

Jordanian EFL Secondary-Stage Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding Language As A Medium Of Grammar Instruction

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: July 11 ,2026 Accepted: October 14,2026	<i>The value and the role of using the mother tongue (L1) in the language classroom is a controversial issue to researchers, to teachers, and to national policies. Historically, there has been a negative attitude towards using it because of its association with the discredited Grammar Translation Method. However, in Jordan, like in most foreign language contexts, using L1 inside the language classroom is natural and inevitable because teachers share the same mother tongue with their students. To gain insights that may be beneficial for teachers, researchers and policy makers, language research (e.g. Ashton, 2014; Nishimuro and Borg, 2013; Pajares, 1992; Richards, 1996) suggested studying teachers' beliefs and practices through which we are investigating whether grammar should be taught using the first language (Arabic), the target language (English), or both.</i> <i>The current study investigates secondary-stage EFL teachers' grammar-related beliefs, practices, and the (mis)match between them regarding the language used as a medium of instruction. The participants of the study are nine experienced female Jordanian EFL teachers working in the five all-girl secondary public schools in Jordan. As for data collection, the instruments of the study are first a questionnaire to identify teachers' grammar-related beliefs, a checklist documenting teachers' grammar-related practices, and a focus-group that explores teachers' own explanations of their beliefs, practices and the factors causing a (mis)match between them. Concerning teachers' beliefs, the questionnaire revealed that 82.2% of the respondents believed that they can use Arabic during grammar lessons, and 84.4% believed that they can translate rules to Arabic whenever needed. As for teachers' actual classroom practices, the observation checklist showed that during grammar lessons eight out of nine teachers (88.9%) used Arabic and translated English grammar rules to Arabic, while only one teacher (11.1%) did not use Arabic and did not translate English grammar rules to Arabic. All teachers' beliefs were matching their practices, a consistency that teachers explained by their abidance by contextual factors, students' preferences and language proficiency, and teachers' experiences as learners. For future research, it is recommended exploring the link between grammar-related teachers' beliefs and practices and students' achievement in different school stages.</i>
Keywords : Teachers' Beliefs, Teachers' Practices, Mother Tongue, Target Language, Grammar Teaching	
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Introduction

Teachers' beliefs steer their practices (Bandura, 1986; Borg, 1998, 2003; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Pajares, 1992). Accordingly, to understand the dynamics of students' performance and achievement, we should understand teachers' thoughts (Clark and Peterson, 1986). Relevant research refers to teachers' beliefs as 'teacher cognition' (Schulman, 1986), 'belief systems' (Pajares, 1992), 'teachers' maxims' (Richards, 1996), or 'personal pedagogical systems' that Borg (1998, p, 9) defined as "the stores of beliefs, knowledge, theories, assumptions, and attitudes that play a significant role in shaping teachers' instructional decisions".

Accordingly, studying teachers' beliefs assist understanding their practices and reveal innovative ideas that aid improving teacher training programs and enriching language pedagogy (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thawaite, 2001). Hence, teachers' beliefs are the source of their syllabi, aims, teaching and assessment strategies, and, consequently, defining teachers' practices and roles in the language classroom (Pajares, 1992).

From the teachers' beliefs and practices perspective, we are investigating grammar teaching in the light of one of Nishimuro and Borg (2013) suggested unanswered pedagogical questions that is whether grammar should be taught using the first or the target language or both. The value and the role of using L1 in the language classroom is a controversial issue to researchers, to teachers, and to national policies (Kharmah and Hajjaj, 1989;

Levine, 2003; Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Voicu, 2012). The medium of instruction used in the foreign language classrooms has been a controversial issue in which researchers as well as teachers have different opinions that range from conservativeness to feeling of guilt and non-professionalism (Almoayidi, 2018; Kharmah and Hajjaj, 1989; Levine, 2003; Littlewood and Yu, 2011; Voicu, 2012). Contrarily, other studies mentioned that using the students' own language facilitates learning, reduces cognitive processing loads, lessens pressure on the working memory, enhances verbal thinking and mental translation, and supports vocabulary retention. (e.g. Blyth, 1995; Kramsch, 1998; Alley, 2005; Belz, 2002; Levine, 2003, 2009, 2011).

There is a negative attitude towards using L1 in language classrooms that come from its association with the discredited Grammar Translation Method (Cook, 2010; Kelly and Bruen, 2015). After the abandonment of the Grammar Translation Method, very few language teaching approaches mentioned using L1 as if it became unquestionable that L2 is the only language to be used in EFL classroom (Cummins, 2007; Levine, 2003, Voicu, 2012). Levine (2003) stated that silencing the issue of using the mother tongue in the language classroom led teachers to follow their intuition and retrieve classroom experiences, instead of shaping "an individualized approach" (p. 343) that is based on pedagogical training, language research literature, official policies, and classroom experiences. Therefore, he stated that although they do not reflect actual pedagogical practices, students' and instructors' beliefs and perceptions of the mother tongue and the target language use aid taking pedagogical decisions and designing observational and experimental research.

