

Research Article

# The Practice of Teaching Grammar in EFL Classrooms: The Case of Grade 11 in Some Selected Preparatory Schools in Debre Berhan Town

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## Abstract

This study investigates the practice of teaching grammar in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms, focusing on grade eleven students in two preparatory schools in Debre Berhan, Ethiopia. The research highlights the crucial role of grammar in language acquisition, particularly within the framework of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which has gained prominence over traditional methodologies. Despite the endorsement of CLT, findings indicate that many teachers continue to rely on structural approaches, limiting students' communicative competence. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations involving 21 English teachers and 592 students. The finding of the study revealed that English language teachers were teaching grammar communicatively by using both inductive and deductive approaches of teaching grammar. They teach grammar lessons with form and meaning interactively. This result was crosschecked by the three tools of data collection and even it had witness from each data gathering tool. To the contrary, the teachers face the following challenges in teaching grammar: the approach of the textbook is not good to make students to understand the grammar points clearly at a given period of time. So, it needs more time, teachers also faced challenge to teach grammar communicatively due to high tendency of students to learn grammar in structural approach and the teachers are incapable to make students to understand grammar as the students have no background knowledge of grammar and they do not have their own methods of learning grammar. Besides, the classroom data showed that all of the teachers' talk dominated the class. This is because the students were not motivated and actively participated while the teachers were teaching grammar and also the majority of the teachers did not manage the students' activities in the classrooms. Moreover, teachers' interview data showed that while teachers utilize both inductive and deductive methods, challenges persist, including inadequate instructional materials, low student motivation, and an emphasis on grammar for standardized testing rather than meaningful communication. The study concludes that improving grammar teaching practices requires a shift towards more interactive, student-centered approaches, promoting active participation, and incorporating diverse instructional resources. Finally, the teachers are recommended to adopt communicative approach of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms.

## Keywords

English Language Teaching, Grammar Instruction, Communicative Language Teaching, Inductive and Deductive Methods

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## 1. Introduction

Grammar gains its prominence in language teaching particularly in English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL). In as much as without a good knowledge of grammar, learners' language development will be severely constrained. Practically, in teaching of grammar; learners are taught rules of language commonly known as sentence pattern [35].

For decades, the role of grammar teaching in an EFL or ESL context has been a major issue for students and teachers alike. Researchers have debate whether grammar should be taught in the classroom and students, for their part, have generally look up on grammar instruction as a necessary avail at best, and an avoidable burden at worst [5].

Teaching grammar was condemned in the past because the emphasis was placed on learning grammar as an end. To avoid this history from being repeated, grammar should be taught as a means for making meaning. Thus, formal instruction/ teaching of grammar may not lead to significant improvement in language proficiency. However, such instruction is useful in speeding up the language development process. After a period of decline, the importance of grammar in language learning has recently reasserted [30].

Grammar deals with the structure and analysis of sentences. Any discussion of grammar, therefore, must address language on two levels, which we may think of as form and function [37]. According to [34], in the case of learners, grammatical rules enable them to know and apply how such sentence patterns should be put together. The teaching of grammar should also ultimately center attention on the way grammatical items or sentence patterns are correctly used. In others, teaching grammar should impasse language structure or sentence patterns, meaning and use.

Whenever we are dealing with the issues of second or foreign language pedagogy and learning theories, we are partly, concerned about the form and structural aspects of the target language. As a matter of fact the form and structure of a language are the main skeleton or backbone of a language up on which the entire language system is built. As a flesh of human beings or other animals cannot stand alone without the presence and healthy system of their skeleton; in most cases, a collection of content words cannot make a meaningful communication unless they are combined with the right forms and structural words. This is the major rational for the inclusion of grammar in second or foreign language teaching and learning process based on the awareness of the effects of communication on learning, understanding and socializing with others [1]. Thus, many governmental and private schools in Ethiopia advertise for the use of communicative language teaching in English as a foreign language teaching and learning classrooms [9]. As a result, language learning and teaching is shifted from focusing on grammar forms and structures and listing of vocabulary deriving of meaning to a more interactive environment of learning and teaching where

students use authentic language for meaningful purposes. Teaching materials, course descriptions and curricular declare a goal of communicative competence [33]. In recent years, there has been a growing demand for teaching grammar materials that present authentic English grammar. However, for many aspects of English grammar, we still know relatively little about the speakers and writers actually use grammatical features [2].

Teaching English as a foreign language in Ethiopia has many benefits for instance, learners can develop English language and skill of communication and writing.

As the English language grammar is a command of learners, it has been deteriorating so, schools, colleges, universities and training institutions are increasingly under criticisms from the public and stakeholders [9]. However, currently, there are complaints that considerable number of students attending higher institutions to study English or other subjects in English with a very weak knowledge of English grammar and little ability to use the language accurately. As this deficiency in the grammar goes on to persist with them in their college or university stay, it is too difficult to maintain quality of education [9]. What is more, the limited English grammar command of graduates from colleges and universities has continued to be a topic of complaints. Indeed, these are quite reasonable for "...language learning is essentially learning how grammar functions in achievement of meaning [36].

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms at North Shoa Zone particularly, in Debre Berhan town grade eleven in focus because no research has been conducted on the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms in our Secondary and Preparatory Schools and even in our university.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

This research is about investigating the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms in two different preparatory schools in DebreBerhan town at North Shoa Zone and it was in light of teaching English grammar in grade eleven.

