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Students' Attitudes towards Learning the Present Tenses through Explicit Grammar Instruction

**A Case Study of First-Year LMD Students at the English
Department in Mila**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the master degree in
Language sciences and Didactics of Language**

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DEDICATION

In the name of ALLAH, the most Gracious, Most Merciful.

I am most grateful to ALLAH for the blessings that have been surrounded me to complete my studies and for giving me the power to finish this work.

I dedicate this work to,

My dearest dear, my beloved father "Abd El Aziz" who taught me self-reliance and helped me to make my dreams a reality.

May Allah bless him

To my beloved mother "Cherifa" without her support, I would never be patient to complete this work.

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Everyone who believes and trusts me. Thank you all.

Abstract

Over the centuries, grammar and its approaches are considered to be important in second and foreign language teaching/learning. In line with this, existing literature shows that students' attitudes are one of the important factors to determine their success in language learning. This research, therefore, is an attempt to investigate students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction. The basic aim is then to determine the effect of explicit grammar instruction on students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses. The educational setting in which this study takes place is the Department of Letters and English language, faculty of letters and languages, Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center of Mila, for the academic year 2016-2017. Along with this aim, it is hypothesized that if the present tenses are taught under explicit grammar instruction, students would have positive attitudes towards learning the target tenses. To achieve the aim of the undertaken research, answer the research questions, and attempt to confirm the validity of the hypothesis, two kinds of data collection instruments were employed with students: the questionnaires and the interviews. According to the sampling, 80 students were selected randomly from a total population of 225 first year students. They have been used as a sample, in the study, in order to fill in the questionnaire; whereas, twelve among them were chosen randomly to answer the interview questions. The data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The results of this investigation have confirmed the hypothesis and have shown that students have positive attitudes towards grammar, in general, as well as towards learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction. On the basis of the results obtained, a number of pedagogical implications are proposed, at the end of the dissertation, to help the students understand and perform better; and to help teachers opt for the right method when teaching grammar.

List of Abbreviations

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DM	Direct Method
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EGI	Explicit Grammar Instruction
EI	Explicit Instruction
ESL	English as a Second Language
FFL	Form-Focused Instruction
FL	Foreign Language
FLL	Foreign Language Learning
GTM	Grammar-Translation Method
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLL	Second Language Learning
TBLT	Task-Based Language Teaching
TL	Target Language

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INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

Learning English is fun, yet some people find it difficult because they have to master English structures which are different from their native structure. Actually, in recent history, grammar teaching has consisted in giving students opportunities to produce specific grammatical structures through interaction. Such an approach, the implicit grammar teaching, may prove ineffective since it creates fluent but inaccurate communicators. A number of studies in foreign/second language acquisition point out that the traditional approach to grammar teaching – explicit teaching – is more fruitful. In the light of this controversy, it is necessary to carry out more researches to clarify the possible outcomes of teaching the present tenses explicitly. However, according to researchers, every instruction has its pros and cons, but it is also important to note what students' attitudes are towards grammar learning in general and present tenses in particular.

Moreover, in their first year, at the department of English, in Mila University Center, students are gradually exposed to grammar. However, informal conversations with teachers and students made us acquainted with the fact that students show a negative attitude towards grammar, at the beginning, and they show deficiencies in using grammar rules especially tenses. This problem can be attributed to the long exposure of these students to grammar implicitly. In fact, students' attitudes towards learning are considered to be one of the most important issues that should be taken into account when discussing factors affecting the teaching/learning process. Therefore, students' attitudes are an area of research that has been studied to some extent, but few studies (if any, in Algeria) have dealt with their attitudes towards present tenses when they are instructed explicitly.

2. Aim of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore the impact of learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction on the attitudes of the students. The focal point is that students require to learn grammar, in general, and present tenses, in particular, and have positive attitudes towards what they learn. The basic reason behind helping students to have positive attitudes is to enhance their performance as these attitudes guide behavior and encourage actions.

3. Research question and Hypothesis

The main question of the study is:

1. What is the effect of using explicit grammar instruction on students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses?

Thus, I hypothesize that if the present tenses are taught under explicit grammar instruction, students' attitudes would be positive.

4. Definition of Key Terms

4.1 Attitudes

An attitude is a complex of feelings, desires, fears, convictions, prejudices or other tendencies that have given a set or readiness to act because of varied experiences (Chave, 1928). It has been defined by Allport (1935) as: "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p. 810). Attitudes, thus, are "directive" in the sense that they guide the behavior and encourage actions; as well as dynamic since they drive the behavior. All in all, they are responsible for the way people

behave towards an object, an idea or a person. They are positive or negative. Therefore, they are predispositions to respond to a given object in a specific manner, they are learned actions.

4.2 Tense

Tense is a grammatical term which refers to the form of the verb in relation to the meaning of the sentence. It is the element that places an action or event in a specific moment of speaking. According to Ansell (2000), there are four types of tenses, namely simple, continuous, perfect, and perfect continuous.

4.3 Explicit Grammar Instruction

Explicit grammar instruction takes place when the grammar lesson is given separately from any other topic and rules are formulated during the teaching and learning process. In explaining the rules, there are also two approaches that can be chosen. In line with this, Scott (1990) states, "An explicit approach to teaching grammar insists upon the value of deliberate study of grammar rules, either by declarative analysis or inductive analogy, in order to recognize linguistic elements efficiently and accurately." (p. 779). In a nutshell, it is an instruction which deliberates the study of grammar either deductively or inductively. In the first type, the teacher gives the rules first and provides the examples later on; while the second type is concerned with providing examples, then students are required to formulate the rules. It is, thus, a way of teaching grammar in which the students study the language consciously. Stern (1992, p. 32) as cited in Ellis (2003) claims that "explicit instruction involves problem-solving and reasoning,"

4.7 Implicit Grammar Instruction

Implicit grammar instruction refers to incidental grammar teaching in which no rules are stated. That is, it is a way of grammar teaching that exposes the students to the target

language to make them acquire the language as naturally as possible. Therefore, the main focus of the teaching and the learning process lies in the meaning or communication and students will gain grammar knowledge unconsciously through the tasks they are working on.

5. Means of Research

To carry out the purpose of this study, a quantitative and a qualitative case approach has been opted for. Hence, the questionnaire was the primary research tool used to collect data about the first year English students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses under explicit grammar instruction at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center-Mila. Only students have been collaborating in answering it in order to identify their attitudes. In fact, data collection has been carried out through the questionnaire because it is easy to construct and enables us to gather a large amount of information in a short period of time. Then, to validate and to understand the obtained results from the questionnaire, some students have been interviewed. It is useful to further investigate students' responses. The interviews seek to elicit and investigate more information about students' attitudes, as well as to understand the reasons why they hold such attitudes towards explicit grammar instruction when learning the present tenses.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

This research is presented in mainly two chapters. The first one represents the theoretical background while the second is the practical part of the study.

The first chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the teaching of grammar. It reviews the different definitions of grammar, the place of grammar in the most influential language teaching methods and approaches together with, an overview of formal

grammar instruction, as well as its significance and necessity in SLL/FLL context. It ends up by providing an explanation of how grammar could be taught (explicitly/implicitly).

Section two is devoted to students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses explicitly. First, it starts with the place of tense/aspect in English grammar with clarifying the major differences between them. Then, it provides some basic forms and uses of the English present tenses. It also explains how to teach present tenses using explicit grammar instruction. This section also provides an in-depth discussion of attitudes. It includes the concept and the nature of attitudes, their major theories and dimensions; how they are formed and composed in line with the different functions they serve. As a final point, it clarifies the relationship between attitudes and language learning.

Chapter two is the practical part which tackles the analysis of the data collected from both students' questionnaires and interviews in addition to the interpretation of the findings in section one and two. Section three, then, considers some pedagogical implications of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

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Chapter One

Theoretical Background

Introduction

Grammar teaching has been considered controversial in the field of foreign language research. Theoretical and empirical developments have led to constantly changing approaches to grammar teaching. The biggest concerns have probably been whether the explicit or implicit method should be favored, and also, whether grammar teaching should take into account learners' communicative needs. Therefore, this chapter provides a review of literature of the topic of the current study. It is divided into two sections. The first section concentrates on teaching grammar in EFL/SLA context; it emphasizes the different definitions of 'grammar', major approaches of teaching second language, and the theoretical framework examines grammar instruction as its significance and explicit/implicit dichotomy. The second section throws light on the students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses. The latter comprises two parts. The first part (A) entitled "Learning the Present Tenses". It dedicates some definitions of tenses and aspect, the importance of tense/aspect, and forms of present tenses. The second part (B) reviews previous background of attitudes generally and students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction.

Section One

Teaching Grammar

Introduction

For ages, grammar has attracted the attention of language researchers and has puzzled both foreign language teachers and learners due to its complex nature and great importance. It is considered as the key to achieve proficiency and, hence, necessary in language classes. Grammar as a separate component of the English language has been the main concern of researchers looking for the most suitable foreign language teaching/learning method that could work best for speakers of other languages, and naturally, every method has its pros and cons. In addition, grammar is generally associated with many other concepts and words. For instance, one of the most typical words is probably the word rules. Therefore, this section introduces teaching foreign language grammar in general and English language in particular.

1. Definitions of Grammar

To master any language, in general, and English language in particular, one should learn its grammar effectively and know how to use it correctly and sufficiently. In fact, the term grammar has been defined in many ways.

As Thornbury (1999, p.14) says, "in fact, no other issue has so preoccupied theorists and practitioners as the grammar debate, and the history of language teaching is essentially the history of the claims and counterclaims for and against the teaching of grammar". Grammar is " Like the universe: it has no beginning, it has no end, it has no shape, it just exists and there is a lot of it!" (Thornbury, *ibid*). In spite of the paramount role that grammar

plays in language teaching and learning, many language specialists have failed to provide the field of language teaching with an appropriate picture of what grammar is. Thus, giving a comprehensive definition of what grammar is seems hard to accomplish, since many grammarians gave a multiplicity of views on what really meant by grammar.

Grammar is the study of what forms and structures are possible in a language, and why these forms and structures are acceptable (Thornbury, *ibid*). Traditionally, grammar is the study of syntax and morphology of sentences. In other words, how words are joined together in a particular order, and what kinds of words can fit into any one link in the chain. However, grammar is also usually linked to meaning. There are two kinds of meaning. First, there is a representational meaning, which means that grammar is used to describe the world. Secondly, there is an interpersonal meaning, which means that grammar helps us to interact with other people. Grammar is also linked to function. A speaker can express one function with many different forms, and there is more than one meaning to a function. Grammar is also defined by rules (Thornbury *ibid*).

Additionally, Ur (1996) defines grammar as "the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning"(p. 7). She (*ibid*) adds:

There is a set of rules which governs how units of meaning may be constructed in any language: we may say a learner who knows grammar is one who has mastered and can apply these rules to express him or herself in what would be considered as acceptable forms.

The term, grammar has been defined in a number of ways by language teachers and grammarians who have influenced and been influenced by different approaches to teaching grammar (Ellis, 2006; Purpura, 2004). Hence, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 251) grammar is "a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language". From this definition, it seems that grammar plays an important role in combining units of language to form sentences. The sentences are acceptable grammatically if they follow the rules of grammar.

According to Ellis (2006), grammar teaching "involves any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it" (p. 84).

Singh (2008) also points out that the teaching of grammar is the teaching of the rules of grammar as part of language education. In the context of second language instruction, the teaching of grammar is generally aimed at imparting the knowledge and ability to use language grammatically and correctly.

Larsen- Freeman (1991, p. 280) also defines the teaching of grammar as "enabling language students to use linguistic forms accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately". Hence, the grammar and language teaching relationship, in previous years, highlights the appropriate and meaningful accurate use of linguistic forms.

2. Grammar in the most Influential Language Teaching Methods and Approaches

Over the decades, the central purpose of language teaching is to help learners to enhance their performance in language fully proficiently both in production and

comprehension of messages. To achieve this goal, different approaches are used by different scholars. One cannot suggest an absolute and perfect approach to language methods of teaching and procedures in classroom implementation. In the first chapter of their book, "Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching", Richards and Rodgers (2001) offer a brief history of language teaching and trace the rise and the fall of diverse approaches and methodologies. In the next point, an attempt is made to discuss the matter on the basis of six approaches.

2.1 The Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM), also known as "The Traditional Method", or "The Classical Method" or "The Indirect Method", is the most ancient method that appeared in the field of foreign language teaching. This teaching pedagogy, as Richards and Schmidt (2010) hold, was basically used to teach Latin and Greek in Europe in the past, but later on, in the nineteenth century it began to be applied to teach "modern" languages such as French and English.

According to Richards and Rogers (2001, p. 5), the GTM is "a method for which there is no theory". Nonetheless, there are some typical characteristics of the GTM, some of which have survived to this day. First and foremost, abstract grammar rules were taught deductively; the rules were presented before practical examples of the rules were given. Furthermore, the use of the first language (L1) as a means of instruction was appreciated. Accuracy as opposed to fluency was the aim in language learning. Translation was emphasized, and thus second language (L2) sentences were frequently translated into L1 sentences and vice versa. Reading and writing were of primary importance (Richards & Rogers, 2001).

That is, in a grammar translation typical lesson, as Richards and Schmidt (2010) points, the teacher selects a particular grammatical structure, presents it and explains thoroughly the rule of its use, usually in the students' mother tongue, and then gives illustrations. After that, the grammar rule is practised and memorized along with a list of vocabulary, and finally, a written text is assigned in order to be translated in and from the target language. As Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 3) note: "Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language".

The GTM has been facing various attacks from reformers. Some criticize that this method is often just based on memorizing unusable grammar rules and vocabulary; the dominance of the first language; and paying little attention to the students' communicative competence.

2.2 The Direct Approach

The Direct Approach was developed in the late nineteenth century and came as a reaction to the Grammar-Translation Approach. In fact, the reform movement that arose emphasized the spoken word with its sound system and contextualized nature. Out of this reformation, grew the Natural Method, which attempted to mirror first language acquisition without recourse to the native language during instruction. One of the most well-known of the natural methods was the 'Direct Method' (DM) which was adopted by Berlitz in his commercial schools and led to the term 'Berlitz' method being used synonymously with the Direct Method. The DM focused on oral and aural skills with the entire class being taught in

the target language (TL) with correct pronunciation, and grammar is considered paramount (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In the DM, in contrast to GTM, the use of L1 is not allowed in the classroom. The teacher must have native-like proficiency in the TL, and lessons focus on the use of dialogues and stories in a conversational style. Grammar, as well as the target culture, is taught inductively and literary texts are not analyzed grammatically, but read for pleasure (Celce-Murcia, 1998; Richards & Schmidt, 2010). In practice, the DM stood for the following principles and procedures (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 12):

1. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
2. Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
3. Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
4. Grammar was taught inductively.
5. New teaching points were introduced orally.
6. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
7. Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
8. Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.

Two questions can be raised while applying this method. One is how to safeguard against misunderstanding without translating, and without reference to L1; the other one is how to apply this method beyond elementary stage of language learning. Hence, teachers had to demonstrate native or native-like fluency in the TL and they needed to be extremely skillful in their ability to communicate ideas and teach vocabulary. Also, the strict use of the TL to

the exclusion of the native language resulted in teachers having to perform time consuming verbal gymnastics (Richards & Rogers, 2001).

2.3 Audio-Lingualism

Audio-Lingualism is known as "Audio-Lingual, aural-oral method, mim-mem method" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 40). Audio-Lingualism is a method of foreign or second language teaching; it draws on the DM, but adds features from structural linguistics and behavioral psychology. Similar to the Direct Approach, Audio-Lingualism focuses on memorizing dialogues, and grammar is taught inductively. The teacher must be proficient only in the structures and vocabulary that are focused on since learning activities are controlled. There is emphasis on pronunciation, memorization and prevention of learner errors; vocabulary learning is limited (Celce-Murcia, 1998). Furthermore, the teacher is in control of the lesson, and students can often participate without any understanding of meaning. The audio-lingual method focuses on the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). It emerges as a way to afford students oral communication skills that the GTM could not. Furthermore, it was a logical by-product of the advances in behaviorist psychology that advocated stimulus-response approaches to learning. Like the previous methods, it is criticized by many researchers because of its principles and procedures, as Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.40) point, "Criticism of the audio lingual method is based on criticism of its theory and its techniques".