Although it is a controversial issue in language pedagogy research, using the mother tongue is natural and inevitable inside the language classroom (Littlewood and Yu, 2011). As a matter of fact, in most foreign language contexts, teachers share the mother tongue with their students, and usually the classroom is the only place where they are both exposed to the target language (Richards 2017). This teaching context is the monolingual which Voicu (2012) described as a reality for the majority of language teachers. What remains is looking for the variant amount of L1 use, and the functions that L1 is needed for in the language classroom.

1.1. Problem, purpose and questions of the study

Grammar instruction is an issue that language teachers still have to discuss and resolve (Ellis, 2002, 2006; Richards and Reppen, 2014). Up to the present time, there is no consensus among language educators on how best to teach grammar, therefore, language research suggested studying teachers' grammar-related beliefs and practices to arrive at effective teaching methods (e.g. Ashton, 2014; Nishimuro and Borg, 2013; Pajares, 1992; Richards, 1996).

In an attempt to improve grammar teaching in Jordan, this study aims at investigating teachers' beliefs and practices concerning teaching grammar through English and/or Arabic languages, and examining whether or not the teachers' beliefs match their grammar teaching practices, and the reasons for this (mis)match.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are Jordanian EFL teachers' beliefs regarding language as the medium of grammar instruction?
2. What are Jordanian EFL teachers' actual practices related to language as the medium of grammar instruction?
3. How consistent are teachers' beliefs and actual classroom practices concerning language as the medium of grammar instruction?

1.2. Significance of the study

This research is supposed to add to the body of scholarly literature on the topic of grammar teaching, and expected to provide answers specific to Jordanian EFL teachers' grammar-related beliefs and classroom practices. It is an attempt to gain insights that may be beneficial for teachers, researchers and policy makers, especially with the little relevant research in Jordan.

1.3. Operational definitions of terms

1. Language: It is a multi-agent, complex, dynamic, adaptive system (Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2006, p. 558).
2. Belief: It is an attitude consistently applied to an activity. (Eisenhart et. al., 1988: 54).
3. Grammar: It is a description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey (Thornbury, 1999, p.13).
4. Grammar Teaching: drawing the learners' attention to the forms and structures of the language and giving them rules of usage (Mohammed, 1993, p: 59).

2. Previous research

Following are examples of relevant research about language as a medium of instruction in language teaching methods, in language teaching research, and in research in the Jordanian context.

2.1. language as a medium of instruction in language teaching methods

Translation in the language classroom was rejected by most structure and meaning-oriented language teaching methodologies (Voicu, 2012). Most of the twentieth century language teaching methods allowed limited use, if any, of the mother tongue in EFL classrooms, while the advocates of the monolingual principle had different reasons to abandon L1. For example, the Direct Method and Audiolingualism abandoned using L1 to avoid language interference and to lead students to practice thinking using L2. The Direct Method was so

conservative that it allowed using only monolingual dictionaries (Cummins, 2007). The Silent Way, Suggestopedia, and Total Physical Response allowed using L1 only for classroom management purposes, such as giving instructions. Communicative Language teaching method and Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis banned L1 use to maximize the target language input.

Conversely, Community Language Learning permitted using L1 to make students feel more secure during conversations. In this method, students should agree on a topic and negotiate it in their mother tongues then they translate it to the target language (Richards and Rodgers, 1982). Lozano's Suggestopedia incorporate principles of yoga and psychotherapy since it theorizes for learning best in a comfortable environment in which using L1 supposedly helps (Adamson, 2004).

Littlewood and Yu (2011) stated that the conservativeness of language approaches and national policies does not reflect the reality of language classes where teachers need to use L1 to build good social relationships with students, to ensure students' understanding, and to maintain classroom discipline. Littlewood and Yu (2011) stated that the advocates of the monolingual principle have different purposes for abandoning or minimizing L1 usage. For example, Krashen's (1985) comprehensible input drew a linguistic paradigm depending on learning through receiving and producing the target language. According to this approach, teachers are the models standing for utilizing L2 in teaching and communication to motivate students to learn and use the target language. Other linguistic methods such as the Direct Method and the Audio-lingual method restrain L1 usage to avoid language interference and to help students practice thinking using L2. According to Littlewood and Yu, the monolingual principle symbolizes the rejection of the Grammar Translation Method, a rejection that continued to appear in every following approach except for Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia. However, the conservativeness of language approaches and national policies like those of UK and Hong Kong does not reflect the reality of language classes.

Voicu (2012) summarized the different insights of language teaching approaches and methods about using L1 in EFL classrooms. The Grammar Translation Method was based on translating texts from L2 to L1, the thing that was later prohibited by language reformers. For example, Direct Method and Audiolingualism abandoned using L1 to avoid language interference. Some alternative methods like the Silent Way and Suggestopedia allowed using L1 only when necessary during for example giving instructions. Then Community Language Learning permitted using L1 to make students feel more secure during conversations. In Total Physical Response, where students are supposed to understand the teacher through body movements, L1 was allowed only during introductory lessons. And in Communicative Language Teaching, unless necessary, L1 is totally prohibited. Voicu added that all teaching methods allowed using L1 in specific amounts and for certain purposes except for the Direct Method and Audiolingualism which are based on the structural habit formation principle which had been frequently criticized for ignoring students' affect, cultural backgrounds, and language proficiency.

