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BELIEFS IN TEACHING GRAMMAR AND COMMON CLASSROOM PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA

ELISHA NURUSUS

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BELIEFS IN TEACHING GRAMMAR AND COMMON CLASSROOM PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA

By

ELISHA NURUSUS

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ELISHA BINTI NURUSUS

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Chairman : Associate Professor Arshad Abd. Samad, PhD
Faculty   : Educational Studies

This study looked at the teachers' beliefs using the data collected from a survey conducted on 345 English Language teachers teaching in secondary schools from state of Melaka and Perak in Malaysia. Teachers' beliefs play a crucial role in teachers' decision-making process regarding the type of materials, activities and instruction they use in their lessons. A teacher's belief on how their learners should learn also instrumental in ensuring the effectiveness of their teaching regardless of the approach they take. Every teacher own a set of personal beliefs regarding the teaching of grammar and how grammar should be taught to the learners. The teachers' years of experience in teaching, their academic background and the location of the school can easily shape teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching. The sample was decided using cluster sampling and Cochran formula of sampling was used to determine the sample size. The instrument for the study is self-developed questionnaire, modeled after the computational model of second language acquisition by Ellis (1998). The items in the questionnaire pertaining teachers' beliefs were measured using 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1, Strongly Disagree to 5, Strongly Agree. The instrument pinpoint four aspects of grammar instruction in the classroom that English Language teachers can use – Input, Elicit L2 Knowledge, student Output and Feedback or error correction. One of the aims of the study is to find out what is the most subscribed belief that the participating English Language teachers have. The study also looked into how teachers of different years of teaching experience viewed the importance of the four aspects of grammar instruction. Analysis also done to look at the importance of each of the four aspects of grammar teaching instruction according to Ellis (1998) by the teachers' years of experience, academic background and school location were also looked into. The teachers'

common classroom practices when they are teaching grammar in the classroom was also identified. The results indicated that a large number of teachers involved in this study believe that Feedback is the most important teaching instruction in grammar teaching. The repeated measures ANOVA results indicate an interesting pattern where the teachers with more than 30 years of experience (F, 13.97, p<0.5) placed more importance on providing Feedback. The teachers with less than 7 years of experience (F, 13.74, p<0.5) placed more importance on Output. The pairwise comparison for teachers' academic background indicates that teachers with TESL background have more preference for Feedback (27.95) and L2 Knowledge (25.20). The result also shows that teachers without TESL background prefer Feedback (28.80). The pairwise comparisons for teachers in urban locations showed significant values between Feedback and all the other emphases with Wilks' Lambda = .732, F (3, 165) = 20.18, p< .05. There are significant differences in all pairwise comparisons except between Output and Input for teachers in rural locations with Lambda = .546, F (3, 146) = 40.45, p < .05. The common classroom practices among teachers who subscribed to Feedback, Output and Input is to frequently use Practice 3 which is correcting students' grammatical errors in the class. Meanwhile, teachers who subscribed to Explicit L2 Knowledge found to be frequently use Practice 2, providing as many examples as possible of the grammar structures. The study discussed the implications and effects of the results and findings from this study on the stakeholders and future research.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

KEPERCAYAAN DALAM PENGAJARAN TATABAHASA DAN AMALAN LAZIM DALAM BILIK DARJAH DI SEKOLAH-SEKOLAH DI MALAYSIA

Oleh

ELISHA BINTI NURUSUS

Oktober 2016

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Arshad Abd. Samad, PhD
Fakulti   : Pengajian Pendidikan