2.4 The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach is considered as an example of the Communicative Approach which "sees communication as the primary function of language" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 129). This approach draws its origins from Krashen's acquisition/learning theory which

suggests that foreign language learners acquire the grammatical system of the TL in a way that is similar to their first language acquisition (Thornbury, 1999). Thornbury (*ibid*) has gone further to say that similar to the DM, grammar is irrelevant in the teaching/learning process and that formal instruction is unnecessary, because normally all human beings are equipped with a device that helps them acquire different grammatical items of the FL in a naturally ordered way regardless of the sequencing in which they are presented to them. Therefore, learners are expected to acquire grammar indirectly through being exposed to a great amount of comprehensible input provided by the teacher.

2.5 Communicative Language Teaching

The Communicative Approach was introduced in the 1970s and is considered to be the opposite of Grammar-Translation, the Direct Approach, and Audio-Lingualism (Harmer, 2007). Hence, Richards and Schmidt (2010) define it as "an approach to foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes that the goal of language learning is communicative competence "(p. 99). In other words, the Communicative Approach acknowledges language as a system for communication of all classroom activities. Consequently, the goal is that students learn to communicate in the TL.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the period when the focus in language teaching/learning classes shifted towards creating communicative competence for FL learners rather than instructing them in order to master grammatical items, i.e., to develop only grammatical competence because it is believed that "Communicative competence involves knowing how to use the grammar and vocabulary of the language to achieve communicative goals, and knowing how to do this in a socially appropriate way"(Thornbury,

1999, p. 18). That is, CLT gives importance to both functional and structural aspects of the language.

However, a distinction between two versions of CLT may be worth noting. Thornbury (*ibid*) reports that CLT has two facets: the "shallow-end approach" and the "deep-end approach" which Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 155) call, respectively, the "weak" version of CLT and the "strong" version. In the shallow-end approach, language is learnt for the sake of being used, i.e., for communicative purposes. Accordingly, grammar teaching is not completely ignored; that is, learners should "learn the rules and then apply them in life-like communication" Thornbury (*op cit*). Consequently, grammar instruction is organized in terms of functions to fulfill a communicative goal. In the deep-end approach, language is used in order to be learnt. This version regards grammar teaching as merely a waste of time; the reason for which "both grammar-based syllabuses and grammar instruction" were rejected (Thornbury, *ibid* p. 22). Proponents of the deep-end approach believe that if learners take part in activities that involve them in real-life communication, they are likely to acquire the grammatical rules of the foreign language unconsciously.

2.5 TASK-BASED LEARNING/TEACHING

The Task-Based Learning/Teaching is also known as "TBLT", "Task-based instruction", "Task-based Learning". Prabhu (cited in Thornbury, 1999) based on his Bangalore Project and favoring the strong version of CLT, suggested a syllabus of tasks from which was the birth of the Task-based Language Learning/Teaching. Thornbury (1999) explains the project saying that students were instructed to work through a task or complete a task without explicit grammar teaching. At the beginning, Task-based Language Teaching

(TBLT) was in Thornbury's terms "hostile to explicit grammar teaching", but this did not last for a long time (*ibid* p. 23).

TBLT is said to be related to pair and group work because this kind of teaching practice is believed to develop learners' oral proficiency, increase language practice opportunities, enhance motivation, and promote psychological health. Ellis (1997) goes as long as to say that group work or students' interaction while performing a given task together leads to an increase in the quantity of learner speech and the variety of speech acts, a reduction of anxiety; an increase in motivation, in independence and in social integration and more importantly in learning.

Due to the numerous advantages of group work which are tightly linked to the task based approach, it was widely called for application in FL classes. The approach appeals for learning through completing real-world tasks because they enable learners to negotiate meaning and show them the way they are required to behave accordingly outside the classroom. Nevertheless, putting learners in groups to communicate and interact with each other does not mean that the language output is of a good or high quality if they do not receive any grammatical instruction. Therefore, Thornbury states that "without some attention to form, learners run the risk of fossilization"(*op cit* p. 24). TBLT recognizes now the importance of a focus on form. This could be applied through correcting mistakes and making learners aware of the grammatical system –consciousness raising. That is, teachers draw learners' attention to notice the grammatical item present in the input and, then, give them the chance to understand its underlying meaning (Ellis, 1995). Following this procedure, foreign language learners will probably produce the target language accurately and appropriately.

Consequently, teachers should use activities that promote awareness of grammar and techniques to draw learners' attention to form.

3. GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION

Teaching grammar in FL classes has always been a main issue which is discussed among language teachers. Each language has a unique grammar and native speakers acquire their mother tongue without learning the grammar rules. This increasing interest in teaching grammar leads to a serious and growing problem. This problem which can be expressed as one of the issues within form-focused instruction (FFI) and which has received a lot of attention is explicit and implicit instruction.

3.1 Significance of Grammar Instruction in Class

The role and type of grammar instruction in FLL with particular reference to EFL has been the subject of SLA research and discussion for decades. In recent times, however, grammar instruction has been recognized as an essential and unavoidable component of language learning and use. It is seen as valuable, if not indispensable, within the context of EFL teaching and learning.

It is a common idea among researchers that grammar teaching benefits learners in language proficiency. Supporting the effectiveness of formal instruction in grammar teaching, Nassagi and Fotos (2004, pp. 126-145) have listed the following arguments from the literature:

1. Some researchers, such as Schmidt (1990), proved that 'noticing' is one of the necessities for learning to take place.

2. Some researchers, such as Pienemann (1984), found that grammar instruction can accelerate the process of learning some structures.
3. Swain (1985) and his colleagues concluded that the most effective way to improve the ability to use grammar accurately is formal instruction.
4. During the last twenty years, considerable empirical classroom teaching research has demonstrated that grammar instruction effects SLA.

Thornbury (1999, p. 14) too in his book "*How to Teach Grammar*" lists the following items:

- Knowledge of grammar provides the learners with the means to generate a potentially enormous number of original sentences.
- Learners who receive no instruction fossilize sooner than those who receive instruction.
- Since language is a "gigantic mass for learners", grammar helps to reduce the enormity of the task by organizing it into need categories.
- Grammar lends itself to a view of teaching and learning known as "transmission" by offering a structural system that can be taught and tested in methodical steps.

Krashen's Monitor hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) claims that "learned" knowledge is completely separate and cannot be converted into "acquired" knowledge. This position has been designated as the "non-interface position" by Ellis (1997). Besides, Krashen also advocates that learners possess an "acquired system" and a "learned system" which are totally different. Finally, Krashen argues that "acquired knowledge" can only be developed when the learner's attention is focused on message conveyance. Furthermore, he claims that "monitoring the output" is possible when learners focus on form rather than meaning and have sufficient time to access their "learned" knowledge.

Although a number of Krashen's hypotheses and assertions of SLA have been challenged in the following years, he still asserts that studies which attempted to demonstrate the efficacy of direct instruction in grammar showed only that grammar teaching has a "peripheral effect" (Krashen, 1992; 1993; cited in Ellis, 1997). Even after several years, when Krashen (1999; as cited in Ellis, 2006) reviews studies that have appeared since that time, he still comes to exactly the same conclusion.

In contrast to Krashen and his supporters, a group of linguists do not accept Krashen's non-interface position (Long, 2000; Celce-Murcia, 1991; Ellis, 1997; 2001; Fotos, 1998). They claim that form-based instruction can facilitate acquisition. Besides, they indicate that conscious attention to form facilitates SLA and that learned knowledge can become acquired knowledge through consistent practice of linguistic features (Dekeyser, 1998). For instance, Fotos (1998) advocates that much of the English language instruction in the world is not ESL-based, but takes place in the EFL environment. In the EFL environment, grammar instruction has never left the classroom. Therefore, he identifies a role for form- focused instruction in EFL pedagogy.

Ellis (2002), who supports formal grammar instruction, argues that consciousness-raising and explicit knowledge facilitate L2 learners' intake to form implicit knowledge. The first reason to support grammar instruction is the basic view that grammar is the fundamental basic of any language; that is, it provides the learners with the structures they need in order to organize and get their messages and ideas across. One important aspect of grammar teaching, according to Azar (2007), is that "it helps learners discover the nature of language, i.e., that language consists of predictable patterns that make what we say, read, hear, and write intelligible" (p. 2). The second reason is, then, grammar is an essential component of

language, a system that learners can use for their communicative needs, a tool allowing them to say more.

3.2 Approaches to Grammar Instruction

The teaching of second and foreign language grammar in higher education is a topic of widespread concern to both teachers and students alike. As a result, two methods have been suggested for teaching grammar within an EFL/ESL context: explicit and implicit grammar instruction.

3.2.1 Explicit Grammar Instruction

3.2.1.1 Definition

In the field of education, explicit instruction refers to teacher-centered instruction that is focused on clear behavioral and cognitive goals and outcomes. These, in turn, are made 'explicit' or transparent to learners. It is teaching where the instruction clearly outlines what the learning goals are for the student; and offers clear, unambiguous explanations of the skills and information structures they are presenting. It is an approach to teaching grammar which overtly presents grammatical rules (Harmer, 1987). According to Archer and Hughes (2011), explicit instruction is "one of the best tools available to educators" that is "a structured, systematic, and effective methodology" for promoting achievement for all students, meeting their needs, and engaging them in apparent clearly articulated teaching. It is dubbed 'explicit' because it is "an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures" (p. 1).

Explicit instruction (EI) involves drawing learners' attention to the rules of the target language, it is usually done through rule explanation or request to focus on grammatical features (DeKeyser, 1998; Ellis, 2006), directly teaching students the content or the skill to be learned, and using clear language. In other words; it entails designing instruction and follow-

up activities that provide information about the lesson, demonstrate the lesson and offer practice, application and transfer of the lesson. Ellis (1997) argues that "Explicit instruction, as found, for example, in the GTM, is directed mainly at the development of declarative knowledge"(p. 84).

3.2.1.2 The Elements of Explicit Instruction

In their research book entitled "*Explicit Instruction Effective and Efficient Teaching*", Archer and Hughes (2011, pp. 2-3) have identified 16 elements of EI which focus on four key components of lesson planning: lesson content, lesson design, lesson delivery, and lesson practice.

1. Lesson content:

1. Focus instruction on critical content.
2. Sequence skills logically.
3. Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units.

2/ Lesson design:

4. Design organized and focused lessons
5. Begin lessons with a clear statement of the lesson's goals and your expectations.
6. Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction.
7. Provide step-by step demonstrations.
8. Use clear and concise language.
9. Provide an adequate range and examples and non-examples.
10. Provide guided and supported practice.

3/ Lesson delivery:

11. Require frequent responses.
12. Monitor student performance closely.

13. Provide immediate affirmatives and corrective feedback.
14. Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace.
15. Help students organize knowledge.

4/ Lesson practice:

16. Provide distributed and cumulative practice.

3.2.1.3 Types of Explicit Grammar Instruction

Within grammar education, there are two different ways of instructing grammar explicitly. Mostly, grammar can be instructed deductively and inductively. The importance of deductive and inductive methods is to give students a good chance to practise thinking skills.

3.2.1.3.1 Deductive Method/Rule Driven Learning

Deductive suggests a top down approach, which is the standard teaching approach that requires teacher's explanation of the rules to the students. Indeed, a deductive grammar method implies that the grammatical rule is introduced initially and after that, examples of its applications are given out, as Thornburry (1999, p. 29) states, "deductive approach to grammar teaching, which is often called rule-driven learning, starts with presentation of rules and is followed with examples". Larsen-Freeman (2000) supports this definition when she claims that in a deductive method, learners are taught rules and they apply these rules when they use the language. This is the approach used in the GTM where teaching begins with presentation of grammar rules and proceeds to practice of the rules involving the translation into and out of the students' first language.

Dealing with the teaching of grammar, the deductive approach maintains that a teacher teaches grammar by presenting grammatical rules, and then examples of sentences are

presented. Once learners understand the rules, they are told to apply them to various examples of given sentences. Giving the grammatical rules means no more than directing learners' attention to the problem that is discussed. Eisenstein (1987; cited in Widodo, 2006) suggests that with the deductive approach, learners are in control during practice and have less fear of drawing an incorrect conclusion related to how the target language is functioning. The deductive approach commences with the presentation of a rule taught and then is followed by examples in which the rule is applied. In this regard, learners are expected to be engaged with it through the study and manipulation of examples.

Michael Swan (1994; cited in Thornbury, 1999, p. 32) outlines some guidelines of what makes a rule good. Here are some of them:

1. The rules should be true,
2. The rules should show clearly what limits are on the use of a given form,
3. The rules need to be clear,
4. The rules ought to be simple,
5. The rules need to make use of concepts already familiar to the learners, and
6. The rules ought to be relevant.

Most importantly, when the rules are presented in the deductive approach; the presentation should be illustrated with examples, be short, involve students' comprehension and allow learners to have a chance to personalize the rule. The explicit rule presentation can enhance the learners' confidence in doing certain tasks.

To be successful in applying the approach, the teacher needs to provide numerous exercises. Nunan (1991) reveals that in dealing with any grammatical point in English, two basic approaches are possible. One of them is a deductive approach in which teachers give

explicit attention to the differences in form. He adds that it will depend on the age of the students, and the complexity of the grammar point and which approach the teachers use.

The deductive approach is often used with adult learners. Through the deductive approach, a teacher tries to teach the rule explicitly to the learners so that they are ready to cope with exercises given. Then, Nunan (*ibid*) clarifies that with adults, particularly academically oriented adults; the students may expect and appreciate an explanation of the grammar rule.

Krashen (2002; cited in Widodo, 2006, p. 130) explains that the deductive approach is related to the conscious learning process. The deductive approach tries to place a great emphasis on error correction and the presentation of explicit rules. Such an approach is applied for the reason that it is an efficient and elegant way to organize and present the rule that is already understood. Nonetheless, Thornbury (*op cit* p. 30) points out that the deductive approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. They are as follows:

a. Advantages

1. The deductive approach goes straight to the point and can, therefore, be time-saving.
2. A number of rule aspects (for example, form) can be more simply and clearly explained than elicited from examples.
3. A number of direct practice/application examples are immediately given.
4. The deductive approach respects the intelligence and maturity of many adult learners in particular and acknowledges the role of cognitive processes in language acquisition.
5. It confirms many learners' expectations about classroom learning, particularly for those who have an analytical style.

b. Disadvantages

1. Beginning the lesson with a grammar presentation may be demotivating for some learners, especially younger ones.
2. Young learners may not be able to understand the given concepts or grammar terminology.
3. Grammar explanation encourages a teacher-fronted transmission-style classroom, so it will hinder learner involvement and interaction immediately.
4. The explanation is seldom as memorable as other forms of presentation (for example, demonstration).
5. The deductive approach encourages the belief that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rule.

3.2.1.3.2 Inductive method/ Rule-discovery method

Meanwhile, inductive suggests bottom-up approach in which the instruction starts by giving students examples and they have to discover the grammar rules by themselves (i.e., the teacher does not reveal the grammar rule in which s/he starts by giving examples first, but leaves it to the students to find out and formulate the rules together with the help of the teacher). According to Thornbury (1999, p. 29), “this approach can be called a discovery learning approach since it starts with some examples from which a rule is inferred”. In short, Thornbury (*ibid*) has revealed that when we use induction, we observe a number of specific instances and from them infer a general principle or concept. He (*ibid*) states that “Direct Method is based on learning by induction” (p. 49). In the case of pedagogical grammar, most experts argue that the inductive approach can also be called rule-discovery learning. It suggests that a teacher teaches grammar starting with presenting some examples of sentences. In this sense, learners understand grammatical rules from the examples. The presentation of grammatical rules can be spoken or written.