Scheffler (2012) stated that monolingualism was a major ELT principle in most of the twentieth century teaching methods, whereas in the twenty-first century language research started calling for a re-evaluation implementing translation as an instructional procedure. The structure-oriented methodologies rejected translation because it results in language interference, while meaning-oriented methodologies rejected translation because using L1 lessens the foreign language input. However, the Grammar Translation Method which is based on translation and on explicit grammar instruction is still utilized in many parts of the world. According to Scheffler, in SLA research, translation was reported to be continually utilized in testing, the acquisition of lexis, the teaching of writing and grammar, and in classroom management routine. According to Scheffler, translation can be helpful if it is implemented to compare and contrast L1 with L2 in for example conscious raising tasks.

2.2. language as a medium of instruction in language teaching research

The twenty-first century language research started calling for a re-evaluation that entail implementing translation as an instructional procedure (Scheffler, 2012). Hall and Cock (2012) considered using L1 a positive pedagogical resource, a conclusion that is consistent with many research findings (e.g. Butzkamm, 1989; Cook, 2001; Widdoson, 2003; Cummins, 2007; Butzkamm and Caldwell, 2009).

Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009, 2012) called for a paradigm shift or 'theoretical house cleaning' in foreign language teaching that is mainly characterized by benefiting from the mother tongue use to gain easy access to foreign language grammars. They believed that L1 use refresh and revive language teaching as language teachers utilize double repertoires.

Hall and Cock (2012) reviewed language research related to using L1 in EFL classrooms and concluded that research findings are not adopted in real life education, the thing that is reflected firstly by teachers' ignorance of the benefits of L1 use, and secondly by banning L1 use by curricula and material designers. They summarized the goals for using L1 listed by research in three main types:

1. Core goals, such as teaching new vocabulary and grammar, building on prior linguistic knowledge and experiences, and guaranteeing students' understanding.
2. Framework goals, such as giving instructions and assigning homework.

3. Social goals, such as expressing personal interest, reducing learners' anxiety, showing solidarity, and creating a positive classroom environment.

According to them, during grammar classes, teachers resort to using L1 to guarantee students' understanding, to clarify complicated points to reduce ambiguity, and to help students understand meanings and functions of the English grammatical rule and be able to generate new sentences. From a psycholinguistic perspective, it was found that using L1 allows for language transfer of cognitive base from one language to another, helps learners construct language awareness, gives students the chance to compare L1 with L2, and let them operate the same learning strategies across languages. Moreover, drawing upon Dewey's humanistic and democratic educational philosophy and also Piaget's constructivist account of learning, Hall and Cook advocated the importance of building on prior knowledge, the thing that not only focuses on information and skills, but also on recognizing the learners' own identity.

Swain and Lapkin (1995, 1998, 2000) highlighted the importance of using L1 in collaborative dialogues in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building using L1 and L2. Swain and Lapkin (2000) summarized Villamil and de Guerrero (1996) five recommended strategies for using L1 by collaborating students with using L1 for making meaning of a text, retrieving language from memory, exploring and expanding content, guiding through language tasks, and maintaining dialogue.

Cummins (2007) stated that abandoning L1 usage in language classrooms was built upon three main theoretical assumptions: that the foreign language is the target language, the no-translation assumption that stems from discrediting the Grammar Translation Method, and that the mother tongue and the foreign language should not interfere. According to Cummins, this 'monolingual principle' which was first termed by Howatt (1984), deprived language learners from great opportunities to learn through bilingual instructional strategies. Therefore, he listed another three theoretical principles that contradicted the monolingual assumptions. First, according to cognitive psychology, learning builds on prior knowledge whether it is encoded in L1 or L2. The second principle comes from across languages literacy-related skills and knowledge in which cross lingual transfer is a normal process. The third principle is Cook's (2007) 'multi-competence' that proposed that second language learners have special mental structures that is different from the ones that monolinguals have.

On the other hand, Nation (2003) considered that teachers should maximize the target language use since their job is basically developing linguistic abilities of their students who rarely encounter English outside language classes. He stated that when students share the same L1, it is natural, easier, more effective, and less embarrassing to resort to using it, however, using L1 started competing the space left for L2 because students are not able to express their ideas in English, used to speak L1, shy, or unmotivated to learn. Nation suggested many ways to maximize L2 use in language classes, such as reminding students of the importance of practicing English, encouraging them to pretend to be English speakers, giving them tasks that suit their linguistic abilities, and giving classroom instructions in English.

Voicu (2012) stated that the overuse of the mother tongue in language classes can become a misleading tool, a bad habit, a source of language errors, and a factor minimizing the target language input. According to him, language teachers had frequently reported that the monolingual principle is an obstacle to language, however, Voicu recommended "using the target language as the medium of instruction when possible and switching to the mother tongue when it is really necessary" (p. 218).