For the last three decade, communicative language teaching (CLT) has been the very fashionable term and an accepted language teaching approach in the world, which is widely recommended and implemented in second or foreign language teaching classrooms. However, as compared to the traditional teaching methods, it is relatively, an effective approach in making second or foreign language learners to develop communicative competence. It is due to its broader acceptance that CLT is being implemented almost all over the world, where English is taught as a second or foreign language [1]. Our country, Ethiopia, is a part of this development. As a result, today many scholars highly recommended putting CLT into effective in our schools. Despite

this, what is really going on is something different from what it was recommended especially, in many Ethiopian English language teaching classrooms. For example, researches which were conducted by [9] and [14] showed this result. As far as the goal of all language teaching and learning including grammar is to build up students' communicative competence, the issue of meaning and use in the teaching of grammar is the major issue.

A recent initiation by Ministry of Education [18] is to practice and to use communicative approach that focuses on enhancing the communicative competence of the students and emphasizes on language use by keeping grammatical forms and structures during communication or speaking. And even the Teachers' Educations System over Haul document advocates that a teacher has to be competent in his /her teaching profession. It states that he/she must be able to use arranged methods of teaching including communicative teaching of grammar that can help to select this way of teaching according to students need and he /she should select and use with understanding a wide variety of appropriate resources [38].

Besides, a research which was conducted by [1] on the effectiveness of teaching English grammar as a foreign language through the integration of form, meaning and use. Accordingly, his study revealed that teaching grammar through the integration of form, meaning and use is more effective than the structural (form-focused) method of grammar teaching.

It is also effective to enable learners acquire and understand the meaning of grammatical forms and their roles in communication. Although these are what the literature reviews and the research findings recommended, many English language teachers of Ethiopian high schools are still using the old structural grammar teaching method in ELT classroom. For example, researches which were conducted by [9] and [14] showed this result. And also the previous studies on teaching grammar had the following problems: primarily, although some researchers have attempted to make studies on EFL grammar, quite majority of the studies focused on teaching methodologies from just the teachers' perspectives and beliefs. Secondly, the free dominance of studies made so far largely on the four major language skills and other language areas are more than the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms. This is, of course, a sharp contrast with the role of grammar in communicative competence and the key positions it occupies in research available in the second or foreign language worldwide. Furthermore, nowadays, there are misconceptions and uncertainties about the role of grammar and teaching and learning it, which exacerbate further the problems. However, none of the above studies had covered an investigation on the whole practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms rather they focused on teaching methodologies from just the teacher's perspective and students' belief and even they focused on comparison between two English grammar teaching methods. Indeed, in our cur-

rent local situations or Ethiopian context, these lacks of insights experience seem to have emanated from different reasons. Therefore, the present researcher believes that this area needs an attention to be given and researched. The current study hoped to fill the existing gap in this particular area in the country. Consequently, this heavily motivated the researcher to investigate the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms. So, the present study is different from the previous studies in that it focused on investigating the whole practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms rather than focusing on only teaching methodologies from just the teachers' perspectives and beliefs and comparison between two English grammar teaching methods as previous researches that were conducted on teaching grammar. Besides, what makes the present study different from the above mentioned researches is: the present researcher recognized that no research has been conducted yet on the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms particularly, in our secondary and preparatory schools in Debre Berhan town and even in Debre Berhan University as well. These all points motivated the present researcher to conduct a research on this area. So, the researcher has attempted to point out how do EFL teachers currently teach English grammar, which grammar teaching approach are suggested, and as how do EFL teachers present grammar lessons in ELT classrooms in General secondary and preparatory schools. This study tried to answer and address the following four basic research questions, which were related to the research problem.

- 1) How do EFL teachers currently teach grammar in ELT classrooms?
- 2) What approaches do EFL teachers use to teach grammar?
- 3) How do teachers present grammar lessons in the classroom?
- 4) What difficulties do EFL teachers face in teaching grammar?

## 1.2. Objectives of the Study

### 1.2.1. General Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the practice of grammar teaching in ELT classrooms, which was carried out in H/Mamo Preparatory and Basso General Secondary and Preparatory Schools.

### 1.2.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

The followings are the specific objectives of this study:

- 1) To investigate how EFL teachers currently teach English grammar in ELT classrooms.
- 2) To see what approaches EFL teachers use to teach grammar.
- 3) To find out how EFL teachers present grammar lessons in the classrooms.
- 4) To see that what difficulties do EFL teachers face in

teaching grammar.

### 1.3. Significance of the Study

It is presumed fact that grammar is very essential for any language teaching and most of the teachers used this grammar for all language skills. Without good grammar, communicating with others is seriously handicapped. Accordingly, conducting of the present research has the following importance:

- 1) It was provided the opportunity for English language teachers to look back and evaluate the practice of grammar teaching methods and techniques and it also helped them to be aware of the practice of teaching grammar and encouraging the English language teachers to overcome the problems related to teaching grammar. It could also be important for English language teachers who referred or looked back the methods of teaching grammar as a source of information.
- 2) It was used as an instance for the concerned bodies like policy makers, syllabus designers, classroom teachers and other concerned bodies to deal with the prevailing problems connecting with the methods of teaching English that the teachers employ currently in teaching of grammar and it was strived for a possible solutions.
- 3) It will serve as a baseline in which other researchers can conduct studies on similar areas with a greater magnitude for reliable and comprehensive research finding.
- 4) In addition to these, it could be useful for high schools' and preparatory schools' teachers to solve the problems related to the practice of teaching grammar if the teachers get chance to read this research paper. In general, for all those reasons, this present study was useful.

### 1.4. The Scope of the Study

This study was delimited to Debre Berhan Town at North Shoa Zone, Amhara National Regional state that the study was carried out in H/Mamo Preparatory and Baso General Secondary and Preparatory Schools grade eleven in focus.