Indeed, Thornbury (*ibid* p. 54) states that the inductive approach has advantages and disadvantages, which are as follows:

a. Advantages

1. Learners are trained to be familiar with the rule discovery; this could enhance learning autonomy and self-reliance.
2. Learners' greater degree of cognitive depth is exploited.
3. The learners are more active in the learning process, rather than being simply passive recipients. In this activity, they will be motivated.
4. The approach involves learners' pattern-recognition and problem-solving abilities in which particular learners are interested in this challenge.
5. If the problem-solving activity is done collaboratively, learners get an opportunity for extra language practice.

b. Disadvantages

1. The approach is time consuming and energy-consuming as it teaches learners to have the appropriate concept of the rule.
2. The time and energy spent in working out the rules may mislead students into believing that rules are the objectives of language learning rather than as a means.
3. The concepts given implicitly may lead the learners to have the wrong concepts of the rule taught.
4. The approach can place emphasis on teachers in planning a lesson.
5. It can place heavy demands on teachers in planning materials taught carefully and systematically.
6. The approach may frustrate the learners, who by dint of their personal learning style or their past learning experience (or both), would prefer simply to be told the rule.

Richards et al. (1985; as cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 156) indicate that “with inductive learning, learners are not taught grammatical or other types of rules directly but are left to discover or induce rules from their experience of using language”.

3.2.1.4. Methodologies for Explicit Grammar Instruction

An important issue concerning the benefits of explicit grammar instruction is the differing methodologies that are available to instructors.

3.2.1.4.1 Focus-on-forms: accuracy (1950s)

Focus-on-forms is associated with traditional grammar-based classes which is consistent with PPP (presentation, practice and production) model of language instruction. It highlighted the importance of explicit grammar teaching during grammar translation in 1950s, cognitive code approach and audio-lingual method in 1960s. Learners were assumed to accumulate grammar in teacher-oriented classes through a deductive technique (rule based) without making grammatical mistakes (Rutherford, 1987). A side from taking a building block view of language, focus-on-forms sacrificed fluency at the expense of accuracy. The emphasis was on grammar competence rather than grammar performance. That is, knowing about grammar was more important than knowing grammar. Focus-on-forms has been criticized for being teacher-centered, artificial, boring and for not allowing meaningful communication, which is essential to language acquisition (Long, 2000). Besides, no attention was paid to the learners' affection.

In addition, this approach makes the learners and the instructors focus on different formations in language, as Harmer (2007) puts it: “Many language syllabuses and course books are structured around a series of language forms. Teachers and students focus on them one by one because they are on the syllabus. This is called ‘focus on forms’ because one of the chief organizing principles behind a course is the learning of these forms.” In other words,

in “focus on forms” approach, the instructors firstly teach the structure and after that they provide the learners with the controlled practice and lastly the lesson ends up with free practice. Furthermore, Ellis (1997) implies that most traditional approaches to grammar teaching are based on providing the learners with opportunities to use the target structure first in controlled practice and then in free practice.

In grammar teaching, the focus on forms approach begins with teaching activities focused on structure and practice. Developmental skill activities follow the instruction of the target framework. However, in the focus on forms approach, the important essence for the learners is to know the grammatical rule for a specific formation. That is why most researchers are opposing the idea of focus on forms instruction.

3.2.1.4.2 Focus-on-meaning: fluency (1980s)

According to Ellis (1997), "the goal of meaning-focused instruction is communicative effectiveness" (p. 41). It was introduced by Krashen and Terrell's (1983) Natural Approach to second language (L2) acquisition, completely rejected any direct instruction on grammar, explicit error correction, or even consciousness-raising, as L2 is claimed to be naturally acquired through adequate exposure to language or comprehensible input (Krashen; 1982 1985). According to this view (non-interface position), explicit knowledge about language and error correction is unnecessary and even harmful as it may interfere with the natural acquisition process. Thus, this position claimed that there was no interaction between explicit and implicit knowledge. Similar to Krashen's view, the deep version of CLT and the early version of the Task Based Language Teaching which didn't last long, were criticized for taking anti-grammar position. Focus on meaning was also criticized in that mere exposure to language input; because along with zero grammar instruction, there was a large number of

grammatical errors in production which finally led to fossilization (Lightbown & Spada, 1994; Skehan, 1996; Swain & Lapkin, 1995). Later, two influential theoretical concepts focus-on-form and consciousness-raising, contributed to revitalization of grammar (Thornbury, 1999).

3.2.1.4.3 Focus-on-form: fluency and accuracy (1990s)

Long (2000) initiated focus-on-form as a reconciliation of form and meaning. As an alternative to the "focus on forms" approach, the focus on form approach in grammar teaching aims to attract the attention of the learners firstly. In this approach learners are made aware of the grammatical form. Cook (2001; cited in Ellis, 2006) argues that "the focus on form approach suggests drawing learners' attention to linguistic forms as they arise in activities whose primary focus is on meaning". Nassaji and Fotos (2004) accordingly highlight that "focus on form involves the teacher's attempts to draw the student's attention to grammatical forms in the context of communication". To say it in another way, Learners are involved in communication but occasional shift of stress is given to formal features of language. Doughty (2001) also defined focus-on-form as paying attention to the form without going back to traditional grammar based teaching. According to Ellis et al. (cited in Doughty & Williams, 1998, pp. 11-14) focus on form has the following characteristics:

- a) "It occurs in meaning-centered discourse,
- b) It is observable,
- c) It is incidental,
- d) It is transitory.
- e) It is extensive."

Although the early Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the strong version of CLT were criticized due to exclusion of focus-on-form activities, weak versions of both

TBLT and CLT accept that some focus-on-form activities are necessary for developing communicative competence. Simply speaking, they value both fluency and accuracy. Focus-on-form activities like underlining, coloring, highlighting and italicizing within a written text make certain target structures more salient and help students to notice them. This is what Sharwood Smith (1993) called input enhancement. A second means of calling attention to form is through input flooding. For example, talking about historical events would give learners abundant opportunities to notice the past tense. Focus-on-form can also be done through an implicit negative corrective feedback known as recast (Long & Robinson, 1998). The benefits of focus-on-form over other approaches like focus-on-forms and focus-on-meaning have been widely accepted (Spada & Lightbown, 1999), but again, there was no attention to the generation of positive emotions, feelings, motivation of the learners which are crucial in grammar classes.

3.2.1.5 Importance of explicit grammar instruction

Explicit grammar instruction, which draws learners' attention to linguistic form and structure, is characterized by two conflicting approaches: "Interventionist and non-interventionist" (Terrell, 1991, p. 58).

Supporters of the interventionist approach state that "given the low number of input/interaction hours in a typical foreign language college (70-150 hours) or high school (100-300 hours) instruction, explicit grammar instruction can serve to speed up parts of the acquisition process" (Terrell, 1991, p. 58).

Non-interventionist approach ,on the other hand, supports the idea that explicit grammar instruction need to be given if enough comprehensible input is provided in a low anxiety environment (Krashen, 1982).

The language acquisition process can be affected by explicit grammar instruction in three ways (Terrell, 1991, p. 58):

1. "As an 'advanced organizer' to aid in comprehending and segmenting the input;
2. As a meaning-form focuser that aids the learner in establishing a meaning-form relationship for morphologically complex forms; and
3. As a means for monitoring, which in turn, will be available for acquisition in the output".

Based on the results of an empirical study focusing on the ways in which explicit grammar teaching can facilitate the L2 acquisition, Scheffler and Cinciate (2011) recommended that EFL/ESL teachers "should invest some classroom time in explicit grammar instruction", as "at least some grammatical phenomena can be successfully taught as simple rules" (*ibid* p. 22). They refer to two kinds of benefits. First, simple descriptions of rules may lead to learners noticing the input structures exemplified by the rules, which may in turn, lead to increased comprehension. Such conscious noticing of L2 features is necessary for implicit language development (Schmidt, 1990; Ellis, 2002; Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Second, simple grammar rules help learners understand their own output and contribute to the learning process, in general, by increasing the learners' sense of confidence, security and achievement.

Moreover, Larsen-Freeman (2000) believes that grammar should be conceived of as a skill to be developed rather than a transmission of knowledge. She argues that "it is better to

think of teaching 'grammaring' than grammar"(p. 255). The hope is to have students use grammatical structures "accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately".

Additionally, defending the importance of explicit grammar instruction, Norris and Ortega (2000) published an article that aimed to determine how effective explicit instruction in L2 teaching across 49 studies. According to the results of these studies, explicit instruction results in a more successful learning of target structures when compared to implicit instruction.

3.2.2 Implicit Grammar Instruction

Implicit instruction, also known as 'inductive teaching', 'skill oriented approach', or 'covert instruction', it is defined as the exposure to grammatical structures through meaningful instruction without explicit explanation of grammatical rules (Spada & Tomita, 2010; cited in Ellis, 2002). That is, students will acquire grammatical structures unconsciously. Accordingly, DeKeyser (1998) posits that implicit grammatical instruction does not involve any explanation of rule presentation or a request to focus on form in the input. It occurs "without intention to learn and without awareness of what has been learned". It is clear that implicit instruction is indirect intervention, i.e., inductive; whereas, explicit instruction is both direct and indirect intervention, i.e., deductive and inductive.

Therefore, it is an instruction whose aim is raising the learners' consciousness of specific grammatical structures (Rutheford & Smith; 1988). Consciousness raising, in this context, is used to refer to the deliberate attempt to draw the learners' attention specifically to the formal properties of the target language. Harmer (1987) views this approach as a teaching of grammar where grammatical facts are hidden from students. Implicit grammar instruction and the communicative approach are often used interchangeably. Yip (1994), however,

defines implicit approach and shows its little difference from communicative approach as follows: implicit grammar instruction focuses on aspects of grammar without necessarily using explicit or technical terms. Instead of imparting rules and principles directly as the deductive approach, it helps learners to discover them for themselves by focusing on aspects of the target structure. On the other hand, it is different from the pure communicative approach by telling learners which structures are ungrammatical and providing the grammatical counter parts. Although, as Yip (*ibid*) said, implicit approaches are different from the pure communicative approach by telling learners which structures are ungrammatical and providing the grammatical counterparts, their main aim is to enable learners to use grammar for communication. To sum up, the implicit approach is an approach to teaching grammar whose goal is raising learners' consciousness to specific grammatical structures or like Chomsky's view which is learning grammar without having to study it. In both cases, explicit explanation of grammatical facts is avoided.

In a language class where grammar is instructed implicitly, it is believed that learners internalize an implicit knowledge of the system of rules that govern the foreign language through communication (Ellis, 1995). This could be achieved through inductive/rule-discovery learning that is similar to the way one acquires his/her first language (Thornbury, 1999; Hinkel, 2005); that is, through an extensive exposure to a great deal of input and interaction. Some teachers tend not to teach grammar at all, expecting learners to acquire the foreign language rules without overt grammar instruction. They assume that students will absorb the rules while hearing, reading, and using the language in communication activities.

Inside the classroom, teachers induce the learners to realize grammar rules without resorting to previous explanation of the form intended to be learnt. Ur (1996) supports this

view, stating that implicit teaching is similar to inductive teaching which means that students infer the rules from the examples presented to them. They are never taught the actual rules. Meaning that, what takes place in a language class is that the teacher presents the rule through different examples, without mentioning it directly. Learners, then, have to study these examples carefully in order to derive the meaning of the grammatical rule and understand it; thus, they develop an automatization and internalization of the language system without being able to describe it.

Thornbury (1999) reports that teachers use a wide range of means (actions, objects, situations) to convey the meaning of the rule and to encourage learners to find out the rule by themselves; therefore, it will be fixed in their mind. This type of teaching is used to teach unclear grammatical structures; for instance, when there is a given rule with unlimited cases of exceptions, it needs to be presented through examples rather than direct statement of the formula (e.g., articles).

It is also believed that implicit grammar instruction enables learners to be active participants, attentive and motivated as long as they take part in their own learning process (Thornbury *ibid*). It helps them to become autonomous and independent as well as provides them with numerous opportunities to practise the target language. Ellis (1997 *op cit*) indeed argues that implicit instruction aims to provide learners with conditions under which they can infer the rules without awareness. The result will be internalizing the pattern without having their attention focused on it.

Conclusion

Grammar has been neglected for a considerable period of time under some communicative methods, but in recent years, there has been a revival of grammar teaching due to its ample benefits. Although many teachers resist this idea because of the complexity and irregularities in the language system; no one can deny the fact that knowledge of the rules governing the foreign language is needed to be learnt and that accuracy and fluency should not be taught separately. For that reason, an awareness of the language system has to be developed if the aim is to develop linguistic competence.

Chapter One: Section Two

Students' Attitudes towards Learning the Present Tenses

Chapter One: SECTION TWO (A)

Learning the Present Tenses

Introduction

Grammar is the skeleton of language; it is the set of rules upon which it is built. Learning tense and aspect is a part of learning grammar. This process is influenced by the teaching method and the role played by the teacher. Tense and aspect are obligatory categories in the sense that whenever we encode an event through a piece of language, we need to select one tense or another, one aspectual category or another. Thus, this section will see in detail how tense and aspect are defined, then present their importance in English, and it will outline the general patterns (forms) of the present tenses.

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 Definition of Tense

In grammar, the students are provided with many rules of a language. One of them is tense. Generally speaking, tense is a term that refers to the way the forms of verbs changed in order to clarify at which time a situation occurs or an event takes place. Since tense is very important in any language, many researchers have defined it differently. For instance, Comrie (1985) defines tense as "the grammaticalisation of location in time" (p. 1). That is, tense is a changing form to convey information about the time location of the topic situations (Comrie, 1985). Equally, Hornby (1995) states that tense is verb form used to indicate the time of the action or state. Strang (1974, p. 134, cited in Hornby, 1995) who

shares this view, argues that "Tense is anyone of the verb forms in the conjugation of the verb which serve to indicate the different times at which the action is viewed as happening or existing".

In this respect, Doughty and Williams (1998) report that tense is the form of a verb that shows us a relationship between the time the action in a verb occurs and the time the verb is uttered; i.e., it is a temporal linguistic quality expressing the time at, during, or over which a state or action denoted by a verb occurs. In addition, Richards and Schmidt (2010) provide a general definition for the term tense, saying that it is a linguistic change in form that occurs at the level of the verb and which expresses time relations. Obviously, it is a grammatical form referring to a set of grammatical markings which are used to relate the time of the events described in a sentence to the moment when the words are uttered. They claim that tense is "the relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action or the state it describes" (p. 590).

Tense is deictic; that is it points towards time now or time then. In this sense, as Salaberry and Shiray (2002, p. 2) say, " Tense is a deictic category that places a situation in time with respect to some other time, usually the moment of speech". Accordingly, Lavery (2001, p. 1) asserts, "[t]ense is a deictic category which places events in time, dealing with the chronological order of events." That is, it is a tool that points out to time now or time then; in short, it refers to the 'here' and 'now' of the speaker.

Tenses are characteristics of verbs shown by different forms of action. In general, "tenses may indicate whether an action activity or state is, was or will be complete or whether it is, was, will be in progress over a period of time" (Frazed, 1970, p. 718). Based

on these definitions, it can be summarized that tenses are varieties found in order to show time in which the action takes place in present, past and future.

2.1.2 Definition of Aspect

Richards and Schmidt (2010) define the notion of aspect as "a term used to denote the activity, event, or state described by a verb; for example, whether the activity is ongoing or complete" (p. 34). Besides, Lavery (2001) adds and defines it as being the grammatical category which differentiates between "complete/incomplete events; single repeated events, between utterances that refer to either the beginning, the middle or the end of a situation" (p. 1). That is, it is a grammatical category which expresses how a state or an action relates to time-whether it is seen as a complete event, an ongoing or repeated situation. For all that, it expresses a feature of the action related to time such as completion and duration.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), aspect has two types: lexical and grammatical aspect. Taking one by one, lexical aspect is "the internal semantics of verbs, which can be grouped into a number of categories: states (e.g.: have, be, want), activities, accomplishments, and achievements" (p. 34). To put it another way, it represents the lexical semantic which means that a language is used to express and describe the manner in which temporality functions through morphological means for the representation of various meanings. On the other hand, the grammatical aspect is "the resources provided by a language", which exist in order to "encode different perspectives taken by a speaker towards activities, events and states" (p. 35).