Richards (2017) stated that the criteria for being a good teacher are having content knowledge that enables teachers to explain grammar in the target language, and pedagogical knowledge that facilitates using grammar in for example writing, and discourse skills that allow teachers to teach English through English, the thing that depends on their communicative ability and mastering the instructional mode of discourse. Nevertheless, according to Richards, since the majority of EFL teachers worldwide today are non-native speakers of English, it is worth discussing whether teachers really need to have a native-like language ability.

Regarding the relationship between language proficiency and teaching ability, Richards (2017) stated that the level of language proficiency affects the teachers' decision making in three stages. First, before teaching, teachers choose the methods and tasks that suit their communicative ability. Richards listed fifteen examples of pre teaching choices that are based on the teacher's language proficiency. Second, during teaching, language has regulative and instructional functions that are supposed to be presented in English to achieve scaffolded and dialogic learning through activities, questioning, and discussions. Finally, after teaching, the choice of follow-up lessons, activities, tests, and reflections on students' performance is also contingent upon the linguistic communicative ability of the teacher. Richards finally suggested that teacher education programs should not focus only on general language proficiency and variable teaching methods, but also on training teachers how to teach English through English as a fundamental part of their professional competence, as it is the case in Australia, Vietnam, and Hong Kong.

Richards (2017) stated that since the majority of EFL teachers worldwide today are non-native speakers of English, it is worth discussing whether teachers really need to have a native-like language ability. According to him, the criteria for being a good teacher are having content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and ability, and discourse skills. The first component of teacher expertise is content knowledge, which Richards

defined as “the teachers’ understanding of their teaching subjects” (p.5). In the case of teaching English, these subjects are linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. This disciplinary knowledge forms language awareness “a teacher’s knowledge of language systems, particularly grammar” (p. 6), but it does not practically enable teachers to convey what they know to their students. Secondly, pedagogical knowledge and ability entails knowledge of the learners’ levels, curriculum, teaching context, and teaching methods. While the content knowledge is a declarative knowledge that enables teachers to explain grammar in the target language, the pedagogical knowledge is a procedural one that facilitates using grammar in for example writing. The third component is discourse skills that allow teachers to teach English through English. It depends on the teacher’s communicative ability and mastering the instructional mode of discourse that Young et.al. (2014) described as the language skills that should be mastered by native and non-native English language teachers, but unfortunately they are not a formal pre requirement of a teacher job.

Hall (2018) maintained that English teachers are language teachers and users that should continuously receive declarative procedural knowledge. To improve linguistic competence of non-native English teachers, Hall adopted the suggestions provided by Snow, Kamhl-Stein, and Brinton (2006, p. 247) such as increasing teachers’ exposure to the target language, linguistic consciousness raising activities, and overt feedback, helping teachers to value themselves as non-native speakers and teachers, training teachers to implement the methods that suit their contexts and their students’ needs and interests.

William and Burden (1997) attributed the continuous use of traditional methods, to the weakness of teacher education programs and weak linguistic abilities of English teachers:

In many countries teachers are not provided with a professional training; in some contexts, the prerequisite for teaching is a primary education. It can be quicker and easier to teach teachers to use the steps involved in an audiolingual approach: presentation, practice, repetition and drills. Teachers can also follow the steps provided in their coursebook in a fairly mechanical way. Teachers who lack confidence tend to be less frightened of these techniques, whereas allowing language to develop through meaningful interaction in the classroom can be considerably daunting, and requires teachers with some professional knowledge. An audiolingual methodology can also be used by teachers whose own knowledge of the target language is limited (p. 12)

Copland and Neokleous (2010) investigated using L1 in two after-school Cypriot private language institutions. The researchers observed and audio-recorded language classes of four experienced female teachers, then they interviewed those teachers to discuss their beliefs about using L1, which is Greek. Based on the audio recordings, the researchers divided using L1 into eleven functions: organizing, explaining or revising language systems and skills, instructions, questions and answers, reprimands, jokes, praise, translation, markers, providing hints, and giving opinions. To reveal complexities and contradictions of L1 usage, the researchers chose to study and discuss only the functions of explaining or revising language systems and skills, questions and answers, and translating. The observation of language classes showed also that three out of the four teachers use L1 frequently during class, although, the post interviews showed that all four teachers believed that using L1 in language classrooms should be very limited. Discussing the discrepancy between beliefs and practices with teachers revealed a sense of guilt toward using L1 because teachers thought that it is a negative class routine regardless of the purpose of using it. The researchers concluded first that language teachers should be informed more about recent pedagogical trends and research findings asserting that teachers should value their proficiency and use of their L1 in language classes (e.g. Meiring & Norman, 2002; Butzkamm, 2003; Brooks-Lewis, 2009). Secondly, the study stated that teachers should be aware of the purpose and the amount of using L1. Regarding the contradiction between teachers’ beliefs and practices, the researchers described it as “teachers struggle to reconcile pedagogic ideals with contextual realities, leaving them feeling damned if they use L1 and damned if they do not”. (p. 2).

