



# *The evolution of in-service English teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching*

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to measure how the beliefs about grammar teaching of in-service English teachers in Nicaragua change after their completion of a 5-year English teaching undergraduate program and with some cumulative teaching experience. Data was gathered from questionnaires, journals, and observations of classroom practice. Participants were 20 in-service high school English teachers who were taking one-year training program and were selected using convenience sampling. Findings showed that there was inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice and their beliefs are influenced somehow by their experiences as learners and teachers. In conclusion, teachers' beliefs are often a reflection of how they themselves were taught and their experiences either as a teacher or learner is reflected in their teaching practice.

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a process surrounded by decisions making fundamentally. Teachers have to make decisions on how to teach and assess their lessons from the beginning until the end. Most of the decisions teachers make are vital for the learning process. Within the field of contemporary

educational research, and especially within the field of foreign and second language teaching, teacher cognition has become an area of great interest in the last thirty years (Borg 2003).

Indeed, it is now widely held that understanding what teachers think and believe is essential to understanding (and thereby affecting) what happens in the classroom (Borg 2005). Nonetheless, teacher training programs have traditionally neglected to take into account the beliefs and experiences of teaching and learning that teacher trainees bring with them. Though many different terms have been used, such as pedagogical knowledge, theories of practice, beliefs, personal theories, etc., researchers have been interested in understanding what teachers think, know, and believe about language teaching and learning (Borg 2003). This interest stems from the generally accepted idea that teachers' beliefs influence their perceptions and decisions and therefore need to be understood in order to improve teaching practices and teacher training programs (Farrell 2005). Furthermore, constructivist theory in teaching asserts that teachers construct these beliefs largely through their experience as language learners and that these beliefs are often resistant to change (Richards, Gallo, and Renandya 2001).

The purpose of this study was to measure the changes of in-service teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching bring with them after the completion of a five-year undergraduate program and with some cumulative experience, to see if and how their beliefs are impacted by their experiences as language students and teachers. For the purpose of this study, data was collected administering questionnaires journals and classroom observation. Participants were 20 in-service English teachers who were selected using convenience sampling. Finally, data was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Results showed that there is a contradiction of in-service teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and what their practice in the classroom. In conclusion, most of what in-service teachers' do in the classroom is only a reflection of how they were taught, all teachers were students once.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In his review of grammar teaching research, Borg (1999) pointed out the general lack of consensus gained from many years of "best practices" research in the area of second language grammar teaching. Citing the shift in language teaching research toward an emphasis on teacher cognition, Borg stressed the importance of exploring teacher's beliefs about grammar teaching in order to better understand how decisions are made and thereby improve L2 teacher education.

Borg's assertion was confirmed by a study about teachers' core beliefs by Richards, Gallo, and Renandya (2001), in which 126 in-service English teachers were surveyed about their core beliefs about teaching. After categorizing the responses, it was found that the majority of the responses centered on grammar teaching. This suggests that beliefs about grammar teaching may be among the least likely to change, since they were identified as core beliefs, which are

often tied to strong feelings and are very deep-seated. It also means that it is important to know what beliefs pre-service teachers bring with them to their professional training, if said training intends to bring about any kind of change in those teachers.

There are many studies that support Richards, Gallo, and Renandya's (2001) findings. Borg (2003) cited many studies (Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers 1997; Burgess & Etherington 2002; Brumfit, Mitchell, & Hooper 1996; Mitchell, Brumfit, & Hooper 1994a, 1994b; Mitchell & Hooper 1992) that explored teachers' views on grammar instruction. All of these studies found that teachers were pre-disposed to teaching grammar in the way that it was taught to them; in most cases in an explicit, sentence-based way. SLA-based theories of language instruction seemed to have little effect in changing the way these teachers approached grammar teaching in their classes.

Another important study in the area of beliefs about grammar teaching is Andrews (2006), in which he examined the evolution of the Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) as it relates to grammar of three experienced English teachers. These teachers had participated in a previous study on TLA in their early years of teaching. Interestingly, Andrews found that the teachers' knowledge of grammar and their beliefs about grammar teaching were largely unchanged after 10 years of professional practice.