Kajian ini memfokuskan kepada kepercayaan guru menggunakan data 345 maklumbalas yang dikumpulkan daripada guru-guru Bahasa Inggeris di sekolah yang mengajar di negeri Melaka dan Perak. Kepercayaan seseorang guru memainkan peranan penting terhadap keputusan mereka berkaitan dengan bahan pengajaran, aktiviti dan arahan yang digunakan semasa waktu pengajaran. Kepercayaan sesorang guru tentang bagaimana sesi pembelajaran juga penting dalam memastikan keberkesanan pengajaran mereka tidak kira apa pendekatan yang diambil. Setiap guru mempunyai satu set kepercayaan mengenai pengajaran tatabahasa dan bagaimana ia patut diajar kepada pelajar. Tempoh pengalaman guru dalam mengajar, latarbelakang pendidikan dan lokasi sekolah tempat mengajar dapat membentuk kepercayaan guru terhadap pengajaran tatabahasa. Sampel bagi kajian ini ditentukan menggunakan teknik kluster and saiz sampel ditentukan menggunakan *Cochran formula of sampling*. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk kajian ini adalah dibina sendiri berdasarkan model penguasaan bahasa kedua oleh Ellis (1998). Kandungan instrumen kaji selidik diukur menggunakan *5-point Likert scale*, dari skala 1, Sangat Tidak Setuju sehingga 5, Sangat Tidak Bersetuju. Instrumen yang dibina adalah berfokus kepada empat aspek pengajaran tatabahasa yang boleh digunakan oleh guru Bahasa Inggeris di dalam kelas – *input*, pengetahuan bahasa kedua, *output* pelajar dan maklum balas guru. Salah satu matlamat kajian adalah untuk mengenalpasti kepercayaan kebanyakan guru Bahasa Inggeris yang terlibat. Kajian ini juga melihat bagaimana tempoh pengalaman guru yang berbeza berbanding dengan kepentingan empat kaedah pengajaran tatabahasa. Analisa juga dilakukan untuk melihat tahap kepentingan bagi setiap empat kaedah pengajaran tatabahasa menurut Ellis (1998) berdasarkan tempoh pengalaman

guru, latarbelakang akademik guru dan lokasi sekolah.Praktis yang kebiasaan yang diamalkan oleh guru apabila mereka mengajar tatabahasa di dalam kelas turut dikenalpasti. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan guru yang terlibat di dalam kajian ini percaya bahawa maklum balas ialah kaedah pengajaran yang terpenting bagi pengajaran tatabahasa. Analisa *repeated measure* ANOVA yang ditemui menunjukkan keputusan bahawa guru yang berpengalaman 30 tahun dan lebih (F, 13.97, p<0.5) meletakkan memberikan maklum balas kepada murid sebagai lebih penting. Guru yang berpengalaman 7 tahun dan kurang (F, 13.74, p<0.5) memilih *output* pelajar sebagai lebih penting. Keputusan perbandingan pairwise untuk factor latarbelakang akademik guru menunjukkan guru yang mempunyai latarbelakang *TESL* (27.95) lebih cenderung memberi maklum balas dan pengetahuan bahasa kedua (25.20). Keputusan juga menunjukkan guru yang tidak mempunyai latarbelakang *TESL* hanya lebih cenderung untuk memberi maklum balas (28.80). Perbandingan *pairwise* untuk guru di bandar menunjukkan nilai signifikan antara maklum balas dan penekanan yang lain dengan *Wilks' Lambda* = .732, F (3, 165) = 20.18, p< .05. Terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan di antara semua perbandingan *pairwise comparisons* kecuali di antara *output* dan *input* untuk guru di kawasan luar bandar dengan Lambda = .546, F (3, 146) = 40.45, p < .05. Praktis 3, iaitu membuat pembetulan tatabahasa di dalam kelas didapati sebagai praktis kebiasaan di kalangan guru yang gemarkan maklum balas, *output* dan *input.* Manakala, guru yang gemar pengetahuan bahasa kedua didapati lebih selalu menggunakan Praktis 2 iaitu memberi banyak contoh apabila mengajar struktur tatabahasa. Kajian ini membincangkan implikasi dan kesan daripada hasil kajian ini terhadap pihak yang berkepentingan dan kajian pada masa depan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 12 October 2016 to conduct the final examination of Elisha binti Nurusus on her thesis entitled "Beliefs in Teaching Grammar and Common Classroom Practices in Schools in Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