2.2 The Importance of Tense and Aspect

It is very difficult to speak about tense without referring to aspect or the opposite. Since aspect represents variations in tense, in the same way, tense represents variations in

aspect. They are very necessary in teaching and learning grammar. Certainly, the importance of tense and aspect depends on the role these categories play in establishing finite verbal forms due to the fact that verbs are expressive grammatical units stating actions or situations. They are found in infinitive forms so that, they need to be put into finite forms, in order to be functional in the language. As a result, tense helps to locate the action on the temporal line and aspect indicates the personal psychological position of the speaker with regard to the meaning conveyed by the finite form of the verb.

In learning English as a foreign language, it is very important to know the rules of tenses as part of grammar. By knowing the rules of tenses, the students are believed to be able to construct good sentences in English communication. In other words, it is believed that mastering the tenses, on the basis of aspect in English grammatical structures will enable students to communicate correctly.

2.3 Tense/Aspect in English

Tense and aspect are the most important grammatical categories for expressing time and temporal relations in English. Students must learn and master them since they have a great influence in forming meaningful sentences in order to communicate effectively. These two terms are mostly known as English tenses in EFL classes.

The English tenses being a part of the English grammar, are usually explained as being present, past, future, etc. They have been taught in the same way as any other grammatical point under the different teaching methods. They are regarded as obligatory features of the language, in the sense that; whenever we express an event orally or in writing, we need to choose a specific tense and a specific aspect. In order to express time and to fulfill a

successful communicative purpose, tense and aspect combinations result in a number of different verb forms with different meanings. Yet, they are regarded as appropriate to a particular situation. These forms can be sorted out into four categories: the simple forms, the progressive forms, the perfective forms, and the perfect progressive forms with reference to the present, the past and the future (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

2.3.1 Simple Forms

2.3.1.1 Present Simple Tense

Present simple is one of the tenses that is important to be mastered. It is used to talk about things in general. We are not only thinking about now, but it is used to say something true. It is indeed known as "Absolute Tense" because it is a denomination used for tenses which take the present moment as its deictic centre. Therefore, "situations which include the present moment" (Comrie 1985, pp. 36-41) would be a more appropriate definition for the present tense.

The present simple in regular verbs is identical with the stem of the verb, except for the third-person singular subject where this tense is indicated by the –s end form of the verb. As Thomson and Martinet (2009) argue, "[i]t has the same form as the infinitive but adds an 's' for the third person singular" (p. 159).

Based on Murphy (2007, p. 4), Swan (2009, pp. 448-452), Walter (2001, p. 26) and Parrot (2000, p. 156), Nelson (2001, p. 18), and Thomson and Martinet (2009), the uses/functions of the present simple can be summarized in the following points:

- Truths (habitual, eternal, general, mathematical and scientific, internal).
E.g.: The sun rises in the East.
- Demonstrations, directions, or instructions.

- Demonstrations: E.g.: I place the fruits in the blender.

- Directions: E.g.: You turn left.

- Instructions: E.g.: You beat the eggs.

- Repeatedly: E.g.: Peter goes to school every day.
- All the time and permanently situations: E.g.: Sarah lives in Scotland.
- In some frequency: E.g.: I often go out with my friends.
- In quick commentaries: E.g.: Becker serves Lendl.
- With perception verbs: E.g.: Can you see me.
- For timetables, fixed times: E.g.: The train lives at 6:12.
-

In this respect, Leech (1996, cited in Swan, 2009) summarizes the simple present tense in three meanings which are "a present tense", "a present habit", and "a present event" (pp. 385-386).

Besides the three important meanings above, the present simple tense also has two other special meanings. They are special because, in this case, the present simple tense does not describe the present time, but the future or the past time as Quirk (1972, p. 16, cited in Comrie, 1985) states:

1. Referring to future time

Simple present tense refers to the future in the following cases:

a. When there is a temporal adverbial in the clause.

For example: *The plane leaves for Chicago at eight o'clock.*

b. In conditional and temporal clauses introduced by *if*.

For example: *He'll do it if you pay him.*

2. Referring to past time

Simple present with past time reference is used with, for example, the communication verb *tell, hear, learn*, etc. In the present of the effect of a past communication: *John tells me that you have been abroad.*

2.3.2 Progressive Forms

- **Present Progressive**

Thomson and Martinet (2009) hold that the present continuous or progressive "is formed with the present tense of the auxiliary verb *be* + the present participle *-ing*" (p. 153). Generally, it is an important part of the English tense/aspect system. It is used to denote an action, activity, or event that takes place at the same time the utterance is made. Similarly, Eastwood (1992) argues that the present continuous is used "to talk about temporary actions and situations that are going on now or 'around now': before, during and after the moment of speaking" (p. 451).

In an attempt to clarify the different uses/functions of the present tense, the following points have been summed up from Aitken (1992), Swan (2009), Thomson and Martinet (2009, pp. 154-155), and Eastwood (1992) classification:

a. Temporary action: the action started before speech time, continues during speech time and is not yet complete (Happening now, happening about this time).

E.g.: *Hurry up! We're all waiting for you!*

E.g.: *I am writing a postcard right now.*

b. An action began before another action in the past which interrupted the progressive action:

E. g.: *I was watching TV while the door-bell rang.*

c. To talk about changes, development, and trends.

E.g.: *The growing number of visitors is damaging the foot paths.*

d. An action happens in the near future, especially for planned future events.

E.g.: I am seeing my dentist on Wednesday.

Lastly, there are some specific verbs that cannot be put in the present progressive as "verbs of senses or (involuntary actions): feel, hear, see..." (Thomson & Martinet, p. 155).

2.3.3 Perfective forms

- **Present Perfect**

This tense is formed by putting the auxiliary 'have' in the present tense (has/have) with the past participle of the verb (Thomson & Martinet, 2009; Herring, 2016).

Herring (2016) defines the present perfect tense as a tense which is " used to give general information about something that happened in the past (anytime "before now"), but which did not occur at a definitive point in time" (p. 1017). Moreover, Swan (2009) claims that the present perfect is usually used to speak about "finished events connected with the present" (p. 438). She adds "If we say that something has happened, we are thinking about the past and the present at the same time" (p. 438).

Further, Walker and Elsworth (2000, pp. 42-43), Aitken (1992, p. 23), and Swan (2009, p. 438) summarize the use of the present perfect as:

A. to describe an action that happened at an indefinite time before the present. For example when:

- Things that people have done and experiences.

E.g.: He's taught English in five different countries,

- There is specific evidence in the present of the event that took place in the past.

E.g.: I see they've knocked down the cinema in the centre of town.

B. an uncompleted action when the time marker refers to the past, yet the results remains valid in the present.

E.g.: I have taught English since 2006.

C. a repeated or habitual action or truth.

E.g.: Women have voted since 1921.

D. with some time markers (already, just, yet, still, ever, and never).

E.g.1: I have already read the book.

E.g.2: these letters have just arrived.

E. an action which started in a specific period that is not finished. It refers to a period of time that is still continuing in the present.

E.g.1: I have met my sister this evening.

E.g. 2: They've been on holiday twice this year.

F. to announce news of recent events.

E.g.: Andy has won a big prize.

G. to express the idea of completion or achievement

E.g.: At least! I've finished!

2.3.4 Perfect Progressive Forms

- **Present Perfect Progressive**

Present perfect progressive is also known as 'present perfect continuous'. As its name suggests, it is "a continuous, ongoing action completed before a certain time" (Swan, 2009, p.14). In other words, it is basically used to express an action that began in the past, continues in the present, and may carry on into the future. As far as the form of this tense is concerned, the rule dictates that we should combine 'has/have been' with the present participle of the verb, i.e., the verb form ending in "-ing".

Aitken (1992, p. 29) reports that it " focuses on continuous or repeated activity, engaged in before the present, but relevant to it, and on the continuous duration of that activity." Thus, according to some researchers as Eastwood (2006, p. 38), Swan (2009, p. 445), and Aitken (*op cit* p. 29), and Walker and Elsworth (2000), the action expressed via this type of tense is temporary and used to draw attention mainly to:

A. the repeated nature of an action.

E.g.: I have been learning English for ten years.

B. the continuous nature of an action.

E.g.: I have been living here since 1983.

E.g.: I have been working very hard recently.

2.4 Learning / Teaching the present tenses Through Explicit Grammar Instruction

The grammar instruction has been widely studied in the field of SLA and EFL. A considerable amount has been written on how grammatical rules should be presented, particularly, how to learn tenses. One issue concentrates on whether rules should be learned explicitly or implicitly.

In a manner of speaking, explicit learning of the present tenses is based on raising awareness of rules and tense forms. Firstly, a teacher may use a deductive approach to instruction when teaching the present tenses, explains a new rule and its form and then the students may practise by applying this rule. Secondly, a teacher may use an inductive approach to instruction, introduces new grammatical concepts about a given present tense through examples. Put it differently, the teacher gives his students examples containing tense aspects. Next, he will ask them to figure out a given tense.

In fact, both approaches to instruction give the priority to forming rules explicitly. In the first type, the teacher introduces and explains concepts to students, then expects students to complete tasks to practise the concepts; it is a teacher-centered approach. Conversely, inductive instruction is a much more student-centered approach and makes use of a strategy known as 'noticing'.

Conclusion

It is believed that learning verb tenses is one of the most important tasks in any language learning. Therefore, a good presentation of this feature is required; a clear explanation of both form and use of each tense is needed, and enough practice is essential. Teachers need to afford opportunities for their students to deal with tenses, forms, and rules; and notice the various uses of each, discover new information and try to master each tense.

Chapter One: Section Two (B)

Students' Attitudes towards Learning the Present Tenses

Introduction

This part gives a historical description of attitude studies. It aims to present several strands of literature relevant to learner attitudes towards learning. It tackles the definition of attitudes, theories; dimensions, formation and three components, as well as the relationship among these components will be included. This is followed by the functions and the importance of attitudes in education, and then examines the significance of investigating learner attitudes towards learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction.

3.1 The Concept and the Nature of Attitudes

The study of attitudes has been an important area of interest for psychologists and educators. Because of their possible impact on learning, they have long been considered an essential component of positive educational outcomes.

In order to understand attitudes towards learning, it is important to understand what is meant by an attitude although it is a concept that is not easily definable. Indeed, researchers have commended on how the term is rather ambiguous both in the psychological and the everyday sense of the word. This problem, along with the lack of standardized means of measuring these attitudes, makes it difficult to compare findings in research studies.

Generally, the common definition of attitudes is that it concentrates on the notion that an attitude is an individual's mental state which is based on his/her beliefs or value system,

emotions, and the tendency to act in a certain way. Mostly, they involve the communication of an evaluative judgment about a stimulating object, where the evaluation is the essential aspect of the attitude concept. For example, in education, attitudes may be directed towards subjects and themes being studied. Thus, Thurstone (1928, pp. 222-241) defines attitudes early as how favorable or unfavorable an individual or a group of people could be towards a given issue. Attitudes were not always separated clearly from behavior and Likert (1932) defined attitudes in terms of a certain range within which responses move.

Adding to this, Allport (1935, p. 810) combined the ideas of both Thurstone and Likert saying that an attitude is a “mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all objects and situations with which it is related”. This definition was widely used and is still useful today. It emphasises the latent construct nature of attitudes while showing how they can direct behaviour. Gardner (1975), thus, explains how an attitude always consists of a specific attitude object which stimulates the subjective response; as attitude object or stimulus can be anything that can be distinguished and considered by anyone.

However, Koballa and Glynn (2007) define attitudes as a general expression of either positive or negative feelings towards something and this distinguishes it from other terms like value, belief or opinion. Then, they discuss how an attitude has been defined in a variety of ways with the unfortunate use of being interchanged with words like interest, value, motivation and opinion.

3.2 Attitude Theories

The concept of attitude is essential to social psychology (Allport; 1935, in Rokeach, 1986). Rokeach (1986) also stated that "the notion of attitude is indispensable to the psychology of personality" (p. 109). The study of attitudes has been approached with varying

emphases and methods during most of this century leading to the foundation of various theories. All of these theories try to answer the same question of where attitudes come from.

3.2.1 Functional Theory

Daniel Katz (1960) proposed a functionalist theory of attitudes. He takes the view that attitudes are determined by the functions they serve for us. People hold given attitudes because these attitudes help them achieve their basic goals. Katz's functionalist theory also offers an explanation as to why attitudes change. According to Katz (*ibid*), an attitude changes when it no longer serves its function and the individual feels blocked or frustrated. That is, according to him, attitude change is achieved not so much by changing a person's information or perception about an object, but rather by changing the person's underlying motivational and personality needs.

3.2.2 Learning Theory

Learning theory is proposed by Ivan Pavlov (1890, cited in Orey, 2010). It believes that our attitudes are formed through conditioning. Moreover, it is focused on reinforced behavior as the primary factor responsible for attitude development. Mainly, it is an approach which assumes that person's attitudes are based on principles of reinforcement association, imitation and punishment.

3.2.3 Cognitive dissonance theory/Leon Festinger's Theory

Leon Festinger's Theory (1950, as cited in Orey, 2010) stresses attitude change and that behaviors can determine attitudes. That is, an inconsistency between two cognitive elements produces pressure to make these elements consonant. Hence, Festinger's theory is a perceived discrepancy between an attitude and a behaviour that results in a state of a

psychological tension similar to anxiety which motivates to reduce this tension by changing the behaviour, or the attitude, or the perception of the inconsistent information.

3.2.4 Cognitive Consistency Theories

Research has generally concluded that people seek consistency among their attitudes and between their attitudes and their behaviour. Consistency theories assume that individuals need to have consistency between and among their attitudes and behaviors and will modify one or both to achieve this balance (Zimbardo & Leippe, 1991 ; as cited in Orey, 2010, p. 94). This means that people seek to reconcile divergent attitudes and align their attitudes and behaviour so that they appear rational and consistent. When there is an inconsistency, forces are initiated to return the individual to an equilibrium state where attitudes and behaviour are again consistent. This can be done by either altering the attitude or the behaviour.

3.2.5 Social Judgment Theory

The social judgment theory was originally formulated by Sherif and Hovland (1961, cited in Orey, 2010). Orey (2010) claims that this theory "emphasizes the role of prior attitudes in shaping attitude formation and change." (p. 95). That is, it attempts to explain how existing attitudes produce distortions of attitude related to objects and how these judgments mediate attitude change. The person's initial attitude on an issue provides a point of reference from which he evaluates other opinions

3.3 Dimensions of Attitudes

3.3.1 Beliefs

Beliefs are defined as the acceptance of some predispositions. They are mental concepts which are essential components of attitudes. Pajares, (1992) draw a conclusion that beliefs play a crucial role in constructing knowledge and information, and influence the way a

person behaves. In this respect; Burns (1992, cited in Orey, 2010) argues that beliefs motivate and shape instructional practices, determine a frame for students and teachers' role in the classroom, and help them to apply their knowledge in line with the teaching approach they are applying. Accordingly, Dörnyei (2005) believes that "there is no doubt that learner beliefs greatly affect behavior" (p. 214). Besides that, it is important to know that attitudes and beliefs are different. Perhaps the main difference is that attitudes "have a stronger factual support" whereas beliefs "are more deeply embedded in our minds and can be rooted back in our past or in the influence of the modeling example of some significant person around us" (p. 214).

3.3.2 Feelings

The international dictionary of education (1977, p. 14) defines feelings as "those aspects that emerge from experience of teachers that will develop emotionally in them". It is very important to establish rapport between the student and the method he/she is applying since the effective component has to do with emotions. We can say that students' and teachers' feelings play a major role in language teaching approaches.

3.3.3 Behaviors

The behavioral dimension is the action tendencies or responses that shape behavior. In this sense, the behavior will be accepted according to the attitudinal affect and belief (Eiser, 1984, p. 66). That is to say, the behaviour of humans is influenced strongly by attitudes which are held. When students establish beliefs and feelings towards an approach, they determine their behavior. The previous dimensions of attitudes interact to form an attitude which will produce observable behaviors.