From the research mentioned here, it can be concluded that teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching are among the most difficult to change. This could be because most teachers' first encounters with grammar teaching happen when they are in secondary school, and are therefore impressed upon their minds very deeply long before they reach a teacher training program. Consequently, training programs that fail to take into account the prior experiences and beliefs of pre or in-service teachers make little impact.

### **Research about teacher beliefs in teacher training programs**

Much research has been done on the effect of teacher training education on teacher cognition in the field of foreign and second language teaching. A much cited review on this subject is Kagan (1992), whose results showed that teacher education had an insignificant impact on teachers' beliefs (as cited by Borg 2003). Though subsequent studies have refuted her ideas, the exact nature by which teacher training influences teachers' beliefs is still unclear. More recent studies, however, have shed light on what happens to teachers' beliefs in training programs.

One such study is Freeman (1993), which was a longitudinal study of the changes in teacher thinking of in-service teachers completing a master's program. Among other grounded concepts that emerged from the data, "articulation" and "local and professional language" were two concepts that are useful in defining, at least in part, what happens to teachers' beliefs

when participating in a teacher-training program. The data analysis revealed that the training program gave teachers a professional language which they combined with their local language to articulate, or conceptualize their classroom practice. In other words, they were able to gain access to their own beliefs about teaching using the professional language of the program.

It could be argued that the success of the participants in Freeman's (1993) study was due to the fact that they were in-service teachers, and could immediately apply and analyze in practice the knowledge gained from their teacher training. However, Borg (1998) presented a case study of one ESL teacher whose pre-service training had a great impact on his teaching, despite negative experiences at the beginning of his service. Borg posited that this could be due to a number of factors, including the short duration of the teacher's initial training (a four-week program), its practical focus (practice teaching sessions everyday), and the reflexive nature of the trainers' own practice. Borg also suggested that studies that explore the processes by which teachers make grammar teaching decisions can have a much greater impact on creating more effective L2 teacher trainer programs. Indeed, there is evidence to show that taking into account pre-service teachers' prior beliefs about teaching grammar is important if a program wishes have any impact on these beliefs. One way is by bringing these ideas to the surface for reflection. As stated by Richards, Gallo, and Renandya (2001), "professional development that engages teachers in a direct exploration of their beliefs and principles may provide the opportunity for greater self-awareness through reflection and critical questioning as starting points for later adaptation" (p.12).

Farrell (1999) did just this; he asked his pre-service teachers to complete a reflection assignment which asked them to write 1) an account of their language learning experience, 2) a grammar lesson plan and teach it, and 3) reflections before, during, and after the lesson. He found that by reflecting on their experiences as learners and as teachers, pre-service teachers were able to access their tacit beliefs, scrutinize them, and in effect, change some of them, or at least recognize their impact on their practice.

Indeed, many researchers have seen the value of narrative and reflective inquiry in the professional development of pre-service and in-service teachers.

Johnson and Golombek (2011) make the argument that reconstructing their experiences through narrative allows teachers to make their tacit ideas and beliefs explicit and thereby have a greater sense of self-efficacy and the ability to act with foresight.

The research on the impact of teacher training programs on teachers' beliefs examined here reveal that effective teacher training programs give students a professional language with which to articulate their ideas and the opportunity to reflect upon their unexamined beliefs about teaching and analyze them within the light of their new knowledge. In the study proposed

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here, participants will write in learner journals throughout their one-year teacher training program in order to bring their unmonitored beliefs about grammar teaching to the surface for examination.

### **Research that explores the relationship between beliefs and classroom practice**

The final aspect of in-service language teachers' beliefs that will be taken into account in this study is how those beliefs are manifested (or not) in classroom practice, or in the case of the study proposed here, the participants' student teaching. As Borg (2003) pointed out, a distinction between behavioral change and cognitive change must be made, since the former does not guarantee the latter, and vice versa. While the focus of this study will be to examine the change (or lack thereof) in-service teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching, it cannot be ignored that the ultimate goal of any teacher training program is to impact teachers' classroom practice, and therefore the relationship between their beliefs and classroom practice must also be examined.