Rosnaini Mahmud, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Nooreen binti Noordin, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Internal Examiner)

Berhannudin Mohd Salleh, PhD
Associate Professor
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn
Malaysia
(External Examiner)

NOR AINI AB. SHUKOR, PhD
Professor and Deputy Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date: 22 March 2017

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

Arshad Abd. Samad, PhD
Associate Professor
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Chairman)

Sharifah Zainab Syed Abd. Rahman
Lecturer
Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia
(Member)

ROBIAH BINTI YUNUS, PhD
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

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Name and Matric No.: Elisha binti Nurusus, GS35034

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This is to confirm that:
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Signature:
Name of
Chairman of
Supervisory Committee: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Arshad Abd. Samad

Signature:
Name of
Member of
Supervisory Committee: Dr. Sharifah Zainab Syed Abd. Rahman

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
KBSM	Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah
KBSR	Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah
MOE	Ministry of Education
GTM	Grammar-Translation Method
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
TESL	Teaching English as Second Language
ESL	English as Second Language
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
SMK	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan
SBP	Sekolah Berasrama Penuh
SMV	Sekolah Menengah Vokasional
KSSM	Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah
EPRD	Educational Planning and Research Department

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background information of the study. The first section, the background of the study provides the reasons and necessities in carrying out this study on English teachers who are teaching grammar in schools. The second section, statement of the problem, explains the problems and knowledge gap that exists between teachers' beliefs and the manner in which it may affect teachers in their teaching and their practices in the classroom. The third section provides the purpose of the study, including research questions and research objectives. The fourth section of this study discusses the significance of the study followed by its limitations that may affect the outcomes of the study. The last part provides the operational definitions of the terms used in the study.

1.1   Background of the Study

The English language has long been used and taught in the schools in Malaysia as a second language even though it was never officially declared as a second language (Thirusanku & Yunus (2014).). Over the last few decades, debates on the most suitable teaching approach to teach English Language in Malaysian secondary schools' classrooms are still very much alive and endless. Over the years, schools in this country have gone through several radical changes because of the changes in education policies on the teaching of the English language (Musa, Koo, & Azman, 2012). Despite the efforts to improve the standard of English proficiency among Malaysian students, the standard of English is still considered to be on the decline (Koo & Azman, 2012). Prof. Dato Dr. Sharifah Hapsah Syed Hassan Shahabudin, the former Vice Chancellor of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) best summed up the situation by stating, "We have with us today a sizeable number of students who are unable to string proper sentences in English. Even those with passable proficiency shy away from speaking for lack of confidence," (New Straits Times Online, 2008). This situation calls for a closer look into the matter to find out what exactly is going wrong in the teaching and learning of English in Malaysia.

Based on the Secondary School Integrated Curriculum or *Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah* (KBSM) for the English subject in secondary schools, there are four skills that English teachers need to focus on. These four skills include communicative abilities, writing and reading skills. One of the curriculum content in the KBSM 2003 syllabus states that "The learning outcomes are based on the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, which in turn incorporates grammar, the English

language sound system and the appropriate use of vocabulary" (Ministry of Education, 2003, pp. 2-3). The theoretical base in the communicative approach of this syllabus condones overt teaching of grammar only within context (Asraf, 1996; Ting, 2007). While various theories and teaching approaches may support this implicit and integrated teaching of grammar, the inability of students to communicate in English has raised concerns. Part of the reason may be in the limitation of the communicative language teaching approach itself. A study by Lightbown and Spada (1990) found that there is often a lack of grammatical accuracy for students who were taught under Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) programmes, compared to students who were taught in traditional programmes; as well as a significant difference in term of fluency. The researches argue that this may indicate that some form of grammatical instruction needs to be included in the programmes.