Scheffler (2012) investigated secondary school students’ views of using translation during grammar classes. The subjects were 45 male and female students aged 16-19 in three randomly selected classes in a randomly selected secondary school. The subject students were asked to fill in a questionnaire and write some comments after attending two different grammar lessons, one implementing the Grammar Translation Method and the other using communicative activity. The type of grammar was chosen on purpose to be problematic for Polish learners of English language. The results showed that the majority of students considered the grammar translation class more interesting and better to comprehend the rules than the communicative class, the thing that made them feel more secure and confident. The study recommended taking students’ feelings and expectations in consideration before designing grammar classes.

Ahmad, Radzuan, and Hussain (2018) investigated the beliefs and motivations of EFL teachers and students regarding using Arabic language during grammar classes at Saudi universities. The stratified random sample of the study consisted of 40 female and male Arab and non-Arab EFL university teachers, and 60 female and male students, all approached by means of a questionnaire. The study revealed first that both female and male Arab and non-Arab teachers agree that Arabic can be used during grammar classes to guarantee students’

comprehension, to maintain classroom discipline, and for getting students' feedback. The reasons for using L1 for those three purposes were students' low English language proficiency, and the teachers' attempt to build good relationships with their students, and to save class time. Second, the non-Arab teachers believed that EFL classroom is the only place for students' exposure to L2, therefore they suggested more planned use of Arabic. And finally, most female and male EFL students believed that L1 can be used during grammar instruction but it doesn't necessarily lead them to maintain discipline neither help them to build good relations with their teachers.

Levine (2003) investigated the pedagogical beliefs of 600 undergraduate FL students and 163 FL university instructors about using L1 in the language classroom, the amount of target language use, and the reported anxiety of exclusive usage of the target language. Regarding target language -use anxiety, the research hypothesized that the more the foreign language is used in class the more the anxiety students will experience, this assumption that was theoretically based on the three common research findings in language literature: students consider resorting to using L1 while speaking L2 a reflection of the students' target language weakness, students feel anxious when they are asked to stand up and speak using L2, and that allowing students to use L1 correlates positively with their sense of security. After analyzing the results of an anonymous, internet-based questionnaire, the study showed that both L1 and L2 are variably used in language classes in many US universities and revealed a negative correlation between target language use and anxiety. Levine recommended questioning beliefs as well as observing actual classroom practices and called for modeling teaching guidelines that specifies when L1 use is beneficial and when it is not.

2.3. Grammar teaching research in the Jordanian context

In Jordan, as in most foreign language contexts, EFL teachers work in a monolingual context where they share the mother tongue (Arabic) with their students, and use English language only in the classroom which is usually the only place where teachers and learners are exposed to the target language (English). Many studies investigated the amount and role of L1 use in the Jordanian teaching context.

Maqableh and Smadi (2001) investigated the amount, value, and teaching aspects of using Arabic during English lessons. The sample was 40 female and male language teachers and 1158 students. The researcher collected data through observing lessons, testing the effect of using L1 on students, and a questionnaire to explore teachers and students' attitudes toward using Arabic. The results showed that teachers used Arabic language most of the lesson time and that using Arabic affects students' achievement positively. The questionnaire revealed that teachers and students support the use of Arabic in teaching English, and that most teachers believed that using it was effective in improving students' achievement. The researcher recommended using less Arabic during English lessons and using classical not colloquial Arabic.

Mustafa (2001) explored language proficiency of secondary stage EFL teachers in Ramtha Directorate of Education in Jordan. All male and female secondary stage teachers answered an adapted version of the test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) that comprised reading comprehension, structure and vocabulary sections. The results showed that the overall level of teachers' proficiency is medium in structure, and low in vocabulary and reading comprehension. The study revealed also that there is no statistical significance related to sex, teaching experiences, or qualification.

3. Method and procedures

The participants of the study were nine experienced female Jordanian EFL teachers working in the five all-girl secondary public schools of ArRamtha Educational Directorate in Jordan. The participants were chosen randomly from fourteen teachers, which makes the selected sample equals 65% of all female English language teachers who teach the eleventh and twelfth grades in ArRamtha, Jordan. The following table provides details about the sample of the study:

Table 1: Participants of the study

The participants	Educational background	Years of teaching experience	The grades they teach	The grammar lesson observed
1	MA	20	12 th	Verbs to do
2	B	21	11 th	Causative sentences
3	MA	16	11 th	Revision of verbs to do
4	B	22	12 th	State and dynamic verbs
5	B	16	11 th	The present perfect tense
6	B	2	12 th	A review of 9 tenses
7	B	22	12 th	Simple past & past continuous
8	B	15	12 th	Past perfect
9	B	17	12 th	Past perfect

Table 1 above illustrates the number of the participating teachers, their educational backgrounds, years of teaching experience, the grades they teach, and the observed grammar lessons.