There are many studies that have demonstrated that teachers' stated beliefs are not always reflected in their classroom practices. In a case study of two experienced teachers, Farrell and Lim's (2005) found incidences of convergence and divergence between beliefs and classroom practices. Many of the reasons cited for divergence were contextual, such as time constraints, curriculum requirements, school administration demands, and parental expectations. The researchers also conjectured that deep-seated, unconscious beliefs and attitudes about the effectiveness of traditional grammar instruction may also be a factor, since both teachers admitted to not being consciously aware of their beliefs about grammar teaching until being asked.

Farrell and Lim's (2005) study brings up important points about factors that may influence a divergence between beliefs and practice. Previous research has demonstrated that contextual factors, such as the school environment and student behavior have an important impact on classroom practices, especially in novice teachers (Spada and Massey 1992, Pennington and Richards 1997, Richards and Pennington 1998, as cited by Borg 2006). This being the case, it is important to note that there are very few studies that have been done within contexts which are more representative of language classrooms on a global scale, e.g. public schools with non-native teachers who work with a state-mandated curriculum (Borg 2003). The study proposed here will be poised to address this gap in the research, since the setting is one that reflects these types of contextual factors.

Moreover, the factor of teachers being unaware of their own beliefs is an important one. Other studies that have examined teachers' beliefs (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, and Thwaite 2001, for example) have stated that the participants mentioned that they had not articulated

their beliefs before participating in such a study. This supports Farrell's (2005) conjecture that for many teachers, though they claim to adhere to beliefs that reflect the current teaching paradigm, it may be their unexamined beliefs that influence their classroom actions. As mentioned before, the study proposed here will have a reflective element that will precede classroom practice, which will hopefully help participants to articulate their tacitly-held beliefs about grammar teaching.

Another factor that could account for teachers' divergence from their stated beliefs about grammar teaching is the teacher's beliefs about his or her own mastery of grammar. One example of this is Borg (2005), which explored decision-making through case studies of in-service teachers. Borg posited that one important factor that impacted teachers' decision-making in the classroom was their perceptions of their own knowledge about language. For example, one teacher's lack of confidence in his ability to explain an impromptu grammar question from a student had a direct impact on the way he designed grammar activities in his class.

Phipps and Borg (2009) explored further the "tensions" between teachers' grammar beliefs and classroom practices, using Freeman's (2003) term for the divergence between the two. In a qualitative study of three experienced ESL teachers in Turkey, they focused on distinguishing between core and peripheral beliefs and their relationships to classroom practice. They found that teachers were more likely to make decisions in class that were consistent with their core beliefs, which were more general and deep-seated, and were more willing to do things that went against their peripheral beliefs, which were more specific and more readily identified by the teachers themselves. This distinction between core and peripheral beliefs is important, since it goes beyond identifying tensions and explores the reasons which underlie them.

As demonstrated here, there are many factors which have been shown to cause divergence or tensions between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practice. Some of these are contextual factors, awareness of one's own beliefs, beliefs about one's own knowledge, and the relationship between core and peripheral beliefs. All of these factors will be taken into account in the observations done in this study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The proposed study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How (if at all) do in-service teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching change after their completion of a five-year licensure program in English Language Teaching and with some cumulative experience?
2. What is the relationship between in-service teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and their classroom practice?



## METHODOLOGY

The present mixed methods study is designed to mix qualitative and quantitative data to have a better understanding of the problematic studied. The purpose is to use different research strategies when collecting data to obtain a balance when combining quantitative and qualitative methods. This decision subsequently provides a close approach to strengths and weaknesses of both methods (Johnson and Turner, 2003).

The participants in this study were 20 in- service secondary English teachers who received a scholarship sponsored by the American Embassy in Nicaragua. This scholarship consisted of one- year training program (November 2016 to November 2017) divided into four different modules. Module one and two were focused on the development of their linguistic skills and module 3 and four were devoted to training teachers on teaching methodology. All the participants held a bachelor's degree in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) and their experience in the teaching of English ranged between 5 and 13 years. It is worth mentioning that English teachers in Nicaragua are required to spend five years of study to obtain their bachelor's degree in TEFL program. During their five-year TEFL program, student teachers take two teaching methodology classes. The study began in their first module.

