Grammar Teaching in Communicative Classrooms: Focused on Teachers’ Theories and Practice

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Current studies point out the lack of grammatical awareness of teachers themselves and the negligence of grammar instruction by the teachers, and also postulate there is a strong relationship between teachers’ theories and their classroom practice. The purpose of this paper was to investigate native teachers’ pedagogical theories with reference to their beliefs and instructional decisions in grammar teaching in Korean context. For the purpose of the paper two studies were conducted. The first one was to identify teachers’ beliefs in the role of grammar study in English learning by collecting students’ as well as teachers’ responses to the grammar study-related questions. The second study was to explore how teachers’ pedagogical theories of grammar teaching were actualized in their instructional decisions by presenting the descriptive data about teachers’ actual classroom practices. The result of data analysis indicated that 1) teachers held relatively favorable attitudes toward formal grammar study and error correction and that 2) teachers’ theories and instructional decisions were influenced by an interacting range of experiential, i. e., educational and professional experience, and cognitive factors, i. e., conceptions about issues in grammar instruction.

1. INTRODUCTION

English trends in Korea prefer an all-English class to a bilingual one, being escalated by the government policy of ‘globalization’, which resulted in an influx of native English-speaking teachers to classes from private to public educational instruction. National curricula also emphasize communicative English education, making it an imminent goal to develop student’s communicative skills. Since the recent, so-called communicative approaches clearly downplay

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the role of form-focused instruction in general, teachers and learners have been often misdirected to believe that it would be acceptable to abandon grammar instruction in English classrooms. Under the extreme view of communicative language teaching (CLT), the view that learning can come about through reciprocal, interactive practice prevails among the teachers, specifically native English-speaking teachers (NESTs).

Consequently form-focused activities accorded low status in classroom processes and the equation was drawn between CLT and the exclusion of grammar instruction and error correction. While most native Korean-speaking teachers, under the particular educational circumstances of Korea, still adopt the grammar instruction of the traditional methods amid the recent change emphasizing communicative aspects of language learning, NESTs have individually different knowledge basis and views on grammar instruction, varying from strongly negative to strongly positive ones (Hwa-ja Lee). Some of the Korean teachers have transformed the way of teaching in their pursuit of CLT. Now both NESTs and non-NESTs’ views on grammar teaching became highly diverse, even polarized since, over the years, English teachers in general have altered their conceptualization of teaching and learning, being informed of new research findings and teaching strategies.

When the teachers’ theories or beliefs are once formed, they hardly ever change, despite warnings from educators that mismatches in teachers’ and students’ perceptions can have negative effects on instructional outcomes (Horwitz, 1990). The teachers’ beliefs and knowledge may give detrimental impact upon students’ language development especially when there are mismatches between teacher and learner perceptions on the issue of an explicit focus on form. There have been reports (Schulz, 1996, 2001) that some students still expect the explicit, rule-based learning and corrective feedback by the teachers, and that they benefit a lot from such form-focused instruction, unlike the prediction made by nativists that L2 as well as L1 acquisition is governed by principle of UG, and that grammatical structures are acquired in a certain predetermined order, regardless of sequence or amount of formal instruction.

Nonetheless, some studies point out the lack of grammatical knowledge/awareness of native teachers themselves and the negligence of grammar instruction by the teachers (Andrew, 2000; Gray, 1999; Williams, 2000). These findings signify that there is a strong relationship between teachers’ theories and their classroom practice. Educational research has revealed, in recent years, the powerful influence of teachers’ theories on their instructional decisions. According to Borg (1998), teachers’ theories are particularly useful in enabling teachers to cope in ill-defined instructional contexts. The issue of grammar teaching can be such an ill-defined domain. The role of formal instruction has been a controversial area of debate: foreign language educators and applied linguists examining the effectiveness of various approaches for English teaching are not in agreement about whether grammar instruction and corrective feedback are essential or
even helpful in learning a new language. Therefore, the study of how teachers integrate their knowledge or theories of grammar teaching methodology into their actual practice will contribute to the development of a better understanding of the classroom teaching process.

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to identify teacher (NEST) and student beliefs in the role of grammar study in English learning and 2) to investigate teachers' (NEST) pedagogical theories with reference to their instructional decisions in grammar teaching.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Matching Teaching and Learning in Grammar Instruction

Just as there are individual differences in the scholars concerning the view on the role of grammar instruction and corrective feedback in ELT learning, learners as well as teachers have different attitudes toward explicit grammar instruction. Classroom research has revealed that the actual procedures that teachers use for grammar teaching are often arbitrary, idiosyncratic, ambiguous, and unsystematic (Long, 1977; Lyster, 1998). These problems have been attributed to a lack of understanding on a teacher's part of what, when, and how to direct their teaching practice to a focus on forms. Foreign language educators and applied linguists now become to question not the need for formal grammar instruction, but the need to rethink how awareness and use of systematic language structures should be taught in a communicative classroom.