This study follows a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach. As for data collection, the instruments of the study were first a questionnaire to identify teachers' grammar-related pedagogical beliefs. The questionnaire, an adapted version of Mohamed's (2006), was divided into two parts. The first one aims at establishing a profile of the teachers' educational backgrounds, their years of experience, and the grades they teach. The second is related to teachers' grammar-related beliefs in regard to using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

The second research instrument was a checklist documenting teachers' grammar-related practices. The researcher attended nine grammar lessons and fill in the classroom observation checklist that is also an adapted version of Mohamed's (2006). The aim of classroom observations was providing direct evidence of teachers' grammar-related practices which was thought to be more precise and productive to the research.

The third data collection instrument was the focus-group that the researcher arranged by inviting the participating teachers to discuss their beliefs and practices. The focus-group aims at understanding own explanations of their beliefs and practices and relating them to any potential factors causing a (mis)match between them.

To establish their validity, the instruments were reviewed by ten juries who are university professors of linguistics, curriculum and instruction that judged the appropriateness of the instruments for the purpose of the study. Since both instruments were adapted, reliability was established by the original author Mohamed (2006).

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. The results of the study

4.1.1. The results of the first research question

The results of the first research question, which asks about the teachers' grammar-related beliefs, are summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Teachers' grammar-related beliefs as gleaned from the questionnaire

No.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	%
1	I use Arabic during grammar lessons	4.11	0.928	82.2
2	I translate English grammar rules to Arabic.	4.22	0.972	84.4

Concerning using the Arabic language as a medium of instruction during English grammar lessons, this study revealed that 82.2% of the respondents believed that they can use Arabic during grammar lessons, and 84.4% believed that they can translate rules to Arabic whenever needed.

4.1.2. The results of the second research question

The second research question addressed the teachers' grammar-related classroom practices. The data was collected through the researcher's notations on the classroom observation checklist during classroom visits. The results are given in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Teachers' grammar-related practices as revealed by the observation

No.	Item	n	%
1	Using Arabic during grammar lesson	8	88.9
2	Translating English grammar rules to Arabic whenever needed	8	88.9

Concerning the medium of grammar instruction, the classroom observations revealed that during the grammar lesson eight out of nine teachers (88.9%) used Arabic and translated English grammar rules to Arabic. Only one teacher (11.1%) did not use Arabic words and did not translate English grammar rules to Arabic.

4.1.3. The results of the third research question

Regarding the consistency, or lack thereof, between the teachers' grammar-related beliefs and their actual classroom practices in terms of the medium of instruction, all nine teachers' beliefs were consistent with their classroom practices. In the questionnaire, eight out of nine teachers reported that they use Arabic during grammar lessons and translate rules to Arabic whenever needed. This belief was consistent with their practices as they explained rules and usages in Arabic and translated terms, rules, and examples to Arabic. Similarly, the only teacher who did not use Arabic during her lesson was the one who reported earlier in the questionnaire that she neither uses Arabic during grammar lessons nor translate rules to Arabic.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1 The discussion of teachers' beliefs

The questionnaire in this study showed that only one out of nine teachers believed that she should not use Arabic during grammar lessons nor translate rules to Arabic, a belief that she actually practiced during her grammar lesson. During focus-group discussions, she commented on her belief saying "why should I use Arabic when I can speak English fluently". She added that at the beginning of each school year her students feel shocked because she does not say any Arabic word, but by time they become used to her style. She believed that if all teachers decide to speak exclusively English, students will work hard to master English language at least to be able to understand what their teachers say. Her belief was supported by another teacher who said "using Arabic really deprives excellent students from listening to and speaking English, but it is a blessing to mediocre and weak students".

In contrast, one participating teacher said that if she uses English as the only medium of instruction throughout the lesson, she will surely find at the end that few students could understand her. A second teacher believed that there is no need to speak English all the time even if it is an English language class. A third teacher commented that she can explain the whole lesson in English, but will feel uncomfortable because she knows that weak students will completely lose her. She added that even in the Scientific stream of the eleventh-grade whose students are usually better than students of other branches, only three or four students can understand an English-only grammar lesson. Teachers also mentioned that they feel comfortable when they teach English grammar using Arabic because this is the way they were taught as students.

4.2.2 The discussion of teachers' practices

The observation of actual grammar lessons revealed that eight out of nine teachers use Arabic as a medium of instruction. The only teacher who did not use any Arabic word during her grammar lesson introduced the rule, examples, exercises, and gave classroom instructions through English language only.

During lessons, teachers were using Arabic to review previous structures, to introduce new rules and translate the examples and the details of exercises, and to give general classroom instructions. During discussions, they explained their excessive use of Arabic by guaranteeing students' understanding of rules and examples, maintaining the flow of the lesson, saving time, and helping students understand the meanings and functions of the English grammatical rule.

the researchers divided using L1 into eleven functions: organizing, explaining or revising language systems and skills, instructions, questions and answers, reprimands, jokes, praise, translation, markers, providing hints, and giving opinions. To reveal complexities and contradictions of L1 usage, the researchers chose to study and discuss only the functions of explaining or revising language systems and skills, questions and answers, and translating. Arabic can be used during grammar classes to guarantee students' comprehension, to maintain classroom discipline, and for getting students' feedback.