### 1.5. Limitations of the Study

Some challenges were encountered during this study. These were:

The researcher focused on only two Government schools due to time and financial constraints. This limited the researcher to get some more and adequate data for his study and if the researcher added some more schools including private schools, he would gather more reliable data for his study but he did not do that. Another challenge of this study was: there was lack of cooperation among the subjects of this study especially, from students' side. In general, these were the shortcomings of this study.

### 1.6. Organizations of the Study

This research is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, which provides the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, the scope of the study, limitations of the study and organizations of the study.

The next chapter reviews the literature relevant to English grammar teaching, including its history, views and concepts of grammar, types of grammar and definitions of grammar, different methods, approaches and techniques of grammar teaching, arguments in grammar teaching, the roles of grammar in language teaching and learning and in communication.

The third chapter explains the research methodology: research design, approach, population of the study, selection of the schools, sampling techniques, and data gathering tools, procedures of data collection, data analysis and interpretations and ethical issues of the study.

Chapter four is about data analysis and interpretation and discussion of the collected data. Finally, in chapter five we would see a concise summary of the research paper; its major findings, conclusions and recommendations were discussed.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. Historical Background of Teaching and Learning Grammar

Grammar teaching in the foreign language has constituted an important and debated issue for the last fifty years. It was condemned in the past because the emphasis was placed on learning grammar as an end. To avoid this from being repeated, grammar should be taught as a means for making meaning. So, formal teaching of grammar may not lead to significant improvement in language proficiency. However, such instruction is useful in speeding up the language development process. After a period of decline, the importance of grammar in language learning has recently been reasserted [30].

In the history of language teaching and learning, the roles of grammar have been addressed by a number of linguistic theories, methodologies and currently, with in the European frame work of reference for languages. The way grammar is or has been considered as a direct and decisive influence on pedagogical grammars, learning processes and many other areas involved in foreign language teaching and learning. Grammar as a sub-system the network of other linguistic systems and sub-skills has been attached different roles in the language classroom, reaching little consensus, not only about the particular items to be taught, but about when or how, or even where to teach or learn grammar [20].

The importance of grammar teaching in both foreign and second language learning is well known long years ago from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. There had been a long debate on the prob-



lems of teaching grammar effectively. For countries, language has been synonymous with language teaching then the role of grammar declined with the introduction of communicative language teaching [32].

At the beginning of 1970, the interest of real language teaching emerged and more interest was taken in social and cultural teaching of language. Consequently, it proved to be a shift from grammar transition and audio-lingual methods to exploration to communicative teaching of language hence, integrative tasks were focused instead of discrete structures. In fact, as [25] pointed out for 2,500 years the teaching of grammar had often been synonymous with foreign language teaching. Thus, children entering “Grammar school” in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in England learned Latin through analysis of its grammar and rhetoric, and spent a considerable amount of time in doing translation practice [24].

Traditional grammar teaching was based on a formal notion of competence: the underlying knowledge of concepts and rules stored in the minds of speakers which equated grammar with syntax and morphology, considering meaning as totally different linguistic level [20].

Teaching grammar has always been a matter controversy especially in second language acquisition as [33] as cited in [21] says “In fact, no other issues has preoccupied theorists and practitioners as grammar debate, and the history of language teaching is essentially the history of claims and counter claims for and against the teaching of grammar, thus, discussing the role of grammar within any communicative can be controversial, due to these misconception and also to the influence of natural approaches which ascribed no grammar role in language learning. However, when explaining the role of grammar specifically, we do not talk about one single type of CLT but about two main types; the shallow end approach and the deep end approach to communicative language teaching [33].

One of the leading advocates of CLT, emphasizes that communication can not take place in any language with the absence of structure of grammar [26]. Similarly, [6] also stresses that grammar is a resource to be used in the compression and creation of oral and written discourses rather than something to be learned as an end in itself. In general, these are all about the historical background of grammar teaching and learning.

## 2.2. Definitions of Grammar

There is no universally accepted single definition of grammar but different scholars defined the term grammar in different ways and in different perspectives. So, I have tried to mention some of definitions quoted by certain distinguished scholars in the below.

According to [23] grammar is defined as “the description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language”. It usually takes in to accounts the

meanings and function these sentences have in the overall system of the language.

As [33] it is also defined as, “a study what forms are possible in a language the system of rules that covers the order of words in a sentence (syntax) and formation of words (morphology). As the linguists [19] similarly defined grammar as a set of components: phonetics, phonology, morphology and syntax are strung together or meaning because all languages are characterized by these components, by definition, language does not exist without grammar.

According to [27] grammar is defined as a preventive and corrective medicine, safeguarding and rectifying points of words use which are liable to error. It is a science of language. Similarly, [7] defined grammar as the business of taking a language to pieces, to see how it works and it is also the fundamental organizing principle of language. And according to [11] grammar is explained as a systematic study of scientific methods which provide us information and guidance necessary to learn a language. The science of grammar teaches us how a language is spoken and written correctly and effectively. So, it can be said that grammar is primarily concerned with the formation and classification of words and sentence and their practical significance in daily life.

## 2.3. Types of Grammar

In general speaking, today, there are three kinds of grammar in English language such as Perspective grammar, Transformational Generative grammar and descriptive grammar. Let us see them one by one in detail.

### 2.3.1. Structural (Formal) Grammar

Formal grammar is a classical or traditional grammar which gives emphasis on rules and forms. It ties language with rules, i.e. it takes us to the forms or structures of the language, with little or no attention given to meaning or contexts [27].

### 2.3.2. Descriptive (National- functional) Grammar

This type of grammar does not focus on the rules of forming correct sentences but it concentrates or focuses on expressing the different notions and functions through appropriate grammatical structure. It focuses on appropriate utterances or it presents language in what is believed to be natural way through speaking, not writing [3].

