celce Murcia and Olshtain (2000: p. 61) have explained that 'there is a growing agreement that teaching grammar exclusively at the sentence level with decontextualized and unrelated sentences, which has long been the traditional to teach grammar, is not likely to produce any real learning'.

The focus of teachers' practices in teaching grammar is investigated and the findings of the teachers' questionnaire show that teachers of grammar (14/47 %) considered the most important characteristic of an effective teaching method of grammar is to help students acquire the form, meaning and function of the structure of language, however, the majority of the responses of teachers of grammar (19/63 %) stated that they teach grammar structures deductively. Moreover, in actual teaching practices, it was observed that most of teachers of grammar (8/80 %) presented grammar items by using the deductive method. The deductive route is at the core of much of traditional grammar teaching, whereas the inductive route, in which students become aware of rules through their interaction with language, is often favoured in more recent approaches.

As indicated by the data from the teachers' questionnaire that teachers of grammar believed that teacher of grammar should focus on form, meaning and use, but their actual practices were observed only focused on presenting forms of grammatical structures. This reflects that there is a gap between the teachers' opinions about teaching grammar and their actual practices.

The findings of the research indicate that the vast majority of teachers of grammar (8/80 %) in the Departments of English were observed presented grammar structures by focusing on forms, i.e. equated with the traditional teaching of discrete points of grammar in separate lectures. They did not present grammar items by focusing on form. The findings of the current research also indicate that the majority of the responses (18/60 %) to the teachers' questionnaire stated that teachers of grammar focus on accuracy, i.e. to devote attention to forms, in the grammar practice activities. This assures that most of teachers of grammar (19/63 %) followed the deductive approach which focuses on forms and then practice, which is the major aim of the structural approach.

To investigate what the theoretical base teachers of grammar depend on. The findings of the teachers' questionnaire demonstrate that the majority of the responses of teachers of grammar (25/83 %) identified that the Eclectic Method of language teaching influences on their practice in teaching grammar. In contrary to this, the classroom observations findings evinced that teachers of grammar followed the principles of the Grammar Translation Method. For instance, the deductive method which they stated that they follow in presenting grammar items is a feature of the Grammar Translation Method.

The results of the research indicate a continued tendency toward traditional teacher- dominate classroom by following lecture mode. The findings of the teachers' questionnaire indicate that the majority of the responses of teachers of grammar (22/73 %) stated that teachers of grammar talk more than the students because they have to present much detail about the new structures of language. This is supported by the findings from the classroom observations where it was observed that all teachers of grammar really talked more than the students and used lecture mode. It is a tradition in the Arab culture that teachers are seen as authoritative and students are not in a position to argue, they are to be obedient. A clear tendency against using a group work mode was found in most of the responses to the teachers' questionnaire. In real classroom practices, it was also observed that no one of the teachers of grammar used a group work mode in teaching grammatical structures.

Classroom practice is interconnected with the socio-cultural reality in the environment around it. In such Arabic teaching settings where external forces play a major role in determining pedagogical practices, it was found that teachers' practices were affected by such social and cultural factors. Some socio-cultural challenges have influenced teachers' practices such as teachers' previous learning experience. The use of L1, (i.e. Arabic), and the L1 interference in L2; and expressing social values in the grammatical explanation seemed clear in teachers' behaviour while teaching grammar.

The findings of the current research specify that some factors, specifically, current teachers' practices that are used in teaching grammar, the current materials which teachers based on to teach the grammar subjects and the teaching modes used by most of teachers of grammar to convey the grammatical information, and the weakness of the students level as a result of their previous study, from most of teachers' point of views, hinder students' understanding of grammar structures. On the other hand, the findings indicate that most of teachers of grammar considered that if factors such as: limited number of students in classroom, qualified teachers who implement grammar courses and the variety of practices followed by teachers in teaching grammar are available in the context of teaching grammar, they will play most influential positive role in grammar teaching.

To investigate the factors that guide teachers in determining their practices for teaching grammar. The research indicates that the choice of the method of teaching grammar is affected by various factors such as practical teaching experience, teachers' opinions about grammar and the context of teaching environment and the level of students, etc. The classroom observations findings reveal that teachers' practices were strongly influenced by traditional approaches and by teachers' experience as students.