The ability to deliver and impart the knowledge of grammar to create an interactive grammar classroom with finesse might take years of practice. Regardless of the teaching approach, the effectiveness of the approach will depend on the teacher who will implement it. Teachers are the central point of the success of any language programme. Hence, the beliefs of the teacher play a significant role as it influences decisions made regarding teaching materials, activities and instruction used for the teacher's lesson. Most English language teachers have their own set of personal beliefs about grammar teaching and on how teaching grammar should be. For example, teachers who believe that grammar should be emphasized on may not be able to carry out an activity that does not focus on grammar. Ezzi (2012) posits that teachers' beliefs are the key to understanding more of the teachers' teaching practices and the reasons that influence their decision-making. A qualitative study conducted by Borg in 1998 found that the beliefs regarding the teaching of grammar gained during a teacher's initial training could be the biggest influence on the teacher's teaching practice. He further notes that a teacher's firm conviction of the belief formed during his training and his own experience as a learner also dominates his teaching beliefs. This situation will inadvertently lead to no immediate change in teaching despite the earlier drawbacks in his teaching career.

In the Malaysian context, previous research (Pillay & North, 1997; Asraf, 1996) indicated that the majority of the teachers felt that it is necessary for students to learn grammar. Their studies found that the teachers considered grammar as the fundamental aspect of language and feel the same way about spending an entire period on grammar. Pillay & North (1997) and Asraf (1996) also found that the exposure to the variety of alternative approaches to the teaching of grammar during teaching training were not reflected by their preference for traditional grammar instruction in practice. . This situation revealed the need to study the beliefs and practices of English language teachers in the teaching of grammar in their English language

classroom. It may help us to better understand the differences between the beliefs and practices of novice and experienced teachers. By doing it also, it will provide us with a glimpse of which of the grammar teaching methods work and which do not. Additionally, the study would also look into whether the teachers' beliefs of grammar teaching play a major role in deciding which teaching methods are to use in the classrooms. Moini (2009) explicates that one of the aspects that influence teachers' beliefs is the individual development of their beliefs and that involved years of experience in the teaching career.

Over the years, the scope of studies conducted in the field of Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) in the Malaysian context has been vast and varied. However, there are not many studies that focused specifically on the teaching of grammar and even less studies were conducted on the English language teachers' beliefs regarding grammar teaching. Ting (2007) carried out one of the few studies on trainee teachers that studied the impact of teacher education on TESL trainee teachers' beliefs and practices of grammar teaching. The focus of her study was just on trainee teachers and did not include the different variety of grammar teaching instructions and practices used in the classrooms. The study by Ting (2007) also did not explore how teachers' beliefs in teaching grammar may differ according to their stages of years of teaching experience, teachers' academic background, school location, and how it can affect their teaching practices.

Baleghizadeh & Farshchi (2009) concluded that little attention is given to teachers' perception and its role in the teaching of grammar. This lack of attention could be observed from the smaller number of studies that studied the manner how teachers use their personal pedagogical systems to make instructional decisions regarding grammar teaching. Ellis (1998) and Pajares (1992) observed how there were not many researches that explored the teachers' beliefs involved in their decision-making process in teaching grammar. Pajares (1992) raised the importance of such studies to "inform educational practice in ways that prevailing agendas have and cannot (p. 307)." Kagan (1992) also observed the gap of knowledge when "the more one reads studies of teacher beliefs, the more strongly one suspects that this piebald of personal knowledge lies at the very heart of teaching" (p. 85).

Since beliefs are often formed through experience, it is also important to examine how the number of years in teaching can influence the way that a teacher teaches. Borg (2003) implied that teachers' cognition does not only shape what teachers do, they were also shaped by the experiences that teachers accumulated over the years. This should include how teachers' beliefs may affect their cognitions in the teaching of grammar. It important because Borg (1998) highlighted that "little attention has been paid to L2 teachers' perceptions of the role of grammar teaching in their work, and to

the manner in which instructional decisions regarding grammar teaching are informed by teachers' personal pedagogical systems" (p. 10).