Functional grammar also conceives of language as largely social interaction, seeking to explain why one linguistic form is more appropriate than another in satisfying a particular communicative purposes.

### 2.3.3. Transformational Generative Grammar

According to this type of grammar sentences are divided into two (A) basic sentence and (B) transformed sentences or

transformational sentence in which the focus is on the innate ability of the native speakers to produce or create correct and only correct, grammatical structures in his/ her language [3].

## 2.4. Approaches of Grammar Teaching

Although there is a general consensus among scholars on the importance of incorporating grammar in second language pedagogy, the issues about how it should be taught remains controversial. The source of such controversy is the absence of one best grammar teaching approach used for teaching all grammatical rules [22].

As a result, we have different options used for teaching grammar, such as explicit grammar instruction, implicit grammar instruction and the recently introduced approach integrated grammar teaching approach. The following sections will discuss the features of these grammar teaching approaches as well as different views raised in connection with them.

### 2.4.1. Explicit Grammar Teaching

To begin from its definition, explicit grammar teaching refers to an approach which starts with direct presentation and explanation of grammatical rules, followed by examples [12, 14, 17, 33]. Some scholars call it deductive approach to grammar teaching or rule driven learning [33]. In a similar way, [15] described explicit grammar teaching as:

*Overt of grammar teaching means that the teacher actively provides the students with grammatical rules and explanation. The information is openly presented so, with overt teaching we are explicit and open about the grammar of the language.*

In the case of explicit grammar teaching, the primary focus is on the form aspect of language and as result the meaning aspect of the form is somewhat ignored. Most of the exercises given following explicit grammar teaching are more of accuracy focused. However, as [28] and other suggest that an exclusive emphasis on the form aspect of the language alone is not a sufficient condition for the development of communicative competence. There must be also an emphasis that should be the meaning focused or fluency focused activities that enable the learners to interact freely without fear of committing grammatical errors. But this does not mean that explicit grammar teaching is irrelevant and it does nothing to help communication. It contributes a lot. How? The following scholars have the answers to it.

In the first place, as [4, 11, 15, 33] discussed, explicit grammar teaching has paramount significance in making L2 learners have the necessary and basic grammar knowledge which can form the basement in language acquisition process. This is mainly because; unless one has the basic linguistic knowledge as to how words are combined to form larger meaningful units of language, fluency focused or meaning focused language instruction cannot exist. And this linguistic knowledge basement can be achieved through overt explana-

tion of rules for learners. In this regard, [13] states explicit instruction of grammar increases learners awareness of the target language structure and improves accuracy in its use as well as providing opportunity for meaning focused comprehension and production of the target structure."

The other importance of explicit grammar instruction is its positive role in monitoring [16] argued that explicit knowledge of grammar helps learners in the form of monitoring certain language performance. [11] underlined that monitoring output constitute one sources of input. Despite this, [16] argued that explicit knowledge of grammar cannot be converted in to implicit knowledge and this condition will adversely affect students' production skill. But, [11] believed that explicit knowledge through practice. In addition to this, [11, 14, 33] suggested that explicit knowledge of grammar helps learners to notice certain linguistic items in the later language acquisition process. It can function as a kind of advance organizer, which helps them to establish meaning form relationship which in turn is very important to comprehend meaning. Despite all these explicit grammar teaching has some short comings overt grammar presentation encourages a teacher's fronted teaching and learning process. As a result, the teachers taking time will be too much whereas students will have very limited time to take as well as exposure to do certain self-evident that second language learning classrooms are the only environment or place for learners to practice the target language in a communicative manners. These will highly affect learners' fluency development probably the end goal of second language learning.

### 2.4.2. Implicit Grammar Teaching

Unlike explicit grammar teaching, in an implicit grammar teaching, grammatical rules and forms are not presented and explained for L2 learners overtly. Rather students are exposed to a number of examples which could be in the form of reading text, dialogue or conversation which embody the new grammatical form or rule. Then, students are asked to explore the new linguistic form presented in the given text by means of searching common features revealed in the text. Therefore, at the beginning of the lesson, students' attentions are drawn to the meaning or the message conveyed through that particular text, not to the grammatical aspect. That is why some scholars call it: rule discovery or learning through experience, (Experiential learning) overt and inductive approach [8, 11, 12, 33], as opposed to explicit grammar teaching it is the students who take much of the class time taking, and thus, there is a shift as to the grammar teaching methods from the teacher covering (teacher fronted) grammar to the learner discovering grammar [32].

### 2.4.3. Integrated Grammar Teaching

The major rationales which support the claim that grammar teaching should be form, meaning, and use emanated from the very nature and role of grammar in communication. When we talk about grammatical form and structures, our

major concern is not only to discuss the rules but also the meaning impact it has on what we speak, read, listen and write in this regards, [10] noted that, to say that some one knows a language, he/she needs to have the ability language, grammatically acceptable sentences to gather with the ability to communicative using the forms accurately as the occasion demands. These key points are good indicators of the teaching of grammar should look like.

As [33] underlined that grammar communicates meaning as precisely as the writer or speaker wants to convey. Thus teaching of grammar should take the meaning making potential of grammar in to consideration in addition to the rules that underlie grammaticality and ungrammaticality of form and structures of the language.

Learners need to learn not only what forms are possible but what particular forms will express particular meaning. Seen from these perceives, grammar is a tool for making meaning. The implication for language teacher is that the learners attention needs to be focused not only on the forms of the language, but on the meaning these form convey [33].