3.4 Formation of Attitudes

It has been largely agreed that an attitude is held intrinsically within the individual, thus, it is inaccessible to direct observation. That is, observational learning plays a fairly big role in the formation of attitudes, from watching and imitating other persons or what we call "modeling" other people attitudes. "The attitudes and the beliefs of people we interact with, and admire have a strong impact on our behaviors and beliefs about certain things" (Myers, 1999, p. 23). Brown (2000) supports this view when he claims that attitudes develop during childhood through imitating parents and peers' attitudes.

Operant conditioning learning approach is a method characterized by rewarding a person for a given attitude. This method aims to maintain the attitude or strengthen it. Parents may, for example, reward their daughter with praise when she expresses the attitude that doing math is fun. Each time the child is rewarded, the attitude becomes stronger. Or, parents may punish their son with a verbal rebuke when he expresses that same attitude. In these examples, operant conditioning serves to impart attitudes.

On the other hand, it is a form of learning that occurs when a stimulus comes to summon a response that is not previously evoked to form an attitude. Furthermore, people are more likely to imitate a certain behavior that is rewarded. Thus, if an aggressive behavior seems to be rewarded, it is more likely to be imitated

Attitudes are also found due to the process of differentiation; thus, from several attitudes are formed special ones. For example, due to certain ill-feelings about some teachers, the students may start hating everything related to the school.

Some attitudes, however, are formed due to a shocking or a tragic experience. Generally, when an individual is not ready for a tragedy, this becomes the basis of long standing attitudes. Furthermore, attitudes "adopted also meaning that they are some form of social inheritance which an individual obtains for the first time by following the example of the family. So, as she/he grows, the attitudes of his/her friends become his/her own" (Koshhar, 2008, p. 356).

Finally, attitudes are also formed through direct experience. It is known, in fact, that the more exposure one has to a given object, the more positive one's attitude is likely to be. Brown (2000) believes that "[t]hese attitudes form a part of one's perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living" (p. 180).

3.5 Components of Attitudes

There are three components that make up attitudes and these are: 'affective/emotional', 'behavioural', and 'cognitive components' (Wenden, 1991). Basically, a cognitive component is based on the knowledge or information about a person or object, etc., and his belief about it. The affective component involves emotional reactions of feelings an individual has towards an object, a person, an event or an issue. It is stated that affective responses may be either extremely positive or extremely negative, positioned according to the dimension of meaning and its perceived value (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Finally, the behavioral or conative component refers to one's consistent actions (action tendency) or behavioral intentions towards the object. To sum up; it means how the attitudes influence and affect the way a person behaves or acts.

Ajzen (2005) argues that an attitude is a complex and a multi-dimensional construct consisting of three components; namely, emotional or affective, which represents the positive or the negative feelings about the object; a cognitive component, which comprises ideas and beliefs about it; and a behavioural component, relating to the tendency to behave in a particular way towards it.

Concerning the relationship among the three components, Oppenheim (1992, p. 175) claims that attitudes are reinforced by belief (the cognitive component) and often attract strong feelings (the emotional/affective component), which may lead to particular behavioural intents (the behaviour/action tendency component). These three components of attitude are essential and must be taken into consideration. When these three components join together, they construct an overall attitude towards an object. It is also evident that these three components can be either positive or negative.

3.6 Functions of Attitudes

Attitudes can serve functions for the individual. They are developed, maintained and may change because of the functions they serve. Katz (1960) suggests that every attitude serves at least one of four functions:

3.6.1 Knowledge Function

The attitude helps us to understand the overwhelming amount of information in the world. Knowledge function allows us to predict what is likely to happen, and so gives us a sense of control, simplify our perceptions of the world so that it becomes more manageable, predictable and safer. Attitudes can help us organize and structure our experience. Moreover, knowing a person's attitude helps us predict his behavior.

3.6.2 Self/Ego-expressive Function

Self-expression of attitudes can be non-verbal. Therefore, our attitudes are part of our identity, and help us to be aware through the expression of our feelings, beliefs and values. Meaning that, attitudes help us to relate to ourselves and to others, presenting a fairly unified image with which others can interact and which help to establish our identity for both ourselves and for others.

3.6.3 Adaptive Function

This function means that if a person holds and expresses socially acceptable attitudes, other people will reward him with approval and social acceptance. Attitudes, then, are considered to be a part of a social group and the adaptive function helps us fit in with a social group. People seek out others who share their attitudes, and develop similar attitudes as those they like.

3.6.4 Ego-defensive Function

The ego-defensive function refers to holding attitudes that protect our self-esteem or that justify actions that make us feel guilty. To rephrase, attitudes help to protect us from ourselves.

In fact, the basic idea behind the functional approach is that attitudes help a person to mediate between his own inner needs (expression and defense), and the outside world (adaptation and knowledge) to explain why we've done something that could be undesirable.

3.7 Attitudes and Language Learning

Gardner and Lambert (1972) conclude that the ability of students to master a second language is not only influenced by their mental competence or language skills but also by the students' attitudes and perceptions towards the target language. They also advocate that

attitude concepts could enhance the process of language learning, influence the nature of students' behaviors and beliefs towards the other language and its culture and community and that this will identify their tendency to acquire that language.

Attitudes are crucial in language growth or decay and restoration or destruction. Attitudes are internal states (positive/ negative reactions towards an object) that influence what the learners are likely to do. Yet, language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning and teaching. According to Oller (1979), attitudes are merely one of the factors that give rise to motivation which eventually results in attainment of proficiency in a second language. Brown (2000) indeed shares the same point of view and he states that if attitudes are negative "it seems clear that may lead to decreased motivation" (p. 181). Moreover, attitudes are two types: positive and negative ones, and of course, it is the teachers' role to be aware that "everyone has both positive and negative attitudes" (Brown, 2000, p. 181). Furthermore, Stern (1983) distinguishes three types of attitudes in second language learning situation: (a) attitudes towards the community and people who speak the L2, (b) attitudes towards learning the language concerned, and (c) attitudes towards languages and language learning in general.

Attitudes, therefore, hold a very important role in the learning process of students. They will affect the learning of English if students hold very strong opinions about learning it. Attitudes deriving from the cognitive, affective and behavioural domains based on past negative experiences of the students or expressed by peers, siblings, relatives or pressure groups may block or hinder the current process of learning.

Attitudes are, thus, indirectly related to second language achievement. We can say that improving the positive attitude of the students towards a particular academic subject may increase their desire to learn the subject and to develop the ability to apply what they have been taught, as well as may lead to an improvement in remembrance (Tahaineh and Danna, 2013).

According to Dörnyei and Csizér (2002), a positive attitude facilitates foreign language learning while a negative attitude acts as a psychological barrier against learning. Thus, attitudes ranging from negative, to neutral and positive states, determine a student's success or failure in his or her learning. This highlights the important role that a positive attitude towards the language being learned plays in learning a second language. Putting it in another way, maintaining positive or negative feelings towards a language may increase the ease or difficulty of learning respectively.

Developing students' attitudes towards learning is considered to be one of the most important issues that should be taken into account when discussing factors affecting the teaching-learning process. Winne and Marx (1989) note that motivation and attitude are both conditions for and results of effective instruction; therefore, studies were conducted in various educational fields to examine strategies and techniques that could contribute in developing students' positive attitudes towards learning.

Conclusion

To conclude this section, we can say that attitudes can be taken as a fundamental aspect which leads a person to behave in a specific way towards objects, events, etc. Therefore, this section has provided an overview of attitude studies as these have developed from late 1920s to the present day. It has discussed their theories, formations, functions, dimensions and their impact on students' learning generally, then with some reference to the English language.

CHAPTER TWO

Field Investigation

Chapter Two: Field Investigation

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Chapter Two: Field Investigation

Introduction

This study is an attempt to see and identify the students' attitudes towards using explicit grammar instruction in learning the present tenses at Abdelhafid Boussouf University Center. Therefore, the focus of the study was on whether they have positive or negative attitudes towards formal grammar instruction particularly explicitly.

This chapter is devoted to handle the methodological framework that was followed to fulfill the aims of the study. In it, some variables, such as the methodology chosen for carrying this research with providing the reasons behind this choice, the participants, instrumentation, procedure, design, and statistical analysis of the study are explained.

Hence, it is divided into three sections; first of all, the students' questionnaire, the students' interview, and then the pedagogical implications for the current study.

1. Research Design

In the design of the research, elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined. The distinction between a "qualitative" and "quantitative" approach, here, relates to the treatment of data, rather than the research method. For instance, the current research employs the questionnaire method, which is classified as a quantitative instrument, but the scrutiny of the data is executed qualitatively and quantitatively. As Strauss (1987, p.2) argues, "The genuinely useful distinction [between qualitative and quantitative] is in how data is treated analytically." Thus, what is different is the manner of transforming information into quantitative data (numbers) or qualitative data (words).

Therefore, to answer the research questions, data were collected by means of the following methods:

- Questionnaire for students
- Students' interview

A descriptive method has been used for gathering data; information is mainly collected through the use of one questionnaire that has been directed to students, it aims at finding out their attitudes towards the use of explicit grammar instruction in learning the present tenses. Moreover, the collected data from the questionnaire were descriptively analyzed in order to find percentages for each response of the different questions. All information gathered is presented in tables.

To support the students' questionnaire, a structured interview was used. The aim of the interview was to gain insight into the factors that influenced students' beliefs about grammar instruction. In other words, by interviewing some of the students, I hoped to gauge their attitudes towards using the explicit grammar instruction in learning the present tenses.

Since the data collected from the questionnaire and the interview is both qualitative and quantitative, this research study can be seen as a mixed research design.

2. Means of Research

Choosing the most appropriate means of research is certainly a matter of many factors. Beiske (2002) states that "[w]hile factors such as time and costs certainly play an important part in deciding how to approach a particular research problem, the subject of the research itself should ultimately determine the methods used." It should be noted that "a good approach of the subject greatly depends on the right choice of the research method."(Scandure &

Williams, 2002; cited in Beiske, 2002). Consequently, because of the descriptive nature of this topic, the researcher opted for the questionnaire and the interview as appropriate tools to collect data.

2.1 Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a means for collecting data that contains a number of questions which participants are supposed to answer. In fact, it is all about trying to gather views from persons. Accordingly, many researchers state that information from a questionnaire, in general, tends to fall into two broad categories-"facts" and "opinions". Moreover, Brown (2001; cited in Dornyei, 2003, p. 3) defines questionnaires as the following; they "are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". They have many advantages, as we know, they allow us to collect large amount of data easily and in a short period of time, i.e., they are time constraint. Dornyei (*ibid*) mentioned several advantages of questionnaires; he said that "The main attraction is their unprecedented efficiency in terms of (a) researcher time, (b) researcher effort, and (c) financial resources [...] They are also very versatile, which means that they can be used successfully with a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics" (pp. 9-10).

Though, it has advantages, the questionnaire can have some disadvantages. In the sense that, respondents may not be serious in their answers or they may not answer themselves (i.e., the respondents may not say their real attitudes); also, they may not give the questionnaire back.

2.2 The Interview

An interview is a kind of conversation between two persons about a theme of mutual interest with a purpose. A situation where one person talks and another listens. According to Kvale (1996), it is knowledge evolved through the dialogue. It is up to the interviewer to create a contact that allows the interaction to get their contact that allows the interaction to get beyond a polite conversation and create an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about his or her experience or personal view. In fact, the interview, as a research tool, is used to collect data from individuals via conversations/talks to understand a particular situation or a matter of interest. There are different kinds of interviews; the present research work makes use of the so-called —structured interview. The latter is used when “the researchers are aware of what they do not know and therefore are in a position to frame questions that will supply the knowledge required” (Lincoln et al., 1985, p. 269).

Apparently, the interview as other tools has advantages. The most common ones are: (a) it is flexible and adaptable way of finding things out; (b) it is time consuming since it is up to the interviewers how much time will spend; and (c) non-verbal cues may give messages which help in understanding the verbal response. However, many people may refuse to participate especially if the interview is recorded. This will result in having a smaller number of participants.

3. Nature of Research

This research is descriptive in nature since it tries to investigate students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses explicitly. Yet; the obtained results apply only to the participants in the study and cannot be generalized to other participants. As Patton (1985, as cited in Merriam, 2002) states , "it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting" (p. 1).

4. Sample Population

4.1 Questionnaire's Population

In this study, population and sample were important. According to Arikunto (1998, p. 115), population is the whole of the research subject. The population of the study was the first year English students. According to Arikunto (2002, p. 10), sample is part of the population from whom the data were obtained. A good sample is one that represents the population generalization of the result. In this study, the whole population includes 225 of first year LMD English students, in Mila University-center; the sample is a total of 80 students chosen to fulfill a questionnaire, 10 male and 70 female students, they are aged between 17 and 26 years old. The selection of such a sample was based on the consideration that first year LMD students have been exposed to learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction; this may be helpful in getting the required data about the attitudes of the students; moreover, 12 students have been randomly chosen to be interviewed.

4.2 Interview's population

As part of this research, an interview was done with first year LMD students at Mila University-Center. Therefore, the interview questions required the participants to explain their opinions that have not been provided and answered yet in the questionnaire. Boyce and Neal (2006) support this aim when someone wants to get detailed information about people's thoughts and behaviors or to explore new issues deeply. The participants were chosen randomly; in the sense that it gives each member equal chance of being selected.

5. Questionnaire Administration

The designed questionnaire was administered during the time table classes. This procedure allowed the researcher to distribute and collect the questionnaires in one session, and be sure that all respondents would give them back.

6. Analysis Procedure of Students' Questionnaire

Every question's answers were gathered in a separate table; in that way, calculating percentages of answers could be possible. Then, provide some explanations about the table's content to make it clear.

7. Research Ethics

All twelve interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality and hence, names were omitted and changed into student 1, student 2, etc., and abbreviated to S 1, S 2, and so on. Information on school names and other personal facts, which could cast hints on the identity of the students, were removed when the texts were used.

8. Limitations

Like all similar studies, this study has some limitations, too. Since interviews took place with first year students and are not familiar with interview's purpose, many students refused to participate. Hence, the number of interviews carried out is smaller than expected.

Conclusion

To sum up, this section has elucidated the research design in terms of tools used in collecting data to answer the raised research questions, the setting and the participants involved. The next section contains analysis of the students' questionnaire and interview in details and the basic findings obtained from the two tools.

Chapter Two: Field Investigation

Section One: Students' Questionnaire

1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire consists of 29 questions which have been assembled in a logical way. They are either closed questions requiring from the students to choose 'yes' or 'no' answers, or to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices, or open questions requiring them to give their own answers, providing justifications when needed, and Likert scale statements where they can agree or disagree with some given statements. According to McKay (2006, p. 36), "close-ended questions allow for more uniformity of responses and are easy to answer, to code, and to analyze. On the other hand, these open-ended questions provide a narrow range of answers which limit the informants' opportunities. In contrast, open-ended questions can provide richer data".

Section One: Students' Attitudes to Teaching Grammar

This section contains twelve questions. The two first questions are concerned with demographic data in which they ask the participants to provide their gender and age. While the rest investigate some aspects related to grammar (3) how they see it as an activity (Q4). Question 5 deals with the importance of grammar, and then the subjects are requested to give its role in enhancing their achievements (Q6), (Q7) is concerned with the role of grammar, then, if a language can exist without grammar with justification (Qs 8 and 9). Questions 10 aims at knowing the students' preferable way to learn grammar. The last two questions (Q11 and 12) of this section explore the role of conscious knowledge in improving their FL.

Section Two: Students' Attitudes to learning the Present Tenses

This section aims at gathering information on students' opinions about learning tenses, particularly the present tenses and the way they want them to be instructed. The first two questions of this section search for information about students' views concerning the importance of learning tenses in EFL classes (Q13), followed by illustration (Q14), and their easiness or difficulty (Q15). Then, questions (16, 17, 18, and 19) investigate students' ability to form and use the present tenses and the time allocated to practice them at school. The two last questions seek to know if the students have difficulties in distinguishing between present tenses (Q20), and then are required to justify their responses (Q21).