Data for this study was collected using the following tools: questionnaires, journals, and classroom observations. The first tool used was the learner journals. Journaling is a form of introspective data collecting that serves as an excellent way of gathering longitudinal data (Bartels 2005). Participants completed their first learner journal in their first module of the program. Borg (2005) also suggested that courses in a language teacher training program should intertwine knowledge about language and methodology. By asking students to reflect upon their beliefs about language teaching and learning as part of their language class, they will become aware of their own beliefs while at the same time provide data for this study.

While the journal prompts were the language teaching-learning process in general, the following questions were used to explore their beliefs about grammar teaching and served as data for this study:

1. How did your high school English teachers teach grammar? Do you think it was effective?
2. What do you think is the best way to teach grammar? To learn grammar?

At the end of their fourth module program, when they have reached at least a low-advanced level of English and have taken their teaching methods modules, participants were asked to answer these journal questions once again in order to compare how or if their answers were different.

The second data collection instrument applied was a questionnaire about their beliefs about grammar teaching (see appendix A). The questionnaire was given to the participants at the end of their third module within the one-year program. By this time, in-service English teachers would have completed module one and two of basic English language. It was expected that the combination of the learner journals and the questionnaire would not only yield data about their initial grammar teaching beliefs, but also allow the participants to externalize and therefore confront and analyze said beliefs (Johnson and Golombek 2011). Some of the statements included in the questionnaire were taken from Johnson's (1992) Teacher's Beliefs Inventory (as cited by Richards and Lockhart 1996). The statements are written to reflect either an explicit, deductive approach to grammar teaching and learning (generally considered to be the traditional way of teaching grammar) or an implicit, inductive approach (a more communicative-based approach). Each statement was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 representing strong agreement and 1 strong disagreement. One limitation in using a questionnaire of this type is that it is by nature general and context-less (Bartels 2005). Also, as with all types of self-reporting, neither the questionnaire, nor the learner journals represent the participants' actual thoughts, rather their estimation of their thoughts. However, by combining these with classroom observation, these limitations can be overcome to some degree.

The final stage of data collecting was classroom observation. In module fourth, in-service English teachers were required to prepare and present lesson plans. These lesson plans were structured using textbooks and syllabi prescribed by the Ministry of Education in Nicaragua in order to provide participants with opportunities to share with the class how they work in real life and avoid prescribing or imposing them textbooks, syllabi or lesson plan structures to follow rigidly. Non-participatory classroom observation will be made to back up the main data and to see how participants present grammar in the class. After each classroom observation, the information obtained will be analyzed to find any divergence between their practice and their reported beliefs.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS**

The nature of data collection in this study required continual data analysis, first comparing initial reports of grammar beliefs to grammar beliefs reported at the end of the fourth module, and then a comparison of reported beliefs to their classroom practices in the fourth module. The first step of the data analysis was a descriptive statistical analysis of survey. This data was analyzed using thematic analysis as it is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006). These authors define thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) in data" (p. 79).



## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire displays that participants agree that language is a set of grammatical structures that need to be learned. They argue that once learners master certain grammatical structures they will be able to make new sentences. However, it is interesting to observe participants' responses in question 2 and 5, in which they believe that it is not necessary to teach students how to use or learn different grammatical rules to speak well in a foreign language. It is quite compelling to see that participants believe that grammar should be learned but should not be taught.

Responses to questions 6 and 8 indicate that participants believe that grammar needs to be presented as clear as possible during instruction and they see grammar as a fundamental element to be fluent in the language. Question 9 reinforces the participants' beliefs by putting grammar as an important pillar between understanding and being understood when communicating in English. However, it is visible participants' contradiction in question 10, in which a good majority points out the importance of exposing students to the language and they see grammar explanations as unnecessary.

Given the statistics in questions 11 to 14, it is strongly marked participants' beliefs towards the learning and teaching of grammar. An estimated 85% of participants believe that communication wouldn't be possible without learning grammar rules and emphasize that teachers should spend at least part of the class instruction explaining grammar.

Nonetheless, there is a contradiction with the responses given in question 15, in which a good majority sees (45%) the teaching of grammar as unnecessary and places emphasis on giving students the opportunity to use the language in real situations and eventually have them discover the rules on their own (see Appendix B).