In addition, [31] suggested that integrative grammar teaching can serve as a possible solution by combining form based with meaning based instruction. In a similar way as regard to the need to integrate form, meaning and use in grammar teaching. All these questions are treated in the integrated grammar teaching approach. As a result, L2 learners can have a full understanding of the forms, meanings and also the experience, "It can, therefore, be said that any option to grammar teaching should integrate the form, meaning and use of the target structures. To this end, both implicit and explicit forms of instruction can be used to present and practice structure".

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

The main objective of this research was to investigate the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms in two preparatory schools in Debre Berhan town at North Showa Zone grade eleven in focus. In order to achieve this goal and answer the research questions, the researcher used the following research methodology: Survey study of descriptive research design and methods including both qualitative and quantitative approaches. And this chapter also describes the participants of the study and how the samples were selected. Below is also a brief description about research design and method/approach, how the sample population was selected and assigned in study, the selection of study areas, data collection instruments, procedures of data analysis and interpretation, and finally, we would see ethical considerations in this chapter.

#### 3.1. Research Design and Method

As the study was attempted to investigate the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms, a descriptive research

method with survey study research design was used to have a wider over view on the area. A descriptive research design was used because it is used to specify or describe a phenomenon without conducting an experiment [29]. To ensure this, a mixed method/ approach (i.e. both qualitative and quantitative approaches) were used because the study requires gathering both qualitative data (for express of data in words) and quantitative data (express of data in numbers) through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation.

#### 3.2. Population of the Study

This research was directly subjected to both grade eleven students and English language teachers of two different preparatory schools: H/Mamo Preparatory and Baso General Secondary and Preparatory Schools. There were eleven English language teachers (nine males and two females) in H/Mamo Preparatory Schools and ten English teachers (five males and five females) in Baso General Secondary and Preparatory School and the total number of English language teachers was 21 (14 males and 7 females) in these schools. Furthermore, there were 516 grade eleven students (250 male and 266 female students) with 12 sections in H/Mamo Preparatory School and 76 grade eleven students (43 male and 33 female students) with two sections in Baso General Secondary and Preparatory School. The total number of grade 11 students was 592 in these two schools. Among these grade 11 students, 293 were male students and the rest 299 were female students. In general, there were 21 English language teachers and 592 grade 11 students and there were 14 sections or classes in these two schools.

#### 3.3. Selection of Schools and Grade Level

Both H/Mamo Preparatory and Baso General Secondary and Preparatory Schools were selected for this study. This was because the geographical location of the schools is close to the researcher. This made the situations convenient for frequent follow up of both English teachers and students via classroom observation and this even saved the researcher from financial and time constraints. Besides, it was expected that the schools' administrators and teachers were willing and cooperative in giving all the valuable information that was asked by the researcher. And the researcher selected grade eleven students as the subjects or participants of the study for both questionnaire and interview since they were pre university students so that they were expected to know more about grammar issues and have knowledge about grammar and they had time to be participant in the study than grade twelve students because grade twelve students did not have ample time to be respondents for filling in questionnaires and responding interviews as they were busy by preparing themselves for entrance exams. By having and considering these issues in mind, the researcher selected grade eleven students as the subjects of his study.

### 3.4. Sample, Sampling Techniques and Sampling Procedures

The researcher used comprehensive or available sampling procedures of non-probability sampling technique, in order to select all English language teachers (14 males and 7 females) from both H/Mamo Preparatory and Basso General Secondary and Preparatory Schools for questionnaires because the researcher aimed at selecting all English teachers who were teaching English in those schools would be relevant to his study so that they were assumed to be rich in information to meet his purpose of the study and they were small in number and manageable that is why the researcher used comprehensive or available sampling procedure. The researcher applied quota sampling technique to give quota for two selected schools to select students as the sample of study in order to be filled the questionnaire. Under purposive sampling technique, the researcher used the maximum variation sampling method to select higher achiever, medium and lower achiever students for questionnaire and interview in order to balance the responses. Therefore, the researcher used the following general rule to select the sample students for questionnaire and interview (i.e. by taking 25\_30% of the total population of the study).

By having all the above points, the researcher used 148 grade eleven students for questionnaires by calculating  $(592 \times \frac{1}{4} = 148)$  and 14 students for interview by selecting or taking one student from each section or class  $(1 \times 14)$  purposefully.

In conclusion, the researcher planned to use these above sampling technique and sampling procedures in his study because in many cases a complete coverage of a population (592) is impossible and difficult, studies based on the samples relatively require less time and labor.

### 3.5. Sources of Data

As it was stated in the scope of the study, the main sources of the data used for obtaining information for this study were both grade eleven students and English language teachers of H/Mamo Preparatory and Baso General Secondary and Preparatory Schools. The researcher decided to focus on preparatory schools' English language teachers and grade eleven students as primary sources of data by hoping that they would be somewhat confident to express their feelings freely which could be a good lesson for other grade levels. In order to gather the required data from the respondents, the researcher employed primary data tools like questionnaire, interview and classroom observation. It was tried to collect available information by using those tools that were mentioned above. And the researcher used written documents like research papers and books as secondary sources of data.

### 3.6. Data Collection Tools

In order to obtain adequate information for this study, the

researcher used three data gathering instruments like questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation. The tools were found to be appropriate for the researcher to find out the practice of teaching grammar that were employed by the teachers and the students in the actual classroom and the researcher hoped that using those three data gathering instruments that would enable him to collect sufficient data from the participants of the study. The reason why the researcher chose each tool was to triangulate or cross-check the data that obtained by each tool.