The review of the data gained through the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire indicated that teachers were not consciously aware of the different trends involved in grammar teaching due to their limited qualifications and the lack of up-to date references as well as the influence of their previous experience as

students. This is further supported by evidences provided by the classroom observations. As a result, classroom reality is still characterized by traditional practices of the Grammar Translation Method. Additionally, the findings of the current research show that the features of teachers' personal pedagogical knowledge impact on the settings of teaching. Teachers of grammar were observed did not pay attention to the organization of the classes, as the classes observed were over-crowding with students and seemed chaotic, i.e. lacking visible order or organization. The above findings confirm the hypothesis which specifies that teachers are influenced by various pedagogical factors that guide them in determining their practices for teaching grammar.

To investigate the level of students in the light of these findings mentioned above in order to measure how such teachers' practices influence on teaching grammar whether they help students acquire the presented grammar knowledge or not, two grammar tests were conducted. The findings of this research have indicated that the results of the students in the grammar tests demonstrated the students' weakness at grammar. The statistical findings of the students' tests showed that the means and standard deviations of the five groups of students is ranged between 49 % to 55%, and 15. and 18 respectively ;(insert Table 1 here). This assures that the students have no thorough knowledge of the subjects of their prescribed grammar courses. This supports the findings of the teachers' questionnaire and the findings of classroom observation which validate the hypotheses of this research that the weakness of students at grammar in the Departments of English is due to the influence of the outdated teaching methodology which adopted by teachers of grammar.

The current research made a significant contribution as it sought to investigate of teachers' practices on grammar teaching and how such practices impacted on the students' performance in the grammar courses tests scores. The findings of the research have offered an actual evidence of the inconvenience of employing the traditional techniques, strategies and activities in teaching grammar. The performance of the students' tests scores is weak due to such traditional teaching practices. Therefore, the teachers of grammar should reassess their teaching practices and try utilizing up-to-date methods that enable students to achieve better results. It is hoped that the results of the current research will inspire teachers of grammar to do their best to develop their practices and create and use helpfulness methods in approaching grammar teaching in the future.

8. Educational Recommendations

It is recommended that teachers of grammar should attend workshops, seminars, and conferences that enable them to gain a new knowledge to develop their teaching practices and may solve their difficulties in teaching grammar. Debates of effective means and methods of teaching grammar should be a major component of such programmes. Additionally, it is recommended that teachers need to have specific training in how to teach grammar, so as to be able to carry out their responsibility as grammar instructors. This can be realized through giving them chance to carry on their higher studies.

The current research shows that there is a discrepancy between teachers' opinions about teaching grammar and the actual teaching practices. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers of grammar should become sensitive to how their views and experiences can shape their teaching practices.

The findings of the current research show that most teachers of grammar in Yemeni colleges follow the deductive approach while teaching grammar. It is true that it is necessary for students to understand the rules in order to develop their grammatical competence. However, it is also highly recommended that teachers of grammar should follow the inductive approach to the teaching of grammar.

It is recommended that teaching grammar rules should not be in isolation and giving examples. Context plays a very important role in the teaching of grammar. It is recommended that students should have chances to practice grammar structures in contexts that help them induce the rules themselves. It highly recommended that a group work mode should be regularly achieved in the grammar teaching.

The researcher advises teachers of grammar to get skills and abilities of using the different types of up to date teaching aids such as computer, internet, overhead projectors and other audio visual aids. Such aids have a lion's share influence and they should be used in grammar teaching to maintain the students' relevance in the teaching process.

It is highly recommended that teacher of grammar should practise a range of activities that help students get a sufficient knowledge of grammar items to manage the use of such items in a productive manner. Teacher of grammar should also assign sufficient time for practising them.

It is recommended that teachers of grammar should adapt different types of newly develop materials of grammar, since the materials of grammar which were used by teachers of grammar in the Department of English are outdated. This will help to refresh their methods of approaching grammar. Teachers of grammar should take into their consideration the appropriateness of such materials for the students.

For teachers' practices to become more effective, changes should be implemented at the level of teacher training. Teachers with a clear understanding of descriptions of grammar, grammatical patterns and grammar acquisition processes and with an awareness of a range of teaching methods and techniques can realistically help students improve their grammatical competence and communicative competence.

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NB. Table 1 reveals the means and standard deviations of the participants' results of the five Departments of English

Name of the Departments	The Mean	Standard deviation
Dept. of English, Aden	55.3300	15.57
Dept. of English, Saber	50.690	18.23
Dept. of English, Zingebbar	53.980	18.10
Dept. of English, Radffan	49.260	18.17
Dept. of English, Tor-Al Baha	52.7600	15.81