While most of the research on grammar teaching put an exclusive focus on teacher perspectives by way of suggesting techniques for teachers to use in the classroom, very little attention was given to learner perspectives. In particular, Han's studies (1995, 2002) indicate that a teacher-oriented approach to learning problems may potentially lead to a mismatch between teaching and learning. Kern (1995) and McCargar (1993) also point out that student beliefs play an important role in motivation, selection of learning strategies, and learning in general. Therefore, for teaching to be effective and to positively affect learning, teachers should adapt themselves to their students' learning processes. Sharwood Smith (1991) and Chaudron (1988) also allude to the issue of mismatch and both encourage teacher-adaptation rather than learner-adaptation. According to them, the effects of grammar instruction depend on the learner's readiness for and attention to the information available. This premise implies that if there is a mismatch between the learner's attention and the teacher's call, grammar teaching will not have any positive effect on learning.

Based on these arguments, we can see that learning can be enhanced when teaching
harmonizes with learners' needs and expectations. The notion of 'learner-centeredness' encompasses accommodating individual differences, incorporating teaching and learners' natural cognitive processes, and training students to improve learning styles and strategies. Some studies (Oxford, 1989, 1990) support this contention by encouraging students to become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in using specific strategies. Students need to be trained to actively direct their learning process. This meta-cognitive awareness-raising should include an examination of their beliefs regarding pedagogical aspects, for the recognition of their own beliefs facilitates learning. Therefore, teachers should discover what their students believe or know about their learning, and to provide activities that would allow students to examine their beliefs and their possible impact on how they approach learning. This suggestion proved to be fruitful by Schulz's study (1996): the degree of effectiveness of grammar teaching is influenced by the learner's attitude toward such instruction. If it is welcomed, it may well have positive effects than if it is resented.

Since current theories of foreign language education emphasize learner-centeredness, i.e., students' commitment to and involvement in the instructional process, teachers need to look into learner beliefs and take them into account when they plan the format and orientation of classroom activities. Learning will be maximized only when students feel their instructional expectations are met. Teachers should adopt their teaching to the various students' beliefs and needs as much as learners do to the various teaching styles.

2. The Role of Teachers' Pedagogical Theories of Grammar Teaching

If teachers are to incorporate students' beliefs or attitudes toward language learning into their teaching and to determine their classroom practices, they have to develop their own "pedagogical systems—the beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions, and attitudes that teachers hold about all aspects of their work" (Borg, 1998, p. 9)—to be well organized and clearly articulated. These pedagogical systems consist of implicit personal understanding of teaching and learning which teachers develop through educational and professional experiences. The development and application of the pedagogical systems are usually influenced by experiential, cognitive, and contextual factors. Experiential factors comprise initial teacher training, their own experiences as learners, in-service training, and ongoing classroom experience. Teachers' personal styles or psychological preferences concerning teaching patterns, arrangements, and activities can be classified as the cognitive factors. Contextual factors are external forces the teacher had no control over, such as parents, curriculum mandates, school policy, students' characteristics, and the availability of resources.

The view that experiential factors play a primary role in shaping teachers' pedagogical
Grammar Teaching in Communicative Classrooms

theories is evidenced by Mitchell’s study (2000). She explored the teachers’ academic background and training as well as their current knowledge of language and the views on the place of explicit talk about language in the classroom. After conducting lengthy semi-structured interviews with 27 teachers, she found that the English teachers appeared generally lacking in knowledge, confidence, and interest as far as grammar was concerned, and that the teachers’ language studies at university had had a primarily literary orientation and only a few had studied some historical linguistics for their first degree. They didn’t have any further ‘knowledge about language’ work during their initial professional training. Williams (2000) also reports the impact of professional training on teachers’ belief systems: MA students in his class changed their views on grammar teaching over MA courses to feel that they needed an overt knowledge of grammar in order to guide pupils’ learning of grammar.

Quoting the responses of the trainers in work on initial TEFL training courses, Andrews (2000) suggests that the development of teachers’ theories continues throughout their career. According to him, for some people improvements occur in response to the intellectual stimulus of further study, together with the support and encouragement provided by a good working environment and committed colleagues. Pedagogical beliefs and practical theories are also affected by ongoing classroom experience (Borg, 1998). For example, the teacher’s beliefs about the use of students’ L1 in grammar teaching in his study came exclusively from classroom experience. In the other study on the impact of teachers’ theories on decision process, Borg (1999a) found that teachers’ decisions in grammar teaching are influenced not only by experiential, cognitive, and external contextual factors but also by internal contextual factors. The teachers’ perception of student understanding led him to show students that he was aware of their expectations and concerns. The ‘packaging’ exercise, the use of grammatical terminology, and explicit talk about grammar were all conditioned by his perceptions of how positively students respond to them. These teachers created positive attitudes in them towards all aspects of their teaching by taking into consideration students’ needs, expectations, and experiences. Even though his views of grammar teaching were not matched with students’, he built into his personal pedagogical theories ways of responding to these internal factors.

In sum, the studies reviewed above conclude that teachers’ classroom practices are determined to a great extent by the interaction of several factors influencing their personal belief systems. The pedagogical beliefs and theories serve as a filter through which teachers process continuing experience and in turn contribute to the development of new explicit, professional pedagogical systems.
III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Study 1

1. Description of the Study

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first one was to identify native teachers' and students' beliefs in the role of grammar study in English learning in order to look into how teachers' theories in grammar teaching are formed and to measure to what extent teachers' actual grammar instruction matches up to students' needs and expectations. For this purpose students' as well as teachers' responses to the grammar study-related questions were collected using a questionnaire with 5-point scales in the Likert format, administered to 280 students of Sunchon National University and to 31 native-English speaking teachers at two different institutions. The data collection instruments consisted of adaptations of two questionnaires—one for teachers and one for students—from Schulz (2001). Four more questions regarding grammatical terminology and instructional methods were added to the original questionnaires.