Section Three: Students' Attitudes to Learning the Present Tenses through Explicit Grammar Instruction

This is the main core of the questionnaire since it seeks for collecting data about students' attitudes towards learning. In other words, it reveals to us whether students have positive or negative attitudes towards learning present tenses explicitly. Therefore, students' reactions to a given lesson and to teacher's method are explored in questions (22, 23, 24, and 25). Question 26 aims to know the preferable way to learn present tenses followed by students' beliefs about the impact of explicit grammar instruction on their academic performance (Q27), and their behaviors (Q28). In order to confirm their opinions, question 29 seeks to know students' feelings towards implicit grammar instruction.

2. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

SECTION ONE: Students' Attitudes to Teaching Grammar

Q01. Gender/ Are you a:

Option	Number	Percentage %
a. Female	70	87.5
b. Male	10	12.5
Total	80	100

Table 01: Students' Gender.

The table shows that the number of females largely exceeds the number of males. It is not surprising simply because learning and teaching FLs attracts more females than males.

Q02. Age/ How old are you?

Option	Subjects	Percentage %
a.17-20	60	75
b. 21-25	19	23.75
c. 26-30	1	1.25
Total	80	100

Table 02: Classification of Respondents Based on Age.

In the above table 75% of the respondents were found between the ages of 17 and 20 years, 23.75% between 21 and 25, and only 1.25% were between 26 and 30. This shows that most of the respondents were young students.

Q03. When learning grammar you find the task:

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Difficult	10	12.5
b. useless	5	6.25
c. easy	28	35
d. useful	32	40
C+d	5	6,25
Total	80	100

Table 03: Degree of Grammar Difficulty.

From the above results, we understand that ten students (12.5%) find grammar tasks difficult; maybe the used approach does not fit their needs. While five students (6.25%) think that grammar tasks are useless, and they do not contribute in learning the foreign language. On the other hand, twenty eight students (35%), see grammar as an easy task. While thirty two students (40%) maintain that grammar tasks are useful and they provide students with enough data about language properties. These students approximately symbolize the half of my sample. The rest of students (5) indicate that grammar is easy and useful task.

Q4. Do you think that grammar can be?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. An interesting activity	33	41.25
b. A compulsory activity	16	20
c. A boring activity	8	10
A+b	23	28.75
Total	80	100

Table 4: Students' Perception about Learning Grammar.

From the results above, we can figure out that the majority of students (41.25%) see grammar as an interesting activity which means that students are motivated to study it. This interest will make students motivated to acquire its rules and to seek teachers' correction for their errors. However, 16 students (20%) see grammar as an obligatory activity. Maybe because they feel themselves obliged to learn it as a basic tool for enhancing their levels, and 8 other students (10%) consider grammar lesson as a boring activity. This is just because they see no need to learn grammar at the beginning of their studies because they are not able to memorize rules about a new language that they have only some hints about it. Whereas, twenty three students (28.75%) consider grammar both interesting and compulsory at the same time, declaring that they consider it as the basic component of any language.

Q5. Is grammar learning important?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	80	100
b. No	00	00
Total	80	100

Table 5: Students' Attitudes towards Learning Grammar.

As this question seeks to find out whether the students thought that the formal study of grammar is important to master English or not. The results, indicated in table 5, revealed that all the students (100%) had a very favorable and a positive opinion towards learning grammar. It seems that the students had no doubt about the importance of formal grammar in mastering English when learning is limited to the classroom. Therefore, the study of grammar helps in learning a second language, and English in particular.

Q6. Do you agree that grammar will enhance your achievement in EFL?

Options	Subjects	%
a. yes	80	100
b. No	00	00
Total	80	100

Table 6: The Role of Grammar in Enhancing Students' Achievement.

As far as this question is considered, the researcher aimed to check students' attitudes towards grammar. Surprisingly, all students appear to hold positive attitudes towards grammar. There is a total agreement (100%) among English grammar students that it has a great impact on their achievement in a FLL. From the obtained results, one can deduce that the majority of learners are completely aware of the importance of grammar as a necessary component that plays a crucial role in achieving their language learning objectives in EFL.

Q7. Does grammar aim to:

Options	Subjects	%
a. Understand how to use the structures of a given language	9	11.25
b. convey meaning	9	11.25
c. Enhance the writing and speaking skills	11	13.75
A+b+c	51	63.75
Total	80	100

Table 7: Students' Perceptions about the Purpose of Grammar.

The results point out that nine students (11.25%) claimed that grammar aimed to make sense of the language they are learning (how it is structured). Likewise, (11.25%) declare that it aims to convey meaning and avoid being misunderstood by others. But only eleven

(13.75%) state that it aimed to enhance both speaking and writing skills. Conversely, the majority of students (63.75%) consider the three options as the basic purpose of grammar. Therefore, learning it will assist them through the different uses of the specific patterns of language; in addition to the clarification of meaning in order to avoid mistakes in communication. That would result in enhancing writing and speaking skills.

Q8. Can a language exist without grammar?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	00	00
b. No	80	100
Total	80	100

Table 8: The existence of Language without Grammar.

This table shows that all the participants (100%) marked that there is no possibility to have a language or separate it from grammar. By their responses, they declared that language and grammar are interrelated.

Q9. Whatever your answer, please explain.

Firstly, it should be mentioned that not all students answered this question. Also, most of the answers provided are similar to those options in Q7. Students who said that there is no language without grammar state that grammar is the skeleton of language and its existence is very essential. One student declared that without grammar a language cannot be transmitted correctly and accurately, therefore, it will be meaningless and aimless. Others said that grammar helps them to convey their intended meaning appropriately. According to them, its importance is undeniable as it is the key to language. So, no language can be or learned

without learning grammar. Hence, in order to make learners learn English as a second language, grammar rules must be taught. Moreover, it helps students to learn a standard language. Students' comments indicated that they really thought grammar was substantial, either in written or oral communication. This finding is in line with Azad's (2013) finding with Bangladeshi EFL teachers. They believed that grammar was an important component of language which could not be separated from its teaching and learning.

Q10. Do you prefer?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Knowing about grammar rules directly	59	73.75
b. Knowing grammar through using it in real context)	11	13.75
c. Both	10	12.5
Total	80	100

Table 9: Students' Preferences of the Way Grammar is Learned.

Through this question, I intended to know if grammar needs to be learned, or it can just be picked up. What is noticed about this question is that 59 of students (73.75%) claim that grammar is a learnable aspect that needs to be organized and planned like any other learning subject. This confirms that the students consider learning grammar explicitly effective since it helps them to produce grammatically correct language. Eleven of the students (13.75%) preferred to deduce grammar through exposure to language in natural use. This indicates that they feel boredom from rules as well as they find it difficult to memorize them. While only ten students (12.5%) claim that grammar as it can be learned it can be picked up through exposure to the target language. So it depends on students' situation; for

example, when it is the afternoon, their brains have already been full, making them reluctant to think any further. In this kind of situation, the students prefer explicit grammar instruction and vice versa. So they feel that, for effective communication, grammar plays an important role. The results clearly reveal that most students think that grammar is central to language learning and highlight that they are well aware of its place in SLL and FLL.

Q11. Do you think that students need a conscious (learned) knowledge of grammar to improve their language?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	69	86.25
b. No	11	13.75
Total	80	100

Table 10: The Role of Conscious Knowledge of Grammar.

In regard to conscious knowledge of grammar, most of the students, counted as 69 (86.25%), considered it to be something essential. This was reflected by their positive responses to this question. As a result, they prefer to study grammatical rules while learning grammar and they think that knowledge about grammatical rules is vital to speak a language. And only 11 of them picked the option "No". From their choice, we can infer that when the teachers directly give the rules at the beginning, they will not grasp them well, or it depends on the easiness of the material and the situation of the learning. From these results, it is evident that 86.25% of the students have positive attitudes towards grammar, while 13.75% of the students seemed to have a negative view towards the role of conscious knowledge.

Q12. How conscious knowledge is important for you?

Through this open-ended question, I intended to know how conscious knowledge is important to them. Therefore, most of the students contended that conscious knowledge enables them to correct themselves whenever they make mistakes. This belief is in accordance

with Schmidt's (1990) view that conscious knowledge of grammar is necessary "for one step in the language learning process, and is facilitative for other aspects of learning" (p. 131).

SECTION TWO: Students' Attitudes towards Learning Present Tenses

Q13. Is learning tenses necessary?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	54	67.5
b. No	26	32.5
Total	80	100

Table 11: The Necessity of Learning Tenses.

The data in table 11, indeed, revealed that the majority of the students (54), at the rate of 67.5%, replied that they think it is necessary for them to learn tenses. This shows that first year Mila University students believe in the benefits of learning tenses. In contrast, 26 students (32.5%) claimed that this way of learning is not necessary; maybe because they prefer to learn grammar implicitly.

Q14. If yes, is it for the sake of

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. being able to construct good sentences	20	25
b. being understood in communication	6	7.5
A+b	54	67.5
Total	80	100

Table 12: Students' Reasons for learning the present tenses.

According to the results obtained from this question, it is evident that a majority of the students, i.e., 67.5% opted for both of the choices. This indicates that they consider tenses as a

key part in both constructing correct sentences, which will result in meaningful communication. Moreover, twenty of the students specified it just to construct good sentences. However, only six of them limited it to have a successful communication. This can be explained by their need to use it in their real life.

Q15. Is learning tenses an easy task?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	60	75
b. No	12	15
c. Sometimes	8	10
Total	80	100

Table 13: The Easiness of Learning the Present Tenses.

According to the results of Q15, a huge majority of students (60 students rated as 75%) gave a positive opinion about the easiness of learning present tenses. This is mainly because they are motivated to learn them. Since motivation is the affective variable that impacts the learning process. Conversely, 12 students (15%) picked the option "NO" which indicates that tenses are not interesting to them. The rest of the students (10%) chose the option "sometimes». Thus, this mirrors that they find it difficult in some days. This is may be due to their reluctance to study tenses.

Q16. Do you know how to form the present tenses correctly?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	75	93.75
b. No	5	6.25
Total	80	100

Table 14: Forming the Present Tenses.

As expected, most of the students (93.75%) chose the option "Yes" which means they think that they know how to form the present tenses. Mainly, this is because they have focused on learning and their regulations. However, 6.25% do not think so which might be attributed to the fact that they do not have enough time for practice.

Q17. Do you know when to use the present tenses?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	57	71.25
b. No	14	17.5
d. Sometimes	9	11.25
Total	80	100

Table 15: The Present Tenses in Context.

The answers were clear because almost of the learners (71.25%) chose the option "Yes". 14 of the students, at the rate of 17.5%, chose the option "No", and the rest (11.25%) selected the option "sometimes". This indicates that they are not sure whether they use the present tenses correctly or not. In other words, they may not use the present tenses automatically for the situations where they are used and possibly need more practice. As table

15 presents, the overwhelming majority of the students think that they know when to use the present simple. Comparing that table with the previous one would help us deduce that students problems of tense used seem to exceed problems of tense form use.

Q18. Do you think that you can differentiate between present tenses forms?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	63	78.75
b. No	16	20
d. Sometimes	1	1.25
Total	80	100

Table 16: Differentiating Present Tenses Forms.

As table 16 shows, 78.75% of the respondents find it easy to make difference between present tenses forms. As each tense has its own form as well as because they are interchangeably used, this makes it helpful for them not to be confused. Furthermore, this indicates that they have memorized their uses; however, 20% of the students say “No”. So, they have difficulties in differentiating between tenses forms. This is mainly because of the lack of practice and home preparation which may help them in constructing standing knowledge in their long-term memories. One remaining student, in the ratio of 1.25%, assumes that he sometimes cannot differentiate their forms. As there are tenses among them which are approximately similar in forms such as the present perfect and present perfect continuous.

Q19. Do you have difficulties in distinguishing between present tenses use?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	6	7.5
b. No	48	60
d. Sometimes	26	32.5
Total	231	100

Table 17: Students' Difficulties in Distinguishing between Present Tenses Use.

The statistical results proved that a limited number of the students (7.5%) chose the option "Yes" to indicate that, for the majority of the present tenses, the students seem to have more difficulty in finding the appropriate context than they have in finding the correct form. So the students may be confused about both the form and the meaning. This is, perhaps, because of the lack of practice either at home or in classroom. It might be concluded from this answer that the students need more practice. Moreover, more than half of all the students (48) confront no problems in distinguishing the appropriate uses of the present tenses. And only 26 (32.5%) of the students said "sometimes. This may stem from the lack of the automatic use of the present tenses.

Q20. If yes, is it because you cannot notice when the action is

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Completed	02	33.33
b. Repeated	00	00
d. continuing	00	00
A+b+c	4	66.66
Total	6	100

Table 18: Students' Reasons for Confusion.

The results have shown that 33.33%, which counted two persons, picked the option "completed" commenting that they are confused about the time the action is completed. Hence they will not use the right tense. Meanwhile, the majority of the students (4), i.e., 66.66% selected the three options. This result can only be explained by the fact that students already do not know when the action is completed, repeated, or continuing, that's why they will not use the appropriate tense in a given situation.

Q21. Do you think that you have enough opportunities to practice present tenses at university?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	19	23.75
b. No	61	76.25
Total	80	100

Table 19: Time Assigned for Present Tense Practice at University.

According to the results shown in table 19, 19 of the students (23.75%) think that they have enough time to practice at school. However, a high number of the students (61), at rate of 76.25%, stated that they do not have enough opportunities. The reason may be because of the lack of time which they have for English at university during an academic year. To say it in another way, according to students' responses, almost one hour and a half was assigned to grammar in their language class. So that, they suggested that maximum time should be given to grammar in order to improve students' grammar mastery to make them effective language users.

Section Three: Students' Attitudes towards Learning the Present Tenses through Explicit Grammar Instruction

Q22. Do you believe that students' behaviors affect their success in language learning?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	47	58.75
b. No	33	41.25
Total	80	100

Table 20: Students' Beliefs towards Factors Affecting their Success.

In the above table, we can notice that almost 58.75% of the students believe that their behaviors play a crucial role in their achievement in learning any language. Overall, what has emerged has been the fact that students are aware of the influence of their behaviors and verbal responses on their beliefs and feelings towards learning. Others (41.25%) take a negative attitude towards them. This is may be due to their beliefs that there are other factors which contribute to their success.

Q23. Do you think that students' reaction to a given lesson is based on?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. individual's perceptions	7	8.75
b. Self interest	5	6.25
d. Readiness	17	21.25
A+b+c	51	63.75
Total	80	100

Table 21: Students' Reactions to Universities Lessons.

This item investigates the basis on which students' reactions are formed to a given lesson. The first option that is 'individual's perceptions' opted by just 7 students (8.75%). And only 6.25% of the students stated that their positive or negative reaction to a given lesson depends on their self-interest. Meaning that, when they learn a particular lesson; if it is interesting to them, they will show a positive reaction; and if not, they will display a negative one. As for the third option, it is selected by 21.25% of the respondents. This result can only be explained by the fact that students are aware that an individual must be ready for study in order to get better results. In fact, all the options given are related to each other and belong to how attitudes are formed, the reason why the majority of the students (63.75%) ticked the three options. So, this implies that the majority of students recognize that their success or failure depend on internal factors, i.e., comes from within the individual.

Q24. Do you believe that your teachers' method can affect your learning results?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	80	100
b. No	00	00
d. Sometimes	00	00
Total	80	100

Table 22: Students' Attitudes towards Teachers' Method.

According to the results obtained from this question, all students (100%) believe that the method used by their teachers play a crucial role in the learning process, particularly, their achievements. This is proved by the informants' responses because none of the students ticked the option "No". Therefore, this analysis reveals that the method used by the teacher plays an important part in developing students' attitudes towards language learning.

Q25. Do you enjoy learning the present tenses explicitly in EFL classrooms?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	62	77.5
b. No	15	18.75
d. Sometimes	3	3.75
Total	80	100

Table 23: Students' Feelings towards Present Tenses.