### 3.7. Procedures and Techniques of Data Analysis and Interpretation

In order to analyze and interpret the data, both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used. This means the data that were obtained via questionnaires, classroom observation and interviews were analyzed and interpreted both qualitatively and quantitatively. In other words, it means after the data were collected through those tools, and then interpreted carefully by using both qualitatively and quantitatively. And the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data in a frequency by using numbers and in percentages in the tables. This means the researcher analyzed and interpreted the calculated data by using quantitative data analysis in the form of tabulation. On the other hand, the researcher interpreted the data by using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods that the data collected by classroom observation and interview. The following section shows how the data were analyzed and interpreted in detail.

### 3.8. Ethical Issues/ Considerations of the Study

As a researcher, the researcher must pay respect to ethical considerations particularly, if he was dealing with human subjects. Therefore, the researcher focused on all ethical issues while he was dealing with the participants of the study that were both English language teachers and grade eleven students at the time of data collection. So, the researcher informed regarding the purpose, objectives and methods of the study for the two preparatory schools of the Debre Berhan town particularly, the schools directors, selected English language teachers and grade 11 students. Each participant was informed about the study, and after they agreed to participate in the study, informed consent was obtained before starting the data collection.

## 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the research. It focuses on quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered from both English teachers and grade eleven students via questionnaire, interview and classroom observation. All the gathered data through those tools from the respondents of the study were



analyzed and interpreted in this chapter.

#### 4.1. Analysis and Interpretation of Teachers' Questionnaire

This part focuses on the analysis and interpretation of teachers' questionnaire. This questionnaire contains 18 items for 21 English language teachers and it has five likert scales: strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree and undecided. Here, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data that were obtained from the teachers questionnaire in terms of frequency and percentage.

##### 4.1.1. Analysis and Interpretation of Closed Ended Questions

Which of these approaches do you prefer to teach grammar?

**Table 1.** Questions related to the approaches of teaching grammar.

Items	Respondents in number	Respondents in percent
Inductive	6	28.58%
Deductive	4	19.48%
Both	11	52.38%
Total	21	100%

As indicated in the Table above, 11 (52.38%) of the respondents responded that they prefer both inductive and deductive approaches to teach grammar and 6 (28.58%) of the respondents replied that they prefer inductive approach and 4 (19.48%) used deductive approach in the classroom. This shows that the majority of the respondents use both inductive (skill oriented approach& rule discovery path) and deductive (rule driven teaching& learning method of grammar) approaches to teach grammar in ELT classrooms.

**Table 2.** What do you do, if the students don't understand easily the method that you use to teach grammar.

Items	Respondents in number	Respondents in percent
I repeat the method of teaching grammar again and again	3	14.29%
I change my method of teaching into new method of teaching grammar	16	76.19%
I give a chance to active students in the class to teach grammar	2	9.53%
Total	21	100%

As portrayed in the above table, 16 (76.19%) of the respondents replied that they change their method of teaching if the students don't understand easily using the method that they use to teach grammar in ELT classrooms. Only, 3 (14.29%) of the respondents replied that they repeat the method they teach again and again. And 2 (9.53%) of the respondents responded that they give chances for active students to teach grammar in the classroom. In general, this shows that the majority of teachers change their method of teaching into a new method because this will create the way that the students understand the lesson easily.

The major part of a language course or lesson should focus on teaching and practicing grammar.

**Table 3.** Teachers' responses for Q 12.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	2	9.52%

	Frequency	Percent
Agree	4	19.048%
Neutral	5	23.81%
Disagree	8	38.095%
Strongly disagree	2	9.52%
Total	21	100%

As the above table shows, 8 (38.095%) and 2 (9.52%) respondents replied disagree and strongly disagree with the idea that the major part of a language course or lesson should focus on teaching and practicing grammar. To the contrary, 5 (23.81%) respondents did not give any response as they responded neutral. This shows that the major part of a language course or lesson should not focus on teaching and practicing grammar.

#### 4.1.2. Analysis and Discussion of Open-end Questions

##### 1. What method do you use to teach grammar?

The majority of respondents replied that they teach grammar by using both deductive and inductive approaches of teaching grammar. In this, the teachers teach grammar firstly by telling the topic of the day lesson and by giving some rules with typical examples, and then they make students to be in group to discuss and practice by writing sentences based on the example given before. At the end, the teachers give explanation for that lesson.

For example, Teacher 1 said, personally, 'I use both inductive and deductive methods of teaching grammar based on the students' capacity of understanding the lesson'. Teacher 2 said, 'I usually use either inductive or deductive method based on the nature of the topic of the lesson'. Thus, it is concluded that most of the teachers teach grammar by using both inductive and deductive ways of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms.

##### 2. What roles do you think grammar plays in language teaching and learning?

Eight out of ten teachers responded that teaching grammar plays a significant roles in language teaching and learning because it guides their communication, it paves way for proper usage of language in the way that it can be used at standardized, it plays great rules for understanding the functions and the correct use of language and, in general, grammar is important for both teachers and students to have

knowledge of correct and proper use of the language.

On the contrary, some other respondents replied that grammar plays roles for the sake of making the students accurate speakers of the language and they also answered that there is no language learning or teaching out of grammar. So, it is mandatory to teach grammar and we have to concentrate on it because the national exam for the students depends more on grammar and it also helps students to understand the subject matter of the language, thus, this indicates that the majority of teachers replied that grammar plays a significant role by guiding their communication and it paves the way for the proper and correct use of the language.

##### 3. How do you present grammar lessons in the classrooms?

The majority of the English language teachers responded that they present grammar lessons in the classroom by providing the rules of grammar with examples, so that the students internalize it and use it for communication. The students are come up with basic rules and workout the rules by themselves because the text book even invites them to do so. For example, teacher one said, "Most of the time, first, I give students sort of examples and then I ask them to come to common rules". Teacher two said, 'I usually present a new language items in examples, and let students' work out the rules themselves'. The text book also invites them to do so. In general, most of the time, English teachers, first they provide rules with sort of examples then, they let students to do some exercises in the form of classwork or in the form of homework.