Out of the questionnaire returns from the students, the data from only six classes, divided into higher and lower level according to the scores of English subject in Scholastic Aptitude Test for College Entrance, were used for the detailed, in-depth analysis and for the sake of convenience. The students for this study were all sophomores, who were being taught by NESTs for 5 consecutive semesters. Since the key feature of the General English Program in the university was that all students take two hours of English conversation class by NESTs for six semesters, the objective of the program was to improve the students' communicative skills. The class was assumed to be communicative one rather than traditional one and thus it would fit into the purpose of this study, to look into grammar teaching in communicative classrooms.

Teacher data were collected only from NESTs because non-NESTs' grammar teaching practices were quite predictable. They were reported to provide usually detailed explanations on unknown structures or rules, sometimes with too much emphasis on grammar, in the studies that investigated compared student perceptions of NESTs' and non-NESTs' teaching (Hwa-ja Lee, 2001, 2002). The teachers in this study were all regular faculty members of two different university language centers.
2. Results

1) Beliefs in the Role of Grammar Study

For the convenience of comparison, the 5-point scale responses were merged into a 3-point simplified scale (strongly agree/agree, undecided, disagree/strongly disagree). Table 1 presents a percentage comparison of teacher responses to each of the five questions on the role of grammar in English learning. The table also presents comparative student response rates by proficiency group.

From the response rates in Table 1, it is noticeable that teachers view grammar study as essential to eventual mastery of English (67.9%). Although they still hold favorable attitudes, they are less convinced that grammar study contributes to the improvement of English (42.8%). On the contrary to the positive views of the role of grammar study, teachers’ attitudes toward students’ preference of grammar study are very skeptical. They believe that students neither like the study of grammar (57.1%) nor keep grammar rules in mind when speaking or writing (50%). In spite of the worries over students’ reluctance to grammar study, teachers consider that there is no need of more grammar study in English courses, which is presently the case (50%).

Interestingly, there is considerable discrepancy between teachers’ and students’ views. For item 1, students with lower English proficiency are not aware of the importance of grammar study for the mastery of English as much as teachers and students with higher proficiency (12% and 15.3% discrepancy respectively). Yet it is interesting to note that students from both groups believe in the benefit of grammar study more strongly than teachers (16.6% to 19.2% discrepancy). Teachers and students generally agree that students are reluctant to study English grammar. Nonetheless students with higher proficiency have a greater affinity for explicit grammar instruction than their teachers expected (18.2% discrepancy): 29% of the students with higher proficiency report that they like the study of grammar. Naturally they want more formal grammar study to be included in current English courses (23.4% discrepancy).

The largest discrepancy is found for item 5. While teachers report students do not make use of grammar study as a monitor, students themselves believe they keep grammar rules in mind they try to speak or write (24.2% to 55.4% discrepancy). This large discrepancy rate implies that although teachers’ judgement on the students’ use of grammar rules is negative, students are actually applying grammar rules in producing English expressions in their own ways, but appear to be interspersed with errors.
TABLE 1
Beliefs in the Role of Grammar Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree/Agree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Strongly disagree/Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>H.S</td>
<td>L.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Necessity of grammar study in English</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>55.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mastery</td>
<td>(-3.2)</td>
<td>(-13.2)</td>
<td>(-20.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Contribution of grammar study to English improvement</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-16.6)</td>
<td>(-8.3)</td>
<td>(-4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students' preference of grammar study</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-18.2)</td>
<td>(-10.4)</td>
<td>(-14.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Needs of more grammar study in English courses</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-23.4)</td>
<td>(-8.2)</td>
<td>(-4.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students' use of grammar rules when producing English</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-55.4)</td>
<td>(15.6)</td>
<td>(23.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-24.2)</td>
<td>(0.8)</td>
<td>(36.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1. T indicates teachers of 28 respondents, H.S students with higher proficiency of 69 respondents, and L.S students with lower proficiency of 79 respondents.

2. Numbers in the first parenthesis indicate the difference of agreement/disagreement between teachers and higher students, while those in the second parenthesis between teachers and lower students.