4.2.3 The discussion of the (mis)match between teachers' beliefs and practices

Following are some notes on the (mis)match found between teachers' beliefs and practices in regard to the medium of grammar instruction along with teachers' comments and explanations:

1. In this study, teachers' beliefs and practices were consistent in regard to the use of Arabic during grammar lessons, i.e., Arabic was not used by the teacher who believed that it shouldn't be used during English lessons, and it was used by the eight teachers who reported that they can use it.
2. Teachers did not seem aware of the beneficial functions of using Arabic.
3. Teachers were aware that the excessive use of Arabic contradicts the Ministry of Education standards and the basics of English language teaching. Nonetheless, there was a consensus among teachers that through experience they found that using Arabic is beneficial for the majority of students.
4. In the time that the only teacher who did not use Arabic was attributing her matched beliefs and practices to her trust in her own strong communicative competence which students became used to, the majority of teachers who used Arabic were attributing their matched beliefs and practices to the weakness of their students' linguistic competence.

4.2.4. Factors: Descriptive and Interpretive Representation of the (Mis)Match between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

For the present study, it was in general revealed that there is a match between teachers' beliefs and practices in regard to using Arabic during grammar lessons. Following are the factors behind this (mis)match concluded from the discussions took place in the focus-group.

4.2.4.1. Contextual Factors

The mismatch between teachers' beliefs and practices was found to be relevant to direct contextual factors in this study as in many other empirical studies (e.g. Assalahi, 2013; Basoz, 2014; Borg, 2003; Breen et. al, 2001; Farrell and Bennis, 2013; Farrell and Lim, 2005; Freeman, 2002; Mohammaed, 1991, 1996; Nishimuro and Borg, 2013; Phipps and Borg, 2009; Thabet, 2002; Yusof, Narayanan, and Arif, 2019). During focus-group discussions, teachers attributed Arabic use to the difficult teaching contexts in which they suffer from busy schedules, crowded classroom, heavy teaching loads, long syllabus and time constraints.

Moreover, the general social and institutional context was apparently a dominant factor steering teachers' decisions as it was observed during discussions that teachers make sure to follow the pattern that is socially and institutionally acceptable by doing what everyone does: teaching grammar in Arabic. During discussions, one teacher said "teachers are free to believe in many things, but their highest priority is avoiding students' and parents' objection or even refusal. That is why I quitted teaching the twelfth-grade; there was too much to do to guarantee pleasing students, while things are much better with eleventh graders".

Nevertheless, taking context in consideration can be considered a positive teaching attitude. Some empirical studies (e.g. Phipps and Borg, 2009) mentioned that the discrepancy the context creates between teacher's beliefs and practices reflect teachers' deep understanding of language learning practical requirements.

On the other hand, some studies questioned the importance of the restrictions that contextual constraints impose on practice. Louw, Todd, and Jimarkon (2014) maintained that it is supposed that in conditions where the teacher can control contextual factors the mismatch between their beliefs and practices should be reduced, while empirical investigation (e.g. Lee, 2009) revealed that it is not.

4.2.4.2. Students' preferences and language proficiency

The focus-group discussions showed that twelfth-grade teachers take in consideration students' motivation, preferences, and expectations. In general, twelfth-grade students are motivated by passing the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination, prefer to save time and effort at school, and expect to have simple direct grammar lessons. At this final stage, students come to school to review what they had already learned since nearly all of them, with very few exceptions, are privately tutored. Phipps and Borg (2009) stated that adhering to students' expectations overrides teachers' grammar-related beliefs and so creates a mismatch between their beliefs and practices.

This students' exam driven motivation force secondary English teachers to use Arabic even if this ends with students with weak listening and speaking skills. According to Alhabahba, Pandian, and Mahfood (2016) because most Jordanian students study mainly to pass exams, the linguistic knowledge they receive is temporary.

Students' low language proficiency was considered during teachers' discussions as the major reason for Arabic use. Teachers explained that students' weak linguistic abilities make it hard to keep speaking English to them, therefore, to guarantee students' understanding, teachers resort to use Arabic as medium of grammar instruction. This is also applicable to the scientific stream whose students are usually more proficient and well-motivated because they were basically accepted in the scientific stream after having the highest averages in the tenth-grade.

According to the reports of Jordanian Teachers Syndicate, the results of the national evaluation of language skills (2014) revealed that 22% of the first, second, and third-grade students were not able to read neither English nor Arabic words. Likewise, the international language testing system (2013-2014) reported that Jordanian test-takers scored very low (in Alhabahba et al. 2016: p. 3). The grammatical competence weakness of Jordanian EFL students was also reported by many studies (e.g., Alhabahba et al. 2016; Malkawi and Smadi, 2018).

In educational research, one main reason for studying teachers' beliefs and practices is understanding the dynamics of students' performance and achievement (Borg, 2003; Clark and Peterson, 1986). It is supposed that teachers' practices should maintain a unidirectional, interactive relationship with the effectiveness of teaching which can be gauged through students' outcomes. However, in spite of weak learning outcomes, teachers do not change their practices easily the thing that was repeatedly reported in the literature (e.g. Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). Apparently, teachers stick to the same practices and therefore keep having the same results: poor outcomes.