The teachers' academic background or teachers' education is one of the variables of this study and it is closely related to the national development in terms of its policies and practices (Ratnavadivel, 1999). The teachers are known to be the crucial part of executing the government's education policies and practices at the schools' level, and for some students, the only source of the English language (Azman, 2009; Musa, Koo & Azman, 2012; Cheng, Yunus & Mohamad, 2016). Therefore, it is important to look at the teachers' academic background and how it may affect their beliefs in teaching and their practices of teaching grammar. In 2012, an English language proficiency test (Aptis Test) was carried out on English teachers. It was found that almost 65% of the 24,075 English language option teachers fall short of the minimum standard of English Language Proficiency (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014, p. 57).

Finally, the study also studied whether the location of the school influencing the teachers' beliefs in the teaching of grammar. According to Hazita Azman (2009), studies conducted at the school levels are crucial as for most students, especially for students who are located in the rural areas; schools are the only place where they are exposed to the English language. A study conducted by Talif and Edwin (1990) found there was a significant difference the English proficiency of rural and urban school learners based on their results in comprehensive proficiency test and their Lower Secondary Examination for English results. Urban learners were found to be performing better than their rural counterparts in the proficiency test and Lower Secondary Examination for English. More recent studies also found that the discrepancy of students' performance in the two locations still exist (Swami and Furnham, 2010; Baharudin, Chi Yee, Sin Jing, and Zulkefly, 2010; Gobel et. al, 2013) The report in Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013, 3-17) reveals that the performance gap between urban and rural schools is narrowing over time. Therefore, it would be important to find out the beliefs of the teachers who are teaching in these two locations, especially regarding the teaching of grammar.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

Researchers like Simon Borg (1998) and Rod Ellis (1998) have long raised the issue of the lack of focus on the teachers' perception and other aspects that are vital in teachers' decision-making in class. There are many disagreements that stemmed from the different beliefs on the teaching of grammar which have led to the shift of emphasis on the linguistic form to the communicative language ability and communicative language use (Purpura, 2004). Language experts, theorists, and researchers have been

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introducing various methodologies and approaches to teach grammar throughout the years with hopes that they will be able to provide answers that may be able to fill the gap of information between teaching methods and with students' specific learning problems. Unfortunately, there is no one method that suits all, given the differences in individual learners' characteristics and the context of the learning.

This study was also driven by the fact that there were no clear guidelines in terms of teaching grammar for English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in Malaysian secondary schools which will be very important for new teachers who are teaching English, especially those who are not train in teaching English. The KBSM syllabus provides the context for communicative output and resources, but the syllabus does not provide an explanation as to how grammar is to be taught in context (Ting, 2007). The nonexistence of a clear guideline may cause problems for English teachers who just started teaching and are struggling to adapt to the ever-changing expectations of the English language lessons. Sabar (2004) wrote how new teachers with few years of experience are faced with the "conflicting need to adjust and adapt while at the same time being expected to introduce the most recent methods brought over from a teacher education institution into the school" (p.147). As for the more experienced English teachers, they are entrusted with more teaching responsibilities which also expose them to the risk of burnout, lack of motivation. They are also facing the possibility of being transferred to another school in their home state, taking along their valuable experience of teaching English (Cheng, Yunus & Mohamad, 2016). Therefore, the need to identify these teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices are equally crucial for the researcher to come up with recommendations that will be valuable for all of the ESL teachers of different stages of years of experience. This stressful situation may also result in the teachers pushing aside their beliefs of the grammar teaching and practices just to fulfil their job scope.

It may be observed that there seems to be a lack of attention paid to the gap of knowledge between the in-service teachers' beliefs and their years of experience, the location of the schools where they are teaching, their academic background and teaching practices. The previous studies conducted by Ting (2007); Ali, Hamid & Moni (2011); Ratnavadivel (1999); Asraf (1996); Subramaniam & Khan (2013), indicated that, most of the studies conducted in the Malaysian context in relation to the teaching of grammar in the ESL secondary schools' classroom are carried out on ESL teachers training programmes, trainee teachers pre-teaching beliefs, the implementation of the changed policy within the English language subject's syllabus, the different teaching approaches or methodologies to teach specific language skills and others. It is hoped that the findings from this study will be able to shed some light on the steps or issues which can be considered for recommendations that fit into the need for the Malaysia

examination system while maintaining the development of the communicative ability of the learners in accordance with the national education curriculum. These hopefully can be achieved through the more effective integration of grammar in teaching English at schools through a more concerted approach that begins from the beliefs of the teachers on how to teach.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand the role of teachers' beliefs in teaching grammar in relation to several selected variables as listed in the objectives and research questions of the study below.