2) Beliefs in Instructional Method of Grammar

Table 2 displays the responses to questions about grammar instructional method. In spite of the relatively strong positive attitude toward the role of grammar study, the majority in both teacher and student groups think that practicing English in real-life situations are more important than the study and practice of grammatical patterns. They also hold the negative views on the usefulness of grammar analysis and practice. There is also less agreement found on whether deductive grammar instruction is more effective than inductive instruction. For item 9 asking about the role of grammatical terminology in grammar teaching, most teachers (42.9%) and students (43.5%, 36.7%) believe it is useful in helping students understand grammar rules.
Table 2: Beliefs in Instructional Methods of Grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Strongly agree/Agree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Strongly disagree/Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T  H.S L.S</td>
<td>T  H.S L.S</td>
<td>T  H.S L.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Importance of Communicative English practice</td>
<td>71.4 84.1 72.2</td>
<td>7.1 15.9 19.0</td>
<td>21.5 0 8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Usefulness of grammar analysis and practice</td>
<td>14.3 13.1 16.4</td>
<td>14.3 18.8 29.2</td>
<td>71.4 68.1 54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Effectiveness of deductive grammar instruction</td>
<td>42.9 42.0 32.1</td>
<td>50 31.9 41.8</td>
<td>7.1 26.1 25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Usefulness of grammatical terminology</td>
<td>42.9 43.5 36.7</td>
<td>21.4 21.7 26.6</td>
<td>35.7 34.8 36.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1. T indicates teachers of 28 respondents, H.S. students with higher proficiency of 69 respondents, and L.S. students with lower proficiency of 79 respondents.
2. Numbers in the first parenthesis indicate the difference of agreement/disagreement between teachers and higher students, while those in the second parenthesis between teachers and lower students.

3) Beliefs in the Role of Error Correction

Table 3 presents a percentage compilation of teacher and student responses to five questions on error correction. The results of data analysis reflect the general tendency of teachers' weaker beliefs on the necessity of error correction than students. 28.6% of the teachers agree with the statement, "Teachers should not correct students when they make errors in class," while 8.6% of the students did not want their errors corrected in class. In general, teachers are less positive toward the desirability of corrective feedback than students. Yet they still express much concern about students' errors left untouched, as shown in responses to items 13 and 14.

As indicated in responses to items 12, 13, and 14, students appear to strongly want their errors to be corrected. Yet the responses to items 10 and 11 imply that a considerable number of students still do not like to be corrected in class. These findings look contradictory but can be interpreted to suggest that students recognize the positive impact of error correction on their learning but do not like to be corrected in public. Then what matters seems to be appropriate use of feedback techniques by teachers. The fact that students with higher proficiency show stronger dislike of error correction in class (21.8%), as revealed in item 10, makes it possible to presume that they feel humiliated or embarrassed to be corrected before their peers more than students.
with lower proficiency.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Strongly agree/Agree %</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Strongly disagree/Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>H.S</td>
<td>L.S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Students' dislike of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>error correction</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-14.7)</td>
<td>(27.0)</td>
<td>(5.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. No need of error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correction in class</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(21.4)</td>
<td>(12.5)</td>
<td>(3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Negative feeling of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students when not</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrected in writing</td>
<td>(25.4)</td>
<td>(28.4)</td>
<td>(6.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Desirability of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrective feedback in</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speaking</td>
<td>(-19.0)</td>
<td>(-10.9)</td>
<td>(-11.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Desirability of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrective feedback in</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>82.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>writing</td>
<td>(-19.9)</td>
<td>(8.6)</td>
<td>(1.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. Numbers in the first parenthesis indicate the difference of agreement/disagreement between teachers and higher students, while those in the second parenthesis between teachers and lower students.

3. Discussion

Study 1 was intended to explore teachers' beliefs in the role of a focus on form/forms, in Doughty and Williams (1998)' terms, in English learning under the premise that the study of how teachers make sense of uncertainties surrounding grammar teaching would enable us to define their pedagogical theories and instructional practice of grammar teaching prevalent in classrooms. It was also assumed that the study in turn would provide them with a better insight into grammar teaching methodology, in particular, and the process of language teaching, in general.

In sum, Tables 1, 2, and 3 indicate that teachers hold relatively favorable attitudes toward formal grammar study and error correction but their beliefs are not as strong as students. There are large discrepancies between teachers and students in their perceptions regarding the role of grammar and error correction in language learning. It is also noteworthy that teachers display
more varied responses to each item than students. These fundamental differences of beliefs indicates that L2 teaching is far from a united profession, particularly under the Korean context of college English teaching. Disagreement between teachers’ perceptions might be due to their different beliefs or theories, which resulted from a complex mixture of educational background, their own language learning experiences, in-service training, teaching experiences, instructional context, and personal preferences.

It has been noticed that some of the responding teachers were more attuned to the latest trends in L2 acquisition theories and grammar teaching methodology, disregarding contextual factors such as students’ needs, proficiency level, class size, or curriculum requirement. The discrepancies in teachers’ belief systems were believed to be usually reflected as different instructional practices. Thus the follow-up study was conducted to investigate the relationship between teachers’ pedagogical theories of grammar teaching and their instructional decisions.

Study 2

1. Description of the Study

1) Research Design

The purpose of Study 2 was to explore how teachers’ pedagogical theories of grammar teaching were actualized in their instructional decisions by presenting teachers’ actual classroom practices. The research adopted qualitative study framework and thus the data were collected to demonstrate actual classroom practices in regular classroom and to interpret the way these practices are informed by teachers’ theories.

The research was conducted in three college English classes, in which communicative English syllabus was imposed as a mandatory course for all the students up to the third year. From the examination of the questionnaire returns for Study 1, two teacher groups were identified as having distinct belief systems—agreement and undecided on the role of grammar study. Teachers characterizing two groups—the most strongly agree and the least strongly agree—were selected as the target subjects of this fieldwork. There was no teacher who strongly disagrees with grammar teaching and error correction. As reported in Study 1, most teachers were well aware of the necessity and the positive role of grammar instruction. The data were collected during the first semester of 2003 academic year from the two teachers’ classes.