**Table 4.** Student's responses to item 1-5.

No	Items	F. and%	Responses					
			SA	A	N	D	SD	T
1	I get teachers to correct grammar mistakes	F	25	57	23	15	18	138
		%	18.11	41.3	16.6	13.04	10.87	100%
2	I seek other people to express grammatical points out of class	F	13	20	15	60	30	138
		%	9.42	14.49	10.8	43.48	21.74	100%
3	I memorize the rules of English grammar	F	38	52	16	12	20	138
		%	27.54	37.68	11.59	8.7	14.49	100%
4	I review the rules that have so far been learnt	F	30	68	11	17	12	138
		%	21.74	49.28	7.97	12.32	8.7	100%
5	I write down every new structure I find	F	76	49	0	7	6	138
		%	55.07	35.51	0	5.07	4.35	100%

As it can be shown on the above table, item 1, the response given shows that the majority of the students agree that they get their English teachers to correct their grammatical

mistakes. Regarding item 2, the response depicted that most of the students strongly disagree and disagree respectively. To item 3, majority of the students strongly agree and

agree that they memorize the rules of English grammar.

Focusing on item 4, it can be seen that most of the students strongly agree and agree that they review the rules of grammar that they have so far been learnt. And to item 5, the response revealed that most of the students strongly agree and agree that they write down every new structure that they find it.

Like speaking, in teaching grammar different activities can be given. Through speaking, students can participate to develop their use of correct grammar. Besides, through writing, teachers develop students' grammar skill by giving certain sentences, paragraph and essay to see how students use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc., and also teachers develop students' grammar skill through reading and listening. The observation was taken place during the whole period (42 minutes) for two times in a week for each six selected ELT classes. So, the researcher used classroom observation to check how the English language teachers were teaching grammar and how the students were learning English grammar. And also to evaluate what methods and approaches of grammar teaching English teachers were using while teaching grammar. For this reasons, 12 classroom observation checklist items were prepared. The check list was rating 'Yes' and 'NO' and the analysis and interpretation of data is based on the frequency and described in words.

#### 1. The teacher is good at explaining grammar rules

In fact, almost all English language teachers were good at explaining grammar rules in the ELT classrooms but the students had difficulty to understand those rules easily.

#### 2. The teacher presents grammar rules step by step

The researcher observed that almost all English teachers were not teaching by presenting grammar rules step by step. For example, one teacher was teaching about conditional type two and the other teacher was teaching about past continuous tense.

It is true that teaching grammar rule is advantageous to develop students' grammar skill. But this is based on the level and capacity of the students that they have.

Moreover, some other teachers follow only the approach of the textbook. From this data, the researcher can conclude that English language teachers were not teaching by presenting grammar rules step by step. This is because the approach of the text book preparation does not allow the teachers to do so.

#### 3. The teacher focuses on fluency rather than accuracy

As the researcher observed, four out of six teachers were teaching grammar by focusing on fluency. But some teachers were not in doing so. Indeed, the command of language teaching and learning is to focus on fluency rather than accuracy. This is done in order to enhance communicative competence of students. Thus, it can be concluded that almost all teachers focus on fluency rather than accuracy in order to enhance communicative competence of students because unless they do this, they cannot enhance the speaking skill of students.

#### 4. The teacher's talk dominated the classes

As the researcher observed the classroom, all of the teachers' talk dominated the class. This is because the students were not motivated and actively participated while the teachers were teaching. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the teachers' talk was dominated the class rather the teachers using different mechanisms to motivate and activate students to participate in the ELT classrooms.

#### 5. The teacher corrects grammatical errors when the students make errors

Actually, all teachers give grammatical corrections for the students.

#### 6. The teacher has enough material to teach grammar

The researcher observed six English teachers while they were teaching grammar parts. Accordingly, all teachers, except two, all depend on the students' text book. But two who come up with certain reference in addition to students' text book were participated students more than expected. It is true that teaching grammar different materials is very essential for students to refer different examples and exercises. So, the researcher concluded that almost all teachers did not teach grammar by using different material. This shows that teachers had not enough materials to teach grammar, and all depend on the students' textbook.

#### 7. The teacher gives different examples for grammar lessons and makes the students practice it

In fact, all English language teachers gave different examples for grammar lessons and they also gave exercises for students to practice.

#### 8. The teacher manages the students' activities in the ELT classrooms

As the researcher observed, only two English language teachers managed the activities of students in the classroom among six teachers. To the contrary, four of them did not manage students. This was because at the time they give lecture, they were standing at the front and talked to students rather than following up their activities by moving here and there in classroom and this is also due to high number of students in one classroom is difficult to manage every activity of students. Indeed, managing every activity of students in the classroom is important to know the students well and to help them. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the majority of the teachers did not manage the students' activities in the classrooms.

#### 9. The teacher teaches the lesson with form and meaning

As the researcher observed from the sample teachers, all teachers teach their lessons with form and meaning interactively. In fact, teaching grammar lesson with form and meaning is very preferable for students at General Secondary and Preparatory School levels, because most of these level students cannot understand or discover the meaning of certain point by themselves unless the teacher express and teach them firstly.

#### 10. The students are motivated in participating in English grammar lessons

As the researcher observed, the majority of students were not motivated actively in participating in English grammar lessons even if their teachers encouraged them. This shows that the students had difficulty to understand the grammar lessons.

11. The students are in pair or groups to discuss grammar parts

As the researcher observed, the students were not in pair or groups to discuss grammar parts.

12. The students participate actively in the ELT classroom  
Students were not actively participating in English gram-

mar lessons even if their teachers encouraged them.