The responses from the question twenty-five, show that the views are totally divided among the students. Almost 77.5% students consider learning present tenses pleasurable; they have positive feelings towards them; 18.75% consider it boring. This indicates that they do not like focusing on rules since learning tenses is mainly based on rules. But only 3.75% find it just sometimes enjoyable. Therefore, it depends on their self-interest and readiness as well as the method of their presentation as has been evidenced. So the result clearly highlights that the majority of the students are excited about being allowed to learn rules.

Q26. According to your opinion, how do you prefer to learn present tenses?

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Through teachers' explanations of the rules	47	58.75
b. through discovering rules	10	12.5
d. Both	23	28.75
Total	80	100

Table 24: Investigating Learners' Preferences.

This question deals with students' attitudes toward learning present tenses through the explicit and implicit grammar instruction. Table 24 shows that more than half of the students (47 students rated as 58.75%) preferred learning present tenses deductively/explicitly. The fact that they expect their teacher to explain tenses forms, and then they will be asked to use these rules in different examples in the exercises, especially those complex tenses. Conversely, only 10 respondents (12.5%) are in favor of inductive/implicit grammar instruction. That is, they want to read many examples and deduce the rules, i.e., through communicative practice followed by their regulations. On the other hand, 23 students (28.75%) stated that they prefer both approaches. This is because they want their teacher to vary and differentiate his/her method of teaching. To say it differently; they expect their teacher not to stick to one method.

Q27. I learn present tenses through the conscious awareness of the rules because I believe that it has a positive effect on my academic performance.

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Strongly agree	28	35
b. Agree	25	31.25
d. Neutral	23	28.75
e. Disagree	4	5
f. Strongly disagree	00	00
Total	80	100

Table 25: Students' Attitudes towards the Impact of Using Explicit Grammar Instruction on Students' Academic Performance.

This question was addressed to students in order to confirm that learners' previous answers were done with a great attention. The results obtained affirm that students were aware

about what they have said before. The majority of the students (66.25%) agreed that the EGI has a significant role to play in developing their academic performance. Few of them (28.75%) claim that they are not aware or even convinced that conscious awareness of rules can affect positively students' academic performance. The remaining 5% disagree with the explicit approach to present tenses learning. It is evident that the majority of the students are in favor of learning the present tenses through rules awareness.

Q28. I enjoy learning the present tenses through exposure to language in natural use (communication in real-life).

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Strongly agree	00	00
b. Agree	22	27.5
d. Neutral	11	13.75
e. Disagree	20	25
f. Strongly disagree	27	33.75
Total	80	100

Table 26: Students' Feelings towards Learning English present tenses implicitly.

It is clearly shown from the table above that most of the students state that learning English present tenses through exposure to grammatical tasks is not enjoyable, however, (27.5%) of the participants agree. It means that EFL students don't enjoy learning English present tenses implicitly. Therefore, they have a negative attitude towards implicit instruction. But, 13.75% of the sample cannot take a clear cut decision.

29. Do you believe that learning the present tenses explicitly (focus on rules) determine your behaviors.

Options	Subjects	Percentage%
a. Yes	59	73.75
b. NO	21	26.25
Total	80	100

Table 27: Students' Attitudes towards the Effects of Learning Present Tenses Explicitly on Behaviors.

This question investigates students' verbal responses towards learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction. In fact, when students established beliefs and feelings towards an approach, they determine their behavior. The data in table 27 indicate that the majority of the participants, 59 students at the rate of 73.75%, agree that their attitudes determine the way they react. As a result, they will express their intentions to act. This view is supported by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). They claim that behavioral intentions make reference to a tendency to a number of different attitude actions to react, in a particular way, to a particular object. Meanwhile, 26.25% consider that there is no relationship between their attitudes and behaviors when learning present tenses explicitly. This is mainly because they did not experience it in previous situations.

3. Summary of the Results and Findings from Students' Questionnaire

- **Discussion of the Questionnaire Results**

The main aim of the study was to know the major attitudes that first year English students hold towards present tenses learning through explicit instruction. Therefore, the analysis of the questionnaire supports the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the research; it confirms that students will have positive attitudes if they learn the present tenses explicitly.

In this discussion, I try to highlight the most outstanding aspects that have already been seen in the students' questionnaire.

In accordance with the documented results in the questionnaire, I conclude that students, in this study, agree about the significance of English grammar as a basic element in FLL. To put it differently; they hold a strong positive attitude that formal grammar instruction plays a positive role in language learning and consider it as a skeleton of any language. All the students were unanimous on the fact that the study of grammar was compulsory at the first time, important, interesting, useful, and easy for them as beginner learners of English. Moreover, English students (100%) recorded that grammar is very important in knowing how to use specific patterns of language, how to clarify meaning in communication which will result in enhancing learners' language achievements. Another result indicated that approximately all first year students, in Mila University-Center, considered conscious knowledge of grammar as a vital component of language learning. They thought so because they believed that conscious knowledge of grammar enabled students to do self-correction, particularly in speaking and writing area.

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to find out if students think that tenses are necessary and easy with providing reasons for their view, and whether they know how and when to use them as well as what type of difficulties they face during learning them and why. According to the results, it is pointed out that the majority of the students holds positive attitudes towards tenses and considers them as necessary elements in writing and speaking. Thus, all the students think that accuracy and fluency are equally important for them. Furthermore, most students think that it is the present tenses' use that causes most of the difficulties in comparison to form. All students (100%), however, stated that they do not have

enough opportunities to practise the present tenses as pointed out in question 21. This fact may be due to the lack of time assigned for university syllabus.

What emerged from this study, in the third section, has shown interesting findings since that section is considered the focal part that confirms or rejects the raised hypothesis of the current research. On the whole, participants' responses to questions (22, 23, 24, and 25) tend to be positive and show their awareness about the major factors that contribute to their success or failure in learning a foreign language. They affirm that the role of affective domain (Attitudes) in governing a person's achievement and success in an SLL and FLL context cannot be denied as well as the teachers' method. With regard to the method of teaching grammar, particularly present tenses, it can be clearly stated that students have strong positive attitudes towards explicit grammar instruction (Qs 26, 27). Therefore, they seem to favour the explicit/deductive method over the implicit/inductive one (Q28) since it dominates the majority of the students' preferences in most of questions. The difference in their attitudes towards these two methods is significant. They also believe that presenting grammar through explaining rules would lead to more successful learning of grammar by students (Q27). This high proportion is probably due to the nature of this instruction and its effectiveness. Notable among these is their rejection of the notion that learning present tenses can be through exposure to language in natural environments (Q28). The disparity in views may be due to the simple fact that, in a FLL context, students are much less able to access an English-speaking environment, and therefore prefer to learn the present tenses consciously and explicitly rather than implicitly. Consequently, the results confirm the hypothesis which presumes that students would have positive attitudes towards learning the present tenses if they are taught explicitly.

Conclusion

Analyzing the students' questionnaire has clarified many facts about students' attitudes towards teaching grammar, in general, learning the present tenses, in particular, as well as the preferable way for learning those tenses. The results obtained, apparently, indicate that students perceived grammar as a basic element to learn a FL as it helps them to be accurate and fluent at the same time. They also claim that learning tenses is necessary especially when they are presented and instructed explicitly rather than implicitly. Thus, their beliefs are formed and constructed through previous experiences in secondary school.

Chapter Two: Field Investigation:

Section Two: Students' Interview

Introduction

This section is devoted to analyze the students' responses to the structured interview. The latter consisted of ten questions which are demonstrated in order to find out the attitudes of the first year students. Therefore, the section involves the description, the analysis and the interpretation of the of students' interview. As a concluding step, a discussion of the main findings is included.

1. Description of the Students' Interview

The interviewees were provided with a debriefing after the interview, in which they were given space to add more information if needed. The debriefing might provide "a valuable context for the analysis of the data collected" (Kvale, 1996, pp. 127). It is a structured interview and consists of ten questions. Its aim is fill in the gaps that the questionnaire does not. Mainly, it consists of students' definition of grammar (Q1) and its importance (Q2), in particular in communication (Q3); students' feelings towards learning the present tenses (Q4); the effects of teachers' method on their achievement (Q5); students' feelings towards learning present tenses explicitly (Q6) and its role in increasing students' proficiency level (Q7); (Q8) was devoted to explore the effects of secondary schools students' prior experiences on their current beliefs as well as time allocated to learn grammar (Q9). The last question explored some additional points that might be added by the students. Furthermore, it was sitting face to face interview based on taking notes. In the analysis; the questions used were evaluated thematically with regard to the interpersonal relationship in the interview according to Kvale's recommendation.

2. Analysis of Students' Interview

The results of the interview are summarized below:

Question One: Definition of the Term Grammar

Apart from one student (interviewee) who seemed to be confused and claimed that even the term grammar is not clear to him, a majority of the respondents have defined it as structure, set of rules, and regulation which is quite in accordance with literature review. Moreover, the students in this study defined grammar as the basis of the language, the knowledge which helps them write and speak correctly, which in turn will give them confidence and sense of security. As, one of them admitted: "grammar is a collection of rules by which a given language is structured"; whereas some, on the other hand, think it is "the way how we can put the subject, the verb, and the object in the right order in order to communicate in the target language with others fluently".

Question Two: The Role and the Importance of Grammar

During interviews, participants strongly perceived grammar as very important for a person to learn a new language and thus believed in a need for more of it. In fact, in answering this question, students unanimously are compatible with Thornbury (1999, p.24) who suggested that learning English "without some attention to form, students may run the risk of fossilization". That is, most of the students think that grammar has an important role for effective language teaching. One of the students (S3) said that "Grammar plays an important role in making sentences to convey appropriate ideas." So they feel that for effective communication, grammar plays an important role. Another interviewee (S1) said that "Grammar helps us to learn the basic rules of English which we follow in language learning (in speaking, listening, reading and writing)". Just 2 out of 12 students said that

grammar has no role in language teaching as well as learning which indicated that for them language can be taught/learnt without teaching or learning it.

Question Three: Can we communicate effectively in a language if we don't know the grammatical structure of the language?

To this question, the majority of the interviewees said that we cannot communicate effectively if we don't know the grammar of the language because this is the basic part of knowing a language. According to them, knowledge of grammar rules provide the basics for effective communication as with the help of grammar rules we are able to write and speak correctly and effectively. The illustrative answers are those of S1 and S8: "If you don't know the grammar clearly, you can't organize your sentences. So you may speak in a wrong way" (S1). "If your grammar is not correct, the sentence is not clear, people cannot understand you" (S8). Student 9 also held these views, but added that occasional grammar mistakes should be accepted: "I think grammar is important, but I don't think I need my grammar to be perfect. I think making a little grammar mistake is okay."

Question Four: Do you like learning tenses (present tenses)? Why?

The 12 Students responded to this question that they like learning and practising tenses through different activities in the classroom. This shows that they have interest in the basic elements of grammar and they enjoy learning and using them in language. This is confirmed by them in the second part of the question. Yet, (S1) noted that at this level-1st year- it is important and compulsory for us to learn tenses, especially, the present ones. Since they are necessary tenses and used most frequently in the English language. Another view is held by (S9), noting that s/he enjoys learning tenses because they help her/him to produce meaningful language.

Question Five: Do you think that the teachers' method used in the classroom affect your achievements?

All the students with whom I have made this interview confirmed that the teaching methodology which is quite motivating and interesting will lead to better achievements in learning a FL. One of the interviewees admitted, "I will not achieve better in my study when I am not comfortable with the teaching methodology which is interesting and motivating to me". Therefore, "Yes, certainly", was the common answer for the 12 respondents. This is very important to note that it is the teacher and teaching methodology which can develop the interest of the students in the class and can motivate them to learn and use grammar in their language.

Question Six: How do you feel about present tenses being learned explicitly?

Almost all the students (S1, S5, S7, S8, S10, S11, and S12) said they like their grammar teachers to present tenses explicitly. They insisted that learning tenses is pleasurable and enjoyable in language learning with a clear preference for knowing the regulations, and then applying them in a number of controlled activities. One interviewee said, "I like to be consciously aware of tenses form and its function before I can use it proficiently." Another student held the view that "I will not respond to the activities without explanation of the rules first". Another one said: "when I know the rule before, I can concentrate more and understand well, and then I can answer all the exercises." But others (students 2, 4, and 6) said they dislike this method of teaching the present tenses as they feel that discovery techniques make the lesson more interesting and enjoyable. They prefer to read examples and then infer the rules. Their views can be summarized in what one of them claimed, "Self-discovery of regulations helps me to think and infer the rules; thus, it allows me to be active in the class.

Question Seven: Do you believe that present tenses explicitly help you to increase your level of proficiency?

When asked whether students become proficient when they learn present tenses explicitly, the interviewed Ss1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 believed in the usefulness of explicit grammar teaching in order to be proficient. One explained his position as: "If students are at the beginning level and have no formal background in the English language, then teaching grammar explicitly, in general, and present tenses, in particular, can help establish a basic framework of knowledge". Another one admitted that it allows the EFL student to see what kinds of temporal relations the English tense and aspect system is supposed to represent and how these relations hold together as a system. On the other hand, Interviewees (2, 4, and 6) believed in the importance and the usefulness of explicit grammar instruction only if certain conditions were respected. For example, these students mentioned an important factor which is the integration of grammar into communicative activities. One of those students argued that "if present tenses are taught through the explanation of the rules, then they hinder the learning process; but if they are taught in a communicative and creative way, then they improve the learning process». Still students 3 and 9 believe that the combination of explicit and implicit grammar instruction work better. They think that this way of teaching the present tenses leads to better achievements. One specified that "we want and need some formal grammar rules, but we should also get to learn the grammar rules through communication, reading stories, and writing".

Question Eight: Do you think that prior experiences in learning present tenses at the secondary school affect your current attitudes?

In this interview, the students were asked whether their prior experiences at the secondary school influenced their current attitudes towards learning the present tenses

explicitly. The results reveal that all the interviewees were not different. All of them held the same view that it plays a crucial role. One student said that, " I remember I learnt them in the middle and the secondary school, but my teacher was not so interested and motivated. His method was so boring that's why I hate learning tenses." Conversely, one interviewee admitted in the interview that the way he learned tenses at the secondary school, through formal and traditional grammar teaching, made him feel that it was preferable to "know grammar terminology, exactly present tenses regulations. And formal grammar rules to use the language properly and meaningfully". Hence, they formed their views based on their past learning experiences in the secondary school where tenses are taught under explicit grammar teaching.

Question Nine: How much time was given to grammar in your English language class?

Is it enough for you?

According to students responses, almost one hour and a half was assigned to grammar in their language class. For the second part of the question, all of the interviewees claimed that they have not much time to practise in the classroom. Therefore, they suggested that maximum time should be given to grammar in order to improve their level and to make them effective language users.

Question Ten: Are there any ideas that should be mentioned in this subject and you would add. Please, you have the opportunity to express yourself?

Concerning this question, students express that grammar is the best subject through all the levels because it improves their speaking and writing in the FL. In addition, as students recorded, teachers should opt for the best method to teach grammar that fits all their students'

needs. Other students suggest that teachers must provide more time to practise grammar rules; otherwise they will forget what they have learnt.

3. Discussion of the Students' Interview Results

The obtained results from the students' interview revealed that first year students of English language, at Mila University-Center, consider learning the present tenses with explicit grammar instruction as an appropriate way for developing their achievement; since it directs their attention to particular usages of the forms as well as allows them to see what kinds of temporal relations the English tense and aspect system are supposed to represent, and how these relations hold together as a system. For example, most of the students' answers concerning the definition of grammar and its importance; attitudes towards tenses, in general, and present tenses, in particular; the students' prior experiences in the secondary school; students' opinion about time given to grammar show that first year students of English language have a positive attitude towards instructing present tenses explicitly as a good pedagogical strategy to improve the students' language proficiency. Thus, English grammar teachers should pay attention to students' cognitive, affective and behavioral components, needs, interests and motives for learning English, in general, and tenses, in particular, in order to improve language teaching and learning.