## DATA OF JOURNAL

Journals responses were analyzed and summarized as follows:

<b>How did your high school English teachers teach grammar? Did you think it was effective?</b>	<b>What is the best way to teach grammar? To learn grammar?</b>
The teachers explained a lot of grammar. We wrote sentences and changed them into negative. I understood grammar quite well. (3) <sup>1</sup>	The best way to teach grammar is through songs, starting from basic structures. (2)
<i>Table continues en next page »</i>	

1. The numbers given in the table indicate the frequency of the participants' responses provided in the journal.

<b>How did your high school English teachers teach grammar? Did you think it was effective?</b>	<b>What is the best way to teach grammar? To learn grammar?</b>
The teachers taught grammar in Spanish then they explained the rules. I think it was effective. (3)	The best way to teach grammar is word by word, placing emphasis on the structure. (3)
The teachers provided us with a model then we followed the model and wrote many sentences. (5)	The best way to teach grammar is telling students to investigate grammar rules in advance and have them explain to the class. (3)
Some teachers explained grammar comparing Spanish to English. I found this way very effective. (7)	The best way to learn grammar is connecting it to vocabulary exercises. (2)
I don't remember how teachers taught grammar. (2)	The best way to teach grammar is providing students a model to follow. (6)
	The best way to learn grammar is memorizing grammar structures and practicing different exercises in a grammar book. (4)

Given teachers' experience with grammar in high school, either as teachers or students, it was found that high school English teachers broadly favored teaching grammar explicitly by clearly explaining rules and following models. In addition, some of the participants believe that the teaching of grammar is more effective when the two languages are compared and rules are explained in Spanish. Undoubtedly, there is a strong presence of grammar – translation method in the way some of the participants were formed in their high schools and their opinions refers to grammar – translation method as an effective way to present the language. As Richard – Amato (2003) explained in his book” Making it Happens”, the basic approach of grammar – translation method is to study grammatical rules of the language and practice grammatical structures using translation into the mother tongue. For example, Poldauf (1995: 6) suggested that “the implementation of CA should proceed from the similarities to the differences between the L1 and L2 language systems” (as cited in Du, 2016, p.20).

The results obtained in the journal basically show that participants indicate that the best way to teach grammar is by clearly pointing out the rules and structures. For example, Stern (1992) states that learners use translation to compare the target language to their native language with the objective of finding similarities and differences of both languages and to avoid difficulties in language learning (as cited by Trugul, 2003).

Additionally, some of the participants expressed that the best way to learn grammar is by learning rules and creating a relationship between vocabulary and grammar. As mentioned in the methodology, the journal was administered in the first module and then in the fourth module. The objective was to provide in-service teachers with more opportunities to reflect. However, responses did not change when comparing both journals.

### **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

Observations of the 20 participants delivering their lesson plans were summarized as follows: fourteen of the participants taught grammar explicitly explaining grammar rules and providing three to four exercises to practice. According to Larsen–Freeman (2001) in the article “Grammar Teaching” explains that “the purpose of grammar is not only about giving rules because even if learners knew all rules, this would not guarantee they would be able to produce certain grammatical patterns when they communicate in a particular context” (p.5).

Six of the participants did not include grammar in their lesson plans but they decided to explain grammar at the end. They explained grammar by writing an example and explaining the equivalent in Spanish. It is prominent to mention that some participants responded in one of the questions of the journal that they found effective when their high school English teacher explained grammar rules using Spanish. Auerbach (1993) views the use of L1 as positive and believes the L1 reinforces the learners’ sense of security when they express themselves. Interestingly to mention that the researcher did not ask participants to write their lesson plans based on grammar. Instead, participants were asked to design their lesson plans in the way they write them in their schools. The purpose was to create a natural environment in which participants felt comfortable and not measured specifically in how they presented grammar (see appendix C).