This study on teachers’ theories here was implemented within descriptive and ethnographic paradigm, which is characterized by naturalistic rather than experimental research designs. It was expected that this kind of approach would allow us to explore how teachers shape their
pedagogical theories in grammar teaching and its impact upon their instructional decisions on grammar teaching.

2) Data Collection Procedure

In order to explore teachers’ personal theories I started by obtaining the descriptive data about their work. The data for each teacher were collected through 6 hours of unstructured classroom observations and one-hour semi-structured interviews before and after the observations. The first interview was to get to probe each teacher’s professional profile, e.g., educational background, teacher training, teaching experience, and general views of L2 teaching and learning. During the observations classroom activities were recorded through video taping, fieldnotes, and collecting classroom handouts. General intention of the observations was notified to teachers, but the researcher’s specific interest in grammar teaching was released after the observation.

Before the post-observation interviews, teachers were asked to respond to questions probing for pedagogical theories, which were adapted from Borg (1999b). Those questions were made up to help teachers become aware of their own pedagogical theories. The strategy exploring teachers’ theories consisted of three stages: (a) describing classroom practices, (b) making explicit the rationales, and (c) evaluating these rationales. After the teachers worked through these stages individually, the researcher interviewed the teachers to enhance their reflective awareness of the questions. They were asked to clarify or elaborate on the questions, if necessary. The interviews also focused on the discussion of the key episodes in the observation data. The key episodes were classroom interactions which involved any focus-on-form/forms incidents.

2. Results

In this study, the observed classroom practices played dual roles of the researcher’s interpretative data and the teachers’ theory-generating data. It provided the researcher with the background to investigate how the grammar-related instructions are decided. Likewise the teachers should reflect upon their observed teaching practices in order to establish their pedagogical theories.

1) Case 1

Teacher A was a 41-year-old female native speaker of English who had been involved in TEFL for 5 years and who is currently being enrolled in the MA (TESOL) program of a
university in the U.S. Her teaching was characterized by an exclusive focus on accuracy, as clearly enunciated in her questionnaire response. Her approach to grammar teaching was based on a movement from rule-giving explanation to controlled work through presentation and practice with little production activities. Her regular classroom activities can be summarized as pure form-focused instruction, a term contrasting with FonF instruction (Doughty & Williams, 1998), in that most of the class time was allotted to teaching of linguistic forms in isolation, with the exclusion of communicative activities. She usually used only the “Focus In” section, which is described by the authors as the “structure” part of the unit, out of several activity sections presented in the textbook, Expressions III (2001) by Heinle and Heinle clearly designed for ESL students using a pure communicative format. The textbook was compulsorily required to all junior students of the university. Some of the classroom lessons observed was sketched out by the teacher herself as follows:

Journal 1

Today’s lesson focused on the basics of adjectives and modifiers (cheap, cheaper) in a frenzied, rushed attempt to explain the concept so that unit 5’s grammar focus made more sense. .......(skipped)....... After numerous explanations (partly because several people in one group came in late), the first activity went okay .......(skipped) .........

Journal 2

The activity today was more confusing, I thought. There was no time for schemata building and no reinforcement of the grammar point prior to handing out the worksheet. But once the students got going on it, they easily completed the sheet.

The homework is a worksheet that requires the students to form questions using adjectives plus modifiers. .....(skipped)....... 

Journal 3

A major part of the class was spent on explaining tag questions, the grammatical focus for unit 6 in the textbook. I gave a thorough explanation, which was a lot for the students to digest in a short period of time. .......(skipped) .........

In grading the homework from this past Monday, I realize that the students still do not understand what “quantifier + adjective” means. Most of the textbook is not relevant to their situation and doesn’t fully address their grammatical needs.

Journal 4

Well, I think the class went very well. After rehashing the quantifier + comparative adj.
again and providing more examples, it seemed to make more sense. .......... (skipped) .......... The second time I specifically asked them to incorporate a quantifier + comparative adj. (with mixed results).

Journal 5
Yesterday's class was less grammar-focused than the previous ones, so in some ways it was easier to get through. The activities were directly from the book and began with an explanation of the pragmatics of excuses with “I'm afraid” and “I hate to tell you this but....” The students did the written exercises in the textbook and then they put their answers on the board. .......... (skipped) .........

Journal 6
With more explicit prompting, the students were able to create sentences that were accurate—most errors were singular/plural inconsistencies. The question remains for the final: whether they will know what “quantifier + comparative adjective” means.

When they see examples, they can copy correctly, but I don't know how much of the terminology will register in their brains over the next few weeks. .......... (skipped) .........

A pure communicative approach has not helped most of these students thus far, and a Focus on Form will combine the necessary grammatical concepts with communication in their respective interlanguages.