1.3.1   Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the most preferred belief in teaching of grammar among English Language teachers teaching in Malaysian secondary schools' English language classrooms.
2. To investigate differences in the beliefs regarding the teaching of grammar among English language teachers according to the following variables:
    a. Length of years of experience in teaching English.
    b. Academic background.
    c. School location.
3. To identify the common classroom practices in the grammar classroom of teachers according to their beliefs on teaching grammar.

1.3.2   Research Questions

This study seeks to find answers to these questions on teachers' beliefs in the teaching of grammar.

1. What is the most preferred beliefs category reflecting teaching of grammar among English Language teachers in the Malaysian secondary school English Language classrooms?
2. Is there any significant difference in the beliefs regarding grammar teaching among English language teachers according to the following variables:
    a. Length of years of experience in teaching English?
    b. Academic background?
    c. School location?

3. What are the common classroom practices in the grammar classroom for teachers according to their beliefs on teaching grammar?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is attempted to find out the beliefs of teachers on teaching grammar in the English language classroom in Malaysia. Belief is the central aspect of change which influences teachers' approaches in professional developmental methods, the lesson they learned from it, and the way new instructional techniques are integrated into their teaching (Richardson, 1996). The recommendations may be able to help new teachers with fewer years of experience to adapt quickly to the challenging teaching environment and be able to catch up with the performance of their more experienced peers. It will be able to help them overcome being overwhelmed by the amount of responsibilities given to them.

This study aims to help teachers of different years of experience in teaching English, who are struggling and feel overwhelmed by the need to cope with the different demands of our education's syllabus, the content of the examination and society's demand for quality English language education in Malaysia. Many studies indicate that teachers teach according to what they believe to be most effective. Hence, any attempt to improve a teaching methodology or technique that is not in accordance with the teachers' beliefs may lead to ineffective and half-hearted teaching. This study, therefore, intends to identify teachers' preferred beliefs in teaching grammar. Johnson (1994) suggested that teachers use their own beliefs system to filter their course content in order to make sense of their course content in teacher education courses. He further explained that the teachers' beliefs should be recognized and used to create opportunities for pre-service teachers to reflect on and construct their own beliefs about teachers and teaching.

The recommendations from this study will hopefully, be a step forward in creating an environment that fulfils the teachers' need that can go a long way in reducing the chances of teacher burnout. Different countries have their own set of issues and debates regarding their national education system. While some of the issues are not unique to a country, there are still differences in the foundation of the education for each country. This study will be able to provide findings from Malaysian teachers' perspectives and the educational system's context. Based on findings from this study of the beliefs and practices of teachers in teaching grammar, recommendations will be made to the improvement of pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes. The improvements refer to grammar teaching related courses, based on findings regarding the beliefs and practices of teachers in teaching.

It can help contribute the developments of teachers' professional growth in the teaching profession.

1.5 Limitations

The study might probably be more interesting if it is able to look at other variables that may directly or indirectly influence the beliefs in teaching grammar. Due to the limited number of samples, the differences among the variables are only limited to the length of years of teaching experience, academic background, and school location. The numbers in the sample would be too small or the gap would be too wide if the samples were to be cross-grouped among variables.

The significant gaps among the four stages of experience groups and the data analysis may not be representative of the whole of Malaysia. It would be interesting to see what kinds of results are able to be collected if the gaps among the experienced groups are not too big. It also might be interesting to see if the results from the data would show more differences in the beliefs and the practices between the novice ESL teachers and the experienced ESL teachers. However, the sample is limited to the teachers from the schools in Malacca and Perak.