### **INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

Undoubtedly, the results show that grammar plays a very important role in learning and teaching. The formal learning of grammar is seen as an important vehicle for the successful communication in English in which deductive approach holds the primary focus. Besides, participants placed a lot of emphasis in the teaching and learning of grammar while delivering their lesson plans. It is interesting to mention they spent a considerable amount of time explaining grammar in their lesson plan which indicated somehow they were influenced by their own experiences as learners as shown in the results obtained in the journal which subsequently influenced their decisions when delivering the class. Although, it is not easy to know what guides the teacher’s decision or belief when delivering the class or choosing the best way to teach or learn. According to Johnson (1994) understanding what guides teachers in their practice is not

easy or intending to describe their beliefs is not easy or observable either (as cited by Abdullah, 2012).

However, this seems to contradict teachers' position given the interpretation of frequencies and recurrent patterns on the questionnaires responses where some of them underpin that it is not necessary to teach or learn grammar to speak English, whose position or belief was not actually reflected in the classroom practice. For example, Basturkmen (2012) believes teachers have their own framework of beliefs and sometimes these beliefs are not reflected in their teaching practice, but they have deep impact on the instructional decisions (as cited by Farrel & Bennis, 2013).

Finally, results show that teachers' belief about grammar teaching haven't changed after their completion of their five-year TEFL program and with cumulative experience as language learners and teachers. Therefore, in the present study, findings concerning the role of grammar in the classroom are related to other studies mentioned in the literature.

### **LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

One of the limitation in the present study was the small sample size, only 20 participants. It would have been interesting to administer an interview to the participants in order to examine their beliefs in depth. Additionally, in the questions of the journal, the second question should have been divided in twos: What do you think is the best way to teach grammar and What do you think is the best way to learn grammar? Given the responses, it was observed the majority of participants focused their answers on responding "the best way to teach grammar rather than the best way to learn grammar". This aspect could have clarified some doubts regarding the teaching and learning of grammar.

Despite the limitations mentioned, the present study intends to represent teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching and how their beliefs are related to the classroom practice. When it comes to classroom observation, perhaps it was unethical not to have told participants they were being part of a research study, but somehow, this aspect could have alerted participants they were being observed on how they presented grammar in their class and eventually results could have been different. This decision was made in search of objective information from participants. This study does not generalize the results but intends to shed light on teachers' beliefs of grammar teaching.

It is suggested for further research to have classroom observation and interviews with teacher trainers at the university level to examine their beliefs and see how grammar teaching is presented to pre-service and in-service English teachers. This might clarify if high school

teachers tend to replicate how they learned grammar in their TEFL program or if their beliefs are influenced by other factors.

## CONCLUSION

The findings in this study attempted to explore teachers' beliefs of grammar teaching in Nicaragua. The results indicated that there was inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and classroom practice and their beliefs were influenced somehow by their experiences as secondary school students and student teachers as well. All teachers were once students, and their beliefs about teaching are often a reflection of how they themselves were taught. Hence, there was found a strong presence of grammar – translation method characteristics in the way participants were taught in English while being high school students. They also included grammar-translation method aspects when designing and delivering their lesson plans. This study does not attempt to discredit GTM whose approach had a remarkable success in the past but to inform on teachers' beliefs of grammar teaching in Nicaragua.

The study also reported teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching seem not to have changed after some cumulative experience working as high school teachers and eventually this fact influences on their teaching practice. However, the results cannot be generalized but they intend to represent what some Nicaraguans high school teachers think about grammar teaching. Finally, the study provided important information to the English teachers in general to make decisions regarding the grammar teaching.

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## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaire of Grammar Teaching Beliefs

This questionnaire is part of a study about how pre-service English teachers' beliefs about grammar change over time. Please answer each question carefully and honestly. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers; what matters is that you indicate your personal opinion.