This journal writing highlights the teacher's beliefs of the way grammar teaching works for EFL students: To the teacher, a language's grammar is the foundation of the language and expecting communication without adequate grammatical knowledge is too much daunting. She attributed a lack of true communication ability of the students to a lack of grammar foundation. Therefore she spent almost a half of each class time (10-15 minutes) on explaining rules and usage of a certain grammar structure and demonstrating some model formations under the premise that the “Focus In” parts of the textbook units require extensive explanation of the grammar point over a period of time. The deductive, preempt explanation is always followed by students' worksheet exercises. The frequent occurrences of grammatical terminologies and expressions implicating focus on forms classroom instruction such as explanations, correctly, to form, worksheet, grammar points, quantifier, comparative adjectives, tag questions conspicuously reflect her teaching theories. She appeared to justify herself for a return to explicit, discrete-point grammar instruction with the advent of the debate over focus on form/formS vs meaning-based instruction. The following excerpt typically represents a grammar presentation activity of each class period:
(The teacher writes the rules of tag question formation on the board. After explaining rules on the board she hands out the worksheets and asks students to work in groups of four.)
T: Last time, we talked about tag questions. I want to talk about more today. When do we use question tags?
Ss: (Silence)
T: Umm! To clarify, to make sure something is true or doubtful.
T: We are going to review more tags. You are going home.(writes on the board).
So we can say ... (some students join) aren’t you?(writes on the board).
T: The bell is ringing.
T & S: (altogether) isn’t it?
T: You have a brother.
T & S: (altogether) don’t you?
T: You like ice cream.
T & S: (altogether) don’t you?
T: You played soccer.
T & S: (altogether) didn’t you?
T: He isn’t American.
T: (waits for a second) is he? Remember this is a negative form. So the tag should be ‘is he’.
T: (writes the sentence on the board. “I am a teacher, aren’t I?”

|am not

We say “aren’t I” in this sentence.
S: Uh! This is crazy.
T: I know that’s crazy. I just teach.

This episode highlights characteristic features of the way terminology and grammar practice were used. Terminology was widely adopted over the class activities. Her rationale for grammar teaching relies on two factors that distinguish L2 learning from L1 learning: 1) Adults have powerful cognitive skills that can be used to their advantage; and 2) understanding language differences (within the L2) is crucial to appreciating language subtleties. She convincingly states that correction of errors with a clear explanation leads L2 learners to modify their interlanguages. By drawing upon students’ attention to the differences, she aims to penetrate their metalinguistic awareness. Her approach to grammar instruction was generally a proactive, rather than a reactive one. In the course of her work she made reference to more sophisticated grammatical terms (i.e., quantifier, tag, reinforcer, comparison, progressive) as well as a basic set of labels (i.e., past, present, adjective, verb, noun).

Her class activities appear to follow the typical P-P-P pattern. She usually presented the grammar pattern with an explicit explanation of rules as a first phase of grammar teaching, then
led the students to practice the pattern through worksheet exercises, and then to produce them in a role play or a dialogue format. Yet the last phase of production activity was rarely done, presumably due to time limit. Even if most of her class time was spent on the first two phases of grammar teaching, she strongly believed that she was carrying out grammar teaching within a communicative framework and named this approach as ‘focus-on-form’ instruction.

Further insight into the teacher’s views about grammar instruction is provided by her comments on her language education: “My approach to grammar instruction stems from my own L2 learning experiences. The more practice in comparing structures I had, the more I would manipulate the L2. I also know from both teaching and learning language numerous examples are necessary to solidify interlanguage.”

Her L2 education experience provided her with a good argument for designing and grading homework for every class period. Yet the analysis of the data did not evidence that the fundamental assumption of focus-on-form instruction was appropriately satisfied in her classes that meaning and use must already be evident to the learner at the time of drawing students’ attention to grammar points, despite her firm belief that her approach is most effective in showing students how grammar structures play a role within a communicative framework.

2) Case 2

Teacher B was a male native speaker of English in his mid 30s who has been involved in TEFL about 10 years. He held qualifications of MA in TESOL. The language points he focused on were generally dictated by the textbook, the one used by Teacher A, but were also guided by errors predicted from his teaching experiences or by errors discovered as the lesson progressed. He usually didn’t spend much time presenting the language points because he believed that students had studied the particular structure and use of language parts in the textbook before. The language points focused in class were mostly semantic or lexical rather than syntactic or morphological (i.e., polite questions for personal information, borrow/lend, modals- duty/obligation/opinion/suggestion). Grammatical terminology was rarely used in his classes except for the basic terms such as verb, noun, and adjective. The class journal by the teacher himself depicts his approach to grammar teaching in detail:

Journal 1

The language points I focus on are generally dictated by the text we study in the Open English Conversation classes, but are also guided by the errors I know students will make or by errors I discovered them making as the lesson progresses...... (skipped)...... I use the exercises provided in the text to practice some of the grammar points, and at times, like in
this particular lesson, I created an exercise to give students further chances to practice the forms in writing.

Journal 2

While I hardly ever use the word "grammar" in class (too many bad feelings develop in students if I use it), I will, depending on the lesson, actually use grammar terms such as VERB, NOUN, and ADJECTIVE..... (skipped)..... In fact, when we study an aspect of grammar, I spend more time trying to show students contexts in which particular grammar is used so that they understand when to use it as well as how.

Journal 3

I encourage students to become aware of grammar rules. I believe helping students articulate the rule of grammar for themselves aids their learning, understanding, and memory of the grammar far better than if I just told them the rules. I try to help my students become invested in their own learning...active, interested, and inquiring about what we study....(skipped)....