When group interviews were conducted in some of the schools, it was found that there were several schools that were involved with a special programme that was just carried out by Ministry of Education (MOE). These schools were required to implement and execute the special programme in their schools, and make necessary changes accordingly to their lessons. Though this situation may or may not significantly affect their beliefs much for the effect the teaching of grammar in the long term, they may, however, introduce a bias in how they answered the survey questions and their responses during the group interviews.

1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

This study focuses on teachers' beliefs and some of their practices in teaching grammar in Malaysian schools according to their years of teaching English, their academic background and the location of the school they teach. In examining their beliefs and some of their practices, this section will provide the definitions of the key terms used in this study.

1.6.1 Beliefs

Belief is a critical part of the teachers as it affects their judgments and decisions for their teaching practices in the classroom. According to Abelson (1979), "Semantically, 'belief' as distinct from knowledge carries the connotation of disputability-the believer is aware that others may think differently (p. 356)." Haney et al. (2003) defined beliefs as "one's convictions, philosophy, tenets, or opinions about teaching and learning (p. 367)." The two definitions mentioned may seem straightforward, however, the nature and the features of the term "beliefs" do need further clarification.

The debates pertaining to the use of the term "beliefs" can be confusing. Therefore, it is more helpful to pay attention to the features of the belief system itself. Pajares (1992) described the relationship between knowledge system and belief system as inextricably intertwined when proposing the idea of a beliefs system that is formed by an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Musa, Koo & Azman (2012) gave an elaborate description of belief's identity in practice as "negotiation of ways of being in a specific context; it involves negotiated experience, community membership, learning trajectories, and reconciliation of different forms of membership in order to maintain one's identity across boundaries" (p. 39). It encapsulated Wenger's (1998) description of identity in practice of belief as "a way of being in the world" that will enable teachers to produce "a meaningful and lived experiences" that can be used according to specific situational context in the grammar classrooms (p. 151).

In this study, beliefs refer specifically to the beliefs in teaching grammar. In this respect, Ellis (1998) has proposed that the teaching of grammar is characterized by four major emphases, which are Input, Explicit L2 Knowledge, Output, and Feedback. The study, therefore, examines the teachers' beliefs in terms of the importance teachers place on these emphases: Input, Explicit L2 Knowledge, Output, and Feedback.

1.6.1(a)   Input

The term Input for this study refers to the structured Input provided by teachers to their learners as adapted from the description provided in a computational model by Ellis (1998). The Input involved attempts made by teachers "to contrive oral or written texts in such a way that learners are induced to notice specific target features as they comprehend the texts"

(Ellis, 1998, p. 42). The structured Input takes place when learners are to response non-verbally or minimally verbally to show their understanding of the texts that they listened to or read, and the process does not involve them producing the structures (Ellis, 1998). The purpose of these practices is based on the psycholinguistic rationale that "acquisition occurs when learners attend to the new structured Input rather than when they try to produce it" (Ellis, 1998, p.44).

1.6.1(b)   Explicit L2 Knowledge

For this study, the term Explicit L2 Knowledge or explicit second language knowledge refers to explicit instruction that teachers use to increase students level of L2 Knowledge. This process is when teachers attempt to "develop learners' explicit understanding of L2 rules - to help them learn about linguistic feature" (Ellis, 1998, p. 42). Direct explicit instruction and indirect explicit instruction are the two types of explicit instructions that are focused on for this study. The former term refers to the instruction that takes the "oral or written form of explanations of grammatical phenomena" (Ellis, 1998, p. 48). Indirect explicit instruction refers to the activities where learners need to complete consciousness-raising tasks that require them to "analyse data illustrating the workings of specific grammatical rule" (Ellis, 1998, p. 48).