4.2.4.3. Teachers' experiences as learners

During focus-group discussions, it was revealed that teachers feel comfortable when they teach English grammar in Arabic because this is the way they were taught English grammar as students, a conclusion mentioned by many studies (e.g. Farrell and Lim, 2005; Phipps and Borg, 2009; Yusof, Narayanan, and Arif, 2019). In the Arab world, English language teachers were brought up according to form-focused instruction traditions (Asassfeh et al. 2012; Thabet, 2012). In fact, EFL teachers experienced the same practices as learners, through their teachers, and as teachers, through their colleagues. Teachers teach the way they have been taught, the thing that can be explained by the emotional attachment with their experiences as learners (Farrell and Lim, 2005; Nishimuro and Borg, 2013).

This explains why teachers stay in their comfort zone where they maintain common and familiar practices instead of being distinguished by trying new approaches to grammar and enjoying the capability of using English language during lessons. Teachers were after feeling accepted and secured rather than fulfilling their distinguished self-images as teachers through adopting beliefs and practices that are popular in public schools.

Thus, during meeting teachers, teachers described using Arabic as "the thing that everyone does". Pajares (1992) proposed that

Beliefs help individuals to identify with one another and form groups and social systems. [...] belief systems reduce dissonance and confusion, even when dissonance is logically justified by the inconsistent beliefs one holds. [...] People grow comfortable with their beliefs, and these beliefs become their “self” so that individuals come to be identified and understood by the very nature of the beliefs, the habits they own (p. 317).

One of the participating teachers who had been teaching English for only two years received a distinguished, modern teacher education in Queen Rania Academy in Amman. She said that for two years she had been trained to teach English in the most up-to-date approaches, but once she was assigned in a public school she immediately conformed to the traditional style of English teachers to be a part of the general current of pedagogical practices. She added that “I did not think much about it as there is nothing wrong with using Arabic language which makes things easier for students”.

Research findings have been reported as ineffective in forming teachers’ beliefs (hence, practices) compared to their own experiences as teachers and learners (Nishimuro and Borg, 2013). Teachers never mentioned language research, they were talking only about their experiences as language learners and teachers. Actually, the application of research findings was reported to fail in changing both preservice and in-service teachers’ beliefs (Borg, 2003; Clark and Peterson, 1986; Ellis, 1998; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). This may be also applicable to teacher trainers. According to Louw, Todd and Jimarkon (2014) to evaluate teachers, teacher trainers rely on their experiences as teachers, therefore one would find that trainers’ and teachers’ beliefs are similar. These beliefs are experiential beliefs that were found to be consistent with trainers’ practices, while their received beliefs, which are associated with methodologies that trainers have to conform to, were not. The conflict between teachers’ experiential and received beliefs explains teachers’ L1 use although the Ministry of Education policy requires to use English language while implementing various grammar teaching strategies, such as induction, group and pair-work, problem solving, critical thinking, or activity-based instruction. However, it seems that avoiding Arabic use is not easy because teachers (and trainers) know from their shared experience that it is not easy.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Teachers gain massive amounts of knowledge from their personal and professional experiences, which can be only revealed through investigating their beliefs and practices. Some studies showed that the beliefs teachers hold are consistent with their practices (Johnson, 1994; Kagan, 1992; Ng and Farrell, 2003; Nishimuro and Borg, 2013; Pajares, 1992). However, many studies provided evidence that teachers’ beliefs do not always match their practices (Farrell and Lim, 2005; Phipps and Borg, 2009).

The analysis of teachers’ beliefs and practices in teaching grammar showed that generally these were aligned in regard to using Arabic as a medium of instruction during grammar lessons. The factors behind this matching was concluded from teachers’ comments and discussions, and these were contextual factors, the preferences and language proficiency of students, teachers’ experiences as learners, and weak teacher training.

To summarize, although they may have changed teachers’ beliefs, the low grades and weak outcomes of EFL Jordanian students did not change teachers’ practices. Pajares (1992) claimed that even when the currently adopted beliefs and practices proved to be ineffective, it is still difficult to change them unless challenged. This study attempted to make teacher think about and evaluate their own teaching beliefs and practices, but it is highly recommended that they should be challenged through a new innovative type of teacher training programs and activities.

5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are put forth EFL teachers, researchers and the Ministry of Education. It is recommended that EFL teachers maximize L2 input. It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education in Jordan enhance current teaching quality through planning one teacher training activity every school semester, and design a teacher education program that helps teachers understand their own experiences through training them to practice reflection to be able to evaluate their beliefs and practices and improve them. There has been little specific qualitative research into grammar teaching beliefs and practices. It is recommended that researchers target improving current teacher training programs by recording and reporting effective teaching experiences of EFL teachers, explore the link between grammar-related teachers’ beliefs and practices and students’ learning outcomes in different school stages, and study the beliefs teachers hold about the value of their tasks as teachers and about the skills and the abilities that they need to perform these tasks as suggested by Pintrich (1990).

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