4. Students' Questionnaire and Interview Results

Through the questionnaire and the interview with first year LMD English students, it is found that students' attitudes towards explicit grammar instruction are not quite different depending on their beliefs, feelings, and individual learning experiences. Here are some of the issues and results students raised during the interview and the questionnaire.

In general, the findings obtained from the questionnaire and the interview provided an evidence of a strong belief, on the parts of the students, that formal grammar study plays a positive role in SLL and FLL. Students feel that formal grammar instruction is important to learn English, as it is a tool to speak, listen, read and write correctly. Students viewed grammar instruction as a valuable part of an integrated approach to language teaching. Most of them insisted on the fact that grammar is an essential component of any language which guarantees accuracy. The students were unanimous in believing that the teaching of grammar helped in improving their English language achievement even if they did not always keep in mind grammatical rules when speaking and writing. Moreover, the questionnaire and the interview revealed that students' practices and beliefs about formal grammar instruction were incontestably influenced by their experiences at secondary schools and teachers' method.

Furthermore, analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaire and the interview evidenced that the majority of the respondents believe that present tenses must be taught through explicit instruction. Their positive attitudes are also quite clear since most of them consider learning present tenses necessary in order to be professionally competent and then be confident users of English. This can be explained that they are aware about their importance. Conversely, some students also found grammar; particularly present tenses, as boring and complex mostly because they were not satisfied with the teaching methodology in grammar class and because of their prior experiences at the secondary school (Q8 of the interview). The majority of the students suggested that grammar should be taught deductively, i.e., by explaining the grammar rules and then their use in examples and communicative practice. They also believed that more time should be given to teaching grammar in class. Indeed, Parkinson (2004) discusses how students like clear instructions so that they know what to do

and what to achieve and this was corroborated in this study, and it was found that being told explicitly what to do reduces students' heightened level of apprehension for a task.

Overall, the results of the current study are compatible with other studies as Wang's study (2012) who compared the effect of inductive and deductive approaches in teaching English verb tenses to Taiwanese learners. The results showed that students in the deductive group improve more significantly than those in the inductive group. This result implied that explicit instruction of grammatical rules is the most efficient way to learn English for most learners. Additionally, Norris and Ortega (2000) propose that explicit analysis of grammar seems to be more useful than the indirect or the implicit treatment. This assertion is in the same direction with the findings of this study. All in all, the obtained results showed favorable attitudes towards EGI.

Conclusion

In short, as reported by students, grammar is one of the fundamental basics of the language that should be emphasized. It is concluded from the overall agreement that EGI is significant in developing speaking/writing skills as well as in teaching the present tenses as an important aspect within grammar. Therefore, they must be taught explicitly, and teachers should devote more time for practice and error correction in order to strengthen their students' language achievements. Consequently, students become better speakers and better writers in EFL.

Chapter Two: Field Investigation

Section Three: Pedagogical Implications

Introduction

The results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the interviews emphasize the need of learning the present tenses through explicit grammar instruction to have positive attitudes. There are several pedagogical implications from this study that teachers may wish to consider. Depending on these results, the researcher attempts to introduce some recommendations regarding language learning; the teaching and learning of tenses, particularly the present ones, under explicit grammar instruction.

1. Understanding the Importance of Attitudes

Since students may come from very different educational backgrounds, it is necessary to try to understand where the similarities and differences lie, as there will often be differences between students' perceptions regarding language learning, and understanding these differences may thereby reduce conflict.

Therefore, students who have contrasting thoughts and beliefs about the role of grammar instruction may experience conflict in classroom, which may affect students' interest as well as their attitudes. Since students who are not interested may become disillusioned with the grammar language learning process. As Morelli (2003, pp. 33-34) has observed, "Grammar can be taught traditionally or contextually, but student perception should be considered by teachers in the decision-making process. Students need to feel confident that educators have met their needs... and educators should be willing to consider the attitudes and perceptions of students when making decisions about how to teach grammar." In fact, I don't

suggest that teachers allow students to dictate their instructional methods; however, being comprehensive and aware of students' attitudes may encourage teachers to make their teaching enjoyable in order to better address their students' expectations, i.e., grammar should be taught in an organized manner in order to reach the highlighted objectives. For that, I suggest that teachers and students can participate in an ongoing dialogue, which would allow the teachers to become aware of the students changing attitudes towards instruction; help students to become more aware of each other's perceptions along with those of their teachers.

2. Available Time for Engagement in Activities

Among the obtained results from this study concerning present tenses' form and use, the focal point is that some students find it difficult to select the correct tense at the correct time. That is, uses problems seem to exceed form ones. This could be explained by a variety of reasons.

They have no available time for activities inside classroom and/or lack of homework. As a pedagogical suggestion to help students overcome this difficulty would be to allocate a sufficient time for them to engage and involve them in present tenses tasks by creating interesting and meaningful activities, so that students will be intrinsically motivated and get positive results. Accordingly, Archer and Hughes (2001, p. 6) claim that "Increasing engaged time has a positive impact on student learning." Besides, the students might do activities at home and have a look at the next lesson .By doing so; they will foster the present tenses regulations mastery. Thus, the technical knowledge becomes procedural.

3. Integrating Form and Meaning

The formal distinction between the various tense forms is rather easy to make. In fact, two tense forms could be both correct and appropriate in the same situational contexts; however, only one would be appropriate. Going beyond these distinctive variations, students will tend to use short and simple combinations and avoid lengthy complex ones. To integrate the form and meaning, I suggest the following steps; every step requires the use of a specifically designed activity.

Step 1: The teacher should start giving the formal rule or regulation, indicating the three verb forms of the present tenses with all the singular and personal pronouns: affirmative, negative, and interrogative.

This step requires the use of stimulus-response patterns and repetition activities.

Step 2: At this stage, the teacher should answer the question: What does this tense form mean? Form should be clearly explained in association with the three forms introduced in the first step.

This step needs the use of form discrimination activities, in addition to form-meaning matching exercises.

4. Explicit Grammar Instruction and learning Present Tenses

Results of the current study imply that EGI is needed and favored by most of the students to learn the present tenses. Therefore, explicitly showing the meaning relations on a timeline along with a few key elements that need special attention allows the EFL student to see what kinds of temporal relations the English tense and aspect system is supposed to represent and how these relations hold together as a system. Coupled with ample basics, concrete examples, the succinct schemas can help students internalize the key elements to

make initial connections and adjustments. The visualized and schematized system can also guide students in further processing and use, as reported in Wu (2007).

Explicit instruction can direct learners' attention to particular usages of the forms. Most of the students quickly pick up the simple forms. For students who do not know how to formulate the forms yet, explicit instruction may be needed not just for the meaning but the meaning and formal patterns together. Students will have opportunities throughout the lesson to self-monitor and direct their own learning and participation.

Consequently, during EGI, teachers have a great deal of responsibility to monitor student needs and provide the kind of scaffolding most appropriate and clear throughout the learning process. However, students have responsibility too. They must realize that they will be expected to perform the task by themselves, and they should then work toward achieving that goal. Overall, it is suggested that teachers must be trained for the appropriate use of EGI in order to encourage English teachers to use this method in teaching English grammar to improve both students' attitudes towards EFL and their achievement level.

Conclusion

This section has involved some pedagogical implications whose main focus is the learning of the present tenses using explicit grammar instruction. It attempts to sum-up the basic conclusions of the current study and build a coherent sum of suggestions in accordance with all what has been gathered as information about students' attitudes towards learning present tenses explicitly.

General Conclusion

Students' attitudes towards learning are considered to be one of the most important issues. Due to their possible impact on learning, they should be taken into account when instructing a given lesson. In fact, they have long been considered an important component of positive educational outcomes. The focus of this study is to explore whether explicit grammar instruction affects the students' attitudes when learning the present tenses. Hence, the main aim of the study is to find out if the students hold positive or negative attitudes towards learning present tenses explicitly. Thus, it was hypothesized that if present present tenses are taught under explicit grammar instruction, students' attitudes would be positive.

The students' questionnaires clarify their personal attitudes towards learning present tenses explicitly. In accordance with the documented results in questions 4, 5, and 8, we conclude that students agree about the significance of English grammar as an interesting and compulsory activity (28.75%) and a basic element in any language (100%). Moreover, in question 7 English students (63.75%) recorded that grammar is very important in speaking and writing effectively which lead to students' achievement (100% in question 6). As numbers and percentages demonstrated in question 10, students (100%) prefer to be consciously directed to grammatical rules. Responses to question 11 which is concerned with the reasons behind their beliefs stated that 86.25% of the students report that EGI improves their Language.

Furthermore, students in question 13 (67.5%) consider learning tenses necessary in order to construct correct sentences as well as in creating meaningful communication. Considering literature which demonstrates that attitudes are closely related to our beliefs, are based upon experiences and teachers' method, questions 23 and 24 were designed. The

provided answers demonstrate that self-perceptions, self-interest, readiness, and teachers' method contribute in shaping their attitudes. Moreover, results of questions 25 and 26 indicate that students (77.5%, 58.75%) prefer the explicit grammar instruction when learning present tenses. This high proportion is due to its enjoyable nature and its flexibility. In attempting to explore the reasons behind their preferences, students (66.25%) in question 27 claimed that it helps them in enhancing their academic performance as well as determine their behaviors (73.75%). Responses to question 28 clarify that (58.75%) of the students find implicit grammar instruction as a boring method. Therefore, the results can be strong arguments for confirming the hypothesis. That is, students have positive attitudes to learning the present tenses under explicit grammar instruction.

Another emerging result is gained through interviewing students. Therefore, the students' interview clarifies that most of them believe that grammar plays a crucial role in EFL. Apparently, they unanimously show their positive attitudes towards learning present tenses explicitly rather than implicitly. Mostly, because it engages EFL students in the process of making meaning of the target language properties, as well as it will enhance their learning. In other words, for them it is important to learn tenses consciously. By knowing the regulations, the students are believed to be accurate and fluent at the same time.

Overall, the Obtained results revealed that learning present tenses is much favored by students when adopted by the instructors explicitly. In other words, the results have confirmed the hypothesis that students would have positive attitudes when learning the present tenses under EGI.

Thus, learning the present tenses and EGI should be coupled for the effective mastery of these tenses and for changing students' attitudes from negative to positive ones. Therefore, teachers are supposed to be responsible for using the best method that fits all their students' tendencies, as well as fulfill all their needs.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

Appendix B: Students' Interview

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

I will be very grateful if you take few minutes to complete this questionnaire. The latter aims at gathering information about students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses through the explicit grammar instruction. (i.e. learning the present tenses through focusing on rules either directly or indirectly).

Please you are therefore kindly required to cross the appropriate answer according to your own perspective and make comments when necessary. Thank you very much for your help.

Thank you in advance for your precious cooperation.

Section One: Students' Attitudes to Teaching Grammar

*Background Information

1. Gender: Are you a:

a. Male

b. Female

2. Age: How old are you?

A. 17-20

B. 21-25

C. 26-30

3. When learning grammar you find the task:

Difficult Useless Easy Useful

4. Do you think that grammar can be:

- a. An interesting activity
- b. Compulsory activity
- c. A boring activity

5. Is grammar learning is important

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. Do you agree that grammar will influence your achievement in learning English as a foreign language?

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. Does grammar aimed to:

- a. Understand how to use the structures of a given language
- b. Convey meaning
- c. Enhance the writing and speaking skill

8. Can a language exist without grammar?

- a. Yes
- b. No

9. Whatever your answer, please explain why?

.....

.....

10. Do you prefer?

- a. Knowing about grammar (rules directly)
- b. Knowing grammar (use it in the real context)

11. Do you think that students need a conscious (learned) knowledge of grammar to improve their language?

a. Yes b. NO

12. How conscious knowledge is important for you?

.....
.....
.....

Section Two: Students' Attitudes to Learning Tenses

13. Do you think that learning tenses necessary?

a. Yes b. No

14. If yes, is it for the sake of:

- a. Being able to construct good sentences
- b. To communicate correctly
- c. To be understood in communication

15. Is learning tenses an easy task?

a. Yes b. No c. Sometimes

16. Do you know how to form the present tenses correctly?

a. Yes b. No

17. Do you know when to use the present tenses?

a. Yes b. No

Appendix B

Students' Interview

Dear students,

I am presently conducting a research on students' attitudes towards learning the present tenses through the explicit grammar instruction. Therefore, I would like be very grateful if you could provide answers to my questions. Thank you very much in advance for your corporation.

Miss. Fatiha Bekkis

1. Could you give me a brief definition to the term grammar?

.....
.....

2. Do you think that learning grammar is important? Why?

.....
.....

3. Do you think that we can communicate effectively in a language if we do not know the grammatical structure of the language?

.....
.....

4. Do you like learning tenses (present tenses)? Why?

.....
.....

5. Do you think that the teachers' method used in classroom affect your achievements?

.....
.....

6. How do you feel about present tenses being learned explicitly?

.....
.....

7. Do you believe that present tenses explicitly help you to increase your level of proficiency?

.....
.....

8. Do you think that prior experiences in learning present tenses at the secondary school affect your current attitudes?

.....
.....

9. How much time was given to grammar in your English language class? Is it enough for you?

.....
.....

10. Are there any ideas that should be mentioned in this subject and you would add please, you have the opportunity to express yourself?

.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

ملخص

على مر القرون، تعتبر قواعد اللغة و نهجها مهمة في تعليم وتعلم اللغة الاجنبية الأولى والثانية. وتماشيا مع هذا، تظهر الأدبيات الموجودة أن موقف الطلاب هو أحد العوامل الهامة لتحديد مدى نجاحهم عند تعلم اللغة. ولذلك، فإن هذا البحث هو محاولة للتحقيق في مواقف الطلبة تجاه التعلم. ويجري البحث في سياق قسم اللآدب و اللغة الإنجليزية ضمن كلية اللآداب و اللغات في المركز الجامعي عبد الحفيظ بوصوف بميلة، للعام الدراسي 2016-2017. والهدف من هذه الدراسة، أساسا، هو إكتشاف تأثيرات تعليمات القواعد الواضحة على مواقف طلاب السنة الأولى للغة الإنجليزية عند تعلم قواعد اللغة بشكل عام وتعلم أزمنة الحاضر على وجه الخصوص. جنبا إلى جنب مع هذا الهدف، فقد أفترض أنه إذا تم تدريس أزمنة الحاضر من خلال تعليمات قواعد واضحة، فإن مواقف الطلاب ستكون إيجابية. ومن أجل تحقيق هدف هذه الدراسة المسطر والإجابة على أسئلتها ومحاولة التأكد من صحة الفرضية، تم إستخدام نوعين من أدوات جمع البيانات حول الطلاب وهما الإستبيان والمقابلة. ووفقا لطريقة أخذ العينات، استخدم 80 طالبا بصورة عشوائية من مجموع الطلبة الكلي البالغ 225 طالبا في السنة الأولى كعينة في الدراسة من أجل ملء الإستبيان. في حين تم إختيار اثني عشر منهم عشوائيا للإجابة على أسئلة المقابلة الحوارية. و تم تحليل البيانات كميا ونوعيا بما في ذلك الوصف، مثل النسبةئوية. وقد أكدت النتائج المتحصل عليها صحة الفرضية الموضوعية وبينت أن الطلاب على الأرجح يتعلمون أزمنة الحاضر من خلال التعليمات النحوية الصريحة أفضل من الإعتماد على الضمنية. وبذلك يملكون مواقف إيجابية نحو قواعد اللغة وبالأخص نحو تعلم أزمنة الحاضر بواسطة تعليمات نحوية صريحة. وعلى أساس النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها، ثمة بعض من الإقتراحات، في نهاية الأطروحة، لمساعدة الطلاب على تحصيل فهم وأداء أفضل. مما يعني ضمنا أن نتيجة هذه الدراسة قد تكون جيدة لتكون مدخلا لأي شخص يدرس أزمنة اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال التعليمات النحوية الصريحة، وخاصة لأولئك الذين يرغبون في أن يصبحوا مدرسو اللغة الإنجليزية.