*Directions: The following statements are about how English as a foreign language is learned and how it should be taught. Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with each statement using the scale available (5 represents strong agreement, and 1 represents strong disagreement). You may make further comments below if you like.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Language can be thought of as a set of grammatical structures which are learned consciously and controlled by the language learner.	5	4	3	4	1
2. It is not necessary to actually teach students how to use different grammatical rules; they usually begin speaking English on their own.	5	4	3	4	1
3. Language can be thought of as meaningful communication and is learned subconsciously in non-academic, social situations.	5	4	3	4	1
4. If English language students understand some of the basic grammatical rules of the language they can usually create lots of new sentences on their own.	5	4	3	4	1
5. It is not necessary for a person to consciously learn grammatical rules in order to communicate well in a foreign language.	5	4	3	4	1
6. It is important to provide clear, frequent, and precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction.	5	4	3	4	1
7. If a person can listen to, practice, and remember examples of the language that native speakers use, they can learn the language.	5	4	3	4	1
8. English language students generally need to understand the grammatical rules of English in order to become fluent in the language.	5	4	3	4	1

9. If an English language student doesn't know grammar rules, she or he won't be able to understand or be understood when they try to communicate in English.	5	4	3	4	1
10. An English language teacher should simply try to expose students to the language, without a lot of grammar explanations.	5	4	3	4	1
11. Grammar explanations in class help students to communicate in real-life situations.	5	4	3	4	1
12. A good English teacher dedicates at least part of his or her class to explaining grammar rules.	5	4	3	4	1
13. When it comes to communicating in English outside of the classroom, grammar rules are not helpful.	5	4	3	4	1
14. A person can't learn a language without learning grammar rules.	5	4	3	4	1
15. A good English teacher does not waste time teaching grammar rules; he or she gives the students opportunities to use the language in ways that reflect real life and lets them figure out the rules on their own.	5	4	3	4	1

## RESULTS

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
1. Language can be thought of as a set of grammatical structures which are learned consciously and controlled by the language learner.	7 35%	5 25%	5 25%		3 15%
2. It is not necessary to actually teach students how to use different grammatical rules; they usually begin speaking English on their own.	4 20%	4 20%	5 25%		7 35%
3. Language can be thought of as meaningful communication and is learned subconsciously in non-academic, social situations.	6 30%	5 25%	5 25%	2 10%	2 10%

4. If English language students understand some of the basic grammatical rules of the language they can usually create lots of new sentences on their own.	14 70%	6 30%			
5. It is not necessary for a person to consciously learn grammatical rules in order to communicate well in a foreign language.	4 20%	6 30%	3 15%	2 10%	5 25%
6. It is important to provide clear, frequent, and precise presentations of grammatical structures during English language instruction.	16 80%	3 15%	1 5%		
7. If a person can listen to, practice, and remember examples of the language that native speakers use, they can learn the language.	14 70%	4 20%	2 10%		
8. English language students generally need to understand the grammatical rules of English in order to become fluent in the language.	11 55%	3 15%	3 15%	1 5%	2 10%
9. If an English language student doesn't know grammar rules, she or he won't be able to understand or be understood when they try to communicate in English.	4 20%	6 30%	4 20%	3 15%	3 15%
10. An English language teacher should simply try to expose students to the language, without a lot of grammar explanations.	2 10%	4 20%	4 20%	3 25%	7 35%
11. Grammar explanations in class help students to communicate in real-life situations.	9 45%	7 35%	2 10%		2 10%
12. A good English teacher dedicates at least part of his or her class to explaining grammar rules.	11 55%	3 15%	2 10%	2 10%	2 10%
13. When it comes to communicating in English outside of the classroom, grammar rules are not helpful.	2 10%	5 25%	4 20%	1 5%	8 40%
14. A person can't learn a language without learning grammar rules.	5 25%	8 40%	1 5%	2 10%	4 20%
15. A good English teacher does not waste time teaching grammar rules; he or she gives the students opportunities to use the language in ways that reflect real life and lets them figure out the rules on their own.	4 20%	5 25%	2 10%	3 15%	6 30%

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Journal Questions**

This journal is part of a study about how pre-service English teachers' beliefs about grammar change over time. Please answer each question carefully and honestly.

1. How did your high school English teachers teach grammar? Did you think it was effective?
2. What do you think is the best way to teach grammar? To learn grammar?

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Class Observation / Report**

#### **Introduction:**

In this study, I chose to observe student teachers while they present their lesson plans to the class. The objective of this observation is to see how the participants present grammar in the class. In the following paragraphs, I will explain how the class was conducted and the teaching methodologies of the teacher regarding the teaching of grammar.

**Observation Note:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion:** \_\_\_\_\_