Journal 4

On Wednesday, I focused on errors that sent the wrong message to the listener-Can you lend me YOUR hand? VS Can you lend me A hand.? Generally, though, unless communication is completely non-existent, I try to deal in small and subtle ways rather than stopping a lesson or practice session to focus on something not related to the communicative goal of the lesson, student, or class. Or, I'll check the work my students are doing and if there are consistent errors throughout the class, at the end of the lesson, I'll make time to address those errors.

Journal 5

Sometimes, a more advanced student asks grammatical questions based on use. If so, I answer that question, and if it relates to the whole class or is beneficial for all students to know, I'll incorporate that into my lesson as it progresses.... (skipped)....

Journal 6

I believe that after having studied English for at least 10 years, they don't really need to study more or repeatedly study what they already know. They need the opportunity to use what they know. For me, any grammar I teach I do so with the knowledge before, during, and after a lesson that students have had all of it before. And, any time I talk about
grammar. I try to have an immediate opportunity for students to use it in conversation that is meaningful and useful... (skipped)....

His approach to grammar explanation can be summarized to be inductive since he tried to help students define the rule of grammar for students. He led the students become invested in their own learning-autonomous, responsible, and inquiring about what they studied. In overall he tried to present grammar rules incorporating with real use and to put the form and meaning together, yet always meaning first.

The grammar points were mostly introduced only in the presentation phase of his lesson. More time was spent trying to show students contexts in which particular grammar is used. The following episode exemplifies his strategy to provide students with appropriate opportunities to use grammar.

(The teacher asks the students to practice polite questions appropriate for the given situation, providing them with a situation. The situation is described as follows, written on the board: 1) You have to borrow your partner’s video and 2) You want to buy ACE crackers. You don’t have $.)

T: (initiates a dialogue in a group) Could you do me a favor?
S: Sure.
T: Could you lend me your video just for one night?
S: No! (Ss laugh)
T: (goes around groups and helps them interact about 5 minutes)

T: (after listening to students’ errors in the use of ‘borrow’ and ‘lend’)
All right! I have a question for you. How are these two sentences different? (writes two sentences on the board as follows):

1) Can you give me a pencil? and 2) Can I have a pencil?

LEND                 BORROW

Ss: (no response)
T: Some of you say, “Can you borrow me a pencil?” Nope! Be careful (pointing to the student with the error). Can I borrow your pencil (taking a pencil from one student)?
Ss: (laugh)

His way of dealing with student’s grammar errors during fluency work varied from very subtle to conspicuous. In the excerpt presented above, he focused on errors that sent the wrong
message to the listener and tried to provide an explicit correction of expressions “Can you borrow me a pencil?” and “Can you give me your hand?”. Generally, though, unless communication is completely non-existent, he tried to deal with errors in small and subtle ways rather than stopping a lesson or practice session to focus on something not related to the communicative goal of the lesson, student, or class. Or he checked the work his students were doing and if there were consistent errors throughout the class, he made time to address those errors at the end of the lesson.

He also encouraged students to become aware of grammatical rules by striving to present grammar in such a way so that students define the rules for the grammar rules they study. He believed helping students articulate the rule of grammar for themselves aids their learning, understanding, and memory of the grammar far better than if he just told them the rules. He tried to help his students become invested in their own learning. He activated students’ investment by asking leading questions so students could walk through the rules they created. For example, he tried to get students to recognize patterns and meanings in the grammar. If they could articulate the patterns and meanings in English, even a little, he concluded that their understanding and knowledge of grammar was very much correct.

His grammar teaching was formed by the knowledge that students had studied grammar for many years, but had grown to find the study of grammar to be a chore and a bore. He didn’t think it all that necessary to study grammar to speak a language, especially at the level and age these students were. He also believed that after having studied English for at least 10 years, they didn’t really need more or repeatedly study what they had already known. They needed the opportunity to use what they know. For him, any grammar he taught he did so with the knowledge before, during, and after a lesson, that the students had had before. And, any time he talked about grammar, he tried to have an immediate opportunity for students to use it in conversation that was meaningful and useful. In sum, Teacher B’s grammar instruction is characterized by reactive and inductive.

3. Discussion

Study 2 was carried out to probe for teachers’ personal theories of grammar teaching and their instructional decisions. When the classes of two teachers were compared, who showed contrasting attitudes on grammar teaching, the analysis of data revealed that the class of Teacher A, with strongly positive views, was characterized by focus-on-form instruction, while the class of Teacher B, with slightly negative views, focus-on-form instruction.

Teacher B, with the least strongly agreed and slightly disagreed attitudes on grammar teaching, developed his own pedagogical theories of grammar teaching. The teacher led his
students to make a shift to linguistic features when triggered by perceived problems or production as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus was on meaning or communication. Even if he expressed negative views on grammar instruction in interviews and questionnaires, his teaching of grammar was characterized by reactive and inductive focus on form. His instructional decisions in a real classroom setting was based on grammar teaching within CLT framework, with equal focus on meaning and form.

Meanwhile, Teacher A firmly believed that second language teaching that is primarily meaning-focused could be improved with high degree of attention to form. Yet the data I have discussed above indicated that she made use of the movement toward focus-on-form as justification for a return to explicit, discrete-point grammar instruction. She was misguided to take the new trend of grammar teaching as proof of what she had known all along was the correct path. Her instruction was defined to be proactive focus-on-formS rather then focus-on-form since most of her class time was spent on teaching language forms in isolation, deductively.