1.6.1(c)   Output

The term Output used in this study refers to the production practice stage by the students. Production practice is when opportunities are created "for learners to practice producing a specific target structure" (Ellis, 1998, p. 42). He explained further that, at this stage, devices are used by teachers to elicit the production of the target structures from the learners. The devices which may "range from highly controlled text-manipulation exercises to much freer text creation tasks, in which learners are guided into producing their own sentences using the target structure" (Ellis, 1998, p. 50).

1.6.1(d)   Feedback

There are many types of Feedback that teachers may provide to their students. However, for this particular study the focus on the negative Feedback that a teacher gives to learners when learners fail to produce a structure correctly, and this normally occurs at the production practice's stage (Ellis, 1998). Ellis (1998, p. 52) further quoted Lyster and Ranta (1997) on their definition of the different types of feedbacks. There are six

types of teachers' feedback: recast, explicit correction, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition (Lyster & Ranta, 1997).

Recast happens when teacher reformulates a learner's utterances or part of utterance in accordance with target-language norms. Explicit correction is when the teacher provides students with the correct form of their mistakes. Clarification requests refer to a situation where teacher indicates that an utterance has not been understood. Metalinguistic feedback is when the teacher uses technical language to refer to an error. Elicitation is when a teacher attempts to elicit the correct form from the student. The last one, repetition is when teacher indicates an error has been made by repeating all or part of a learner's utterance.

All of the statements on teachers' beliefs were measured using survey questionnaire and five-point Likert scale. The teachers were asked to state from 5, strongly agree, to 1, strongly disagree.

1.6.2 Stages of Years of Experience in Teaching English

This study looks at teachers who have been teaching English specifically from all lengths of years. This specification is due to the fact that some of the teachers might be teaching some other subjects before they are assigned to teach English in the secondary schools' English language classroom. The status of whether a teacher is an experienced teacher or not is dependent on the number of years they have taught. Relatively, it is easy to define new teachers, as they normally refer to teachers without any experience or with some teaching experience, generally less than two years of teaching experience (Rodriguez and McKay, 2010, p. 2). Most studies identify teachers with three or less number of years teaching as the new or novice teachers that still lacks experience (Mok, 1994; Bastick, 2002; Flores & Day, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Ulvik, Smith & Helleve, 2009). There are also studies that only identify teachers with more than five years of classroom experience as experienced (Richards, Li & Tang, 1998; Gatbonton, 1999; Martin, Yin & Mayall, 2006), implicating those who have less as novice teachers.

The study would be able to gain more impactful data if the study was able to focus on teachers in their first or second years of teaching compared to teachers with more years of experiences within these states of Malacca and Perak. Due to the small sample size, the respondents were categorized into four stages of experience groups. The first stage was for a group of teachers with 7 years or less of years of teaching experience as new teachers. This is an acceptable number according to Feiman-Nemser (2003), three or four years are needed by new teachers to achieve competency, and several more

to reach proficiency (p. 26). The teachers with more than 7 years of teaching as experienced teachers and divided into several more stages. The experienced group sample was categorized into three experience groups, which are 8 to 18 years' experience, 19 to 29 years' experience and 30 to 37 years' experience. This was because there were substantial numbers of the teachers from the sample who have taught more than 20 or 30 years of teaching experience. It was also decided so to ensure an even presentation of experience group population and to take a closer look at teachers' beliefs and practices when they classify into a certain experience group.

1.6.3 Academic Background

One of the variables in this study is the teachers' academic background. It refers to the academic qualification that teachers have and the training that they received. For this study, academic background refers to the education and training that teachers received at tertiary level, specifically, their first or bachelor degree.

1.6.4 School Location

In this study, the location of the schools refers to the location of the school where the participating teachers were teaching. The targeted locations of the schools in this study were urban and rural area.

1.6.4 (a) Urban

Urban in this study refer to the location of the schools that were located within the city centre and the teachers have access to most public amenities and services.

1.6.4 (b) Rural

Rural in this study refer to the location of the schools that were located outside the city centre and where the teachers only have access to few public amenities and services.

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