The analysis of data suggested that the teachers' theories and instructional decisions about grammar teaching were influenced by an interacting range of experiential and cognitive factors. Their beliefs about teaching and learning grammar were affected by significant educational and professional experiences in their lives such as L1 and L2 education, teacher education, teaching experience. These different experiences were a key factor in the development of their theories in grammar teaching. For example, Teacher A's stance on grammar teaching can be understood with the recognition of her L2 learning experience, while Teacher B with his professional TESOL training. Even if Teacher B held views against explicit grammar instruction, he was keenly aware of the role of grammar in language acquisition process. That is, the teacher conceptions did not always have a consistent relationship with teacher's classroom practices.

The cognitive factors behind the teacher's theories of grammar instruction practices consisted of the conceptions which they had about a range of issues in grammar instruction, i.e., best way to learn grammar, contribution of terminology, error correction, metalinguistic knowledge, and which had been generated by educational and professional experiences in their lives. These conceptions were narrated in the arguments in favor of and against grammar instruction which the teachers provided in discussion of their work. Most these conceptions impinged on the teachers' instructional decisions, but some did not coincide with classroom practices. This suggests that a realistic understanding of teachers' instructional decisions must be based on a thorough analysis of both teacher theories and the way these beliefs, attitudes, and theories are manifested into classroom practice.
IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study was conducted to investigate how grammar instruction is done in communicative classrooms by analyzing teachers' instructional practices with reference to their beliefs and theories in grammar teaching. For this study, first, teachers' and students' beliefs in grammar study were identified in order to look into how teachers' theories in grammar teaching were formed and in addition to measure to what extent teachers' actual grammar instruction match up to students' needs and expectations. Second, teachers' actual classroom practices were presented in order to see in what manner teachers' theories were realized in their instructional decisions.

The analysis of data in Study 1 indicated that teachers held relatively favorable attitudes toward formal grammar study but their beliefs were not as strong as students. It was also found out that teachers displayed more varied responses than students. Disagreement among teachers' perceptions could be due to their different beliefs or theories, which resulted from complex mixture of educational background, their own language learning experiences, in-service training, teaching experiences, instructional context, and personal preferences.

Therefore, Study 2 was conducted to investigate how teachers' pedagogical theories of grammar study were related to their instructional decisions. The analysis of data suggested that the teachers' decisions about grammar teaching were influenced by an interacting range of experiential and cognitive factors. Their beliefs about teaching and learning grammar were affected by significant educational and professional experiences in their career. Likewise the cognitive factors, i.e., conceptions on the issues of grammar instruction, exerted a great influence on teachers' classroom practices. Yet one interesting finding was that some of these cognitions did not coincide with classroom practices. The analysis of classroom observation data in this study suggested that teachers' decisions about grammar teaching in the classes of such mismatches were taken interactively, not simply preplanned, often prompted by students' reactions.

Overall, this study concludes that teachers in communicatively-oriented classrooms have firm beliefs on the significance of grammar study in language learning, although their attitudes vary to a great extent from strongly positive to slightly negative, and teachers develop their own pedagogical theories of grammar study, which in turn affects their instructional decisions. On the contrary to the worries that teachers in communicative classrooms would place a minimal focus on grammar instruction and error correction, and thus would limit teaching of explicit grammar rules in class, the teachers inquired in this study were identified to try to put equal focus on meaning and form, with high degree of attention to form in some cases.

By focusing on teacher theories and teaching processes, this study represents a behavioral and psychological dimensions of grammar teaching. Such accounts enable us to examine when, how,
and why teachers in a real classroom setting draw upon pedagogical options in grammar teaching. The description of teacher action and theories in this study can be used in teacher training to motivate other teachers to analyze their own beliefs and to evaluate arguments on which their own approaches to grammar teaching rely on.

In addition to the pedagogical implications from this study in terms of teacher education and development, practical suggestions can be postulated from the research findings summarized above to help teachers build their own pedagogical theories appropriate for Korean EFL context. In order to provide our students with maximized benefits from communicative teaching three suggestions can be made to fit the Korean context of instruction. First, a curriculum policy unique to a specific school setting should be clearly set up and notified to teachers so that they might be well aware of the needs of the students and the objectives of the program. Second, teachers with professional training in TESOL should be given distinctive favors commensurate with their specialty, in employment. There should be a kind of institutional regulations to reward those teachers up to their individual qualifications such as certificates, degrees, and academic achievements. Third, teachers should be encouraged to develop their own theories and techniques applicable to their teaching situations through teacher workshops or reciprocal classroom observations on a regular basis.

In conclusion, this study shed lights on teachers' actual practice and their thinking. It also provided a vivid description of what teachers actually did in teaching grammar by exploring how their beliefs or theories were reflected in instructional decisions. However, this study has one limitation in generalizing research findings in that only two of the teachers involved in this study were approached in depth to trace their pedagogical theories and practices due to contextual and educational constraints. Future research should implement more classroom observations of a larger number of targeted teachers in a range of instructional situations (e.g. with different level of students) in order to provide researchers and educators with a more provocative insight into how teachers mapping of their action and thinking might influence our students' classroom performances and thereby their ultimate goal of improving English proficiency.

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