## 4.2. Analysis and Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire Data

This part focuses on the analysis and interpretation of students' questionnaire. Thus, this questionnaire contains 20 items and it has nine likert scales: strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, and disagree and neutral, Very helpful, helpful, not very helpful and to some extent helpful.

**Table 5.** Student's responses to item 1-5.

No	Items	F. and%	Responses					
			SA	A	N	D	SD	T
1	I get teachers to correct grammar mistakes	F	25	57	23	15	18	138
		%	18.11	41.3	16.6	13.04	10.87	100%
2	I seek other people to express grammatical points out of class	F	13	20	15	60	30	138
		%	9.42	14.49	10.8	43.48	21.74	100%
3	I memorize the rules of English grammar	F	38	52	16	12	20	138
		%	27.54	37.68	11.59	8.7	14.49	100%
4	I review the rules that have so far been learnt	F	30	68	11	17	12	138
		%	21.74	49.28	7.97	12.32	8.7	100%
5	I write down every new structure I find	F	76	49	0	7	6	138
		%	55.07	35.51	0	5.07	4.35	100%

Key: SA= strongly agree

N= neutral

A= agree

SD=strongly disagree

T= Total

D= disagree

As it can be shown on the above table, item 1, the response given shows that the majority of the students agree that they get their English teachers to correct their grammatical mistakes. Regarding item 2, the response depicted that most of the students strongly disagree and disagree respectively. To item 3, majority of the students strongly agree and agree that they memorize the rules of English grammar.

Focusing on item 4, it can be seen that most of the students strongly agree and agree that they review the rules of grammar that they have so far been learnt. And to item 5, the response revealed that most of the students strongly agree and agree that they write down every new structure that they find it.

## 5. Summary of the Major Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1. Summary of the Major Findings

The main objective of this study is to investigate the practice of teaching grammar in ELT classrooms at Debre Berhan town of two preparatory schools grade eleven in focus.

In order to achieve this objective the following four basic research questions that were raised in the study. These were:

- 1) How do EFL teachers currently teach grammar in ELT classrooms?
- 2) What approaches do EFL teachers use to teach gram-



mar?

- 3) How do teachers present grammar lessons in the classroom?
- 4) What difficulties do EFL teachers face in teaching grammar?

To answer the research questions mentioned above, the researcher used three different data gathering tools: questionnaire, classroom observation and interview.

Both English language teachers and grade 11 students were participants of the study and they were the primary data sources upon which this study was based. In this regard, non-probability sampling methods were used to select the sample population for the study. A comprehensive sampling technique was employed to select all teachers for questionnaire. Accordingly, 21 English language teachers were taken as subjects of the study for questionnaire. Besides, purposive sampling technique was used to select sample students for questionnaire and interview. Regarding the population of the study, there were totally 21 English language teachers and 592 grade 11 students in both H/Mamo Preparatory and Basso General Secondary and Preparatory Schools. All teachers were taken for questionnaire and 10 teachers were selected for interview purposefully. And out of 592 students, 148 students were used questionnaire and 14 students were employed for interview purposefully. The data collected through questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted quantitatively by using frequency and percentage in tables. Besides, the data gathered via classroom observation and interview were analyzed and interpreted qualitatively by writing in words. Finally, based on the analyzed and interpreted data, the following findings were obtained:

The finding of the study revealed that English language teachers were teaching grammar communicatively by using both inductive and deductive approaches of teaching grammar.

They teach grammar lessons with form and meaning interactively. This result was crosschecked by the three tools of data collection and even it had witness from each data gathering tool.

To the contrary, the teachers face the following challenges in teaching grammar: the approach of the textbook is not good to make students to understand the grammar points clearly at a given period of time. So, it needs more time, teachers also faced challenge to teach grammar communicatively due to high tendency of students to learn grammar in structural approach and the teachers are incapable to make students to understand grammar as the students have no background knowledge of grammar and they do not have their own methods of learning grammar. Besides, the classroom data showed that all of the teachers' talk dominated the class. This is because the students were not motivated and actively participated while the teachers were teaching grammar and also the majority of the teachers did not manage the students' activities in the classrooms. This was because at the time they give lecture, they were standing at the front and

talked to students rather than following up their activities by moving here and there in classroom and this is also due to high number of students in one classroom is difficult to manage every activity of students. Moreover, some English language teachers are forced to teach English grammar more in old method still because the national exam of students is more depended on grammar points and as it gives more emphasis in grammar parts oriented, some teachers give more attention to structures of the language rather than communication parts. So, the teachers are ready to equip students to get ready for their national exam rather than making students to enhance their communicative competence.

The questionnaire data revealed that it is very helpful if the teachers teach students about the strategies of learning English grammar. Besides, it showed that it is very helpful if the teachers break up students in to smaller group to talk about English grammar and it is very helpful if each student is allowed to discover grammar rules by himself or herself. Moreover, it revealed that it is not very helpful if the teacher helps students to self-correct their own grammar.

Teachers' interview data showed that while teachers utilize both inductive and deductive methods, challenges persist, including inadequate instructional materials, low student motivation, and an emphasis on grammar for standardized testing rather than meaningful communication. Also the data subjected to interview analysis have shown that the decision to plan grammar lessons is not up to teachers rather it is based on curriculum that the text book was designed and prepared so; the teachers do not have any their own decision which grammar features are to be focused to teach grammar. The students have no background knowledge about grammar, so, their level of understanding grammar is less, they have high tendency to learn grammar in old method only rather than communicatively and in addition to this, students have mother tongue (Amharic language) influence on learning grammar, they do not have any method and background of learning grammar and they are not masticated to participate in learning English grammar in the ELT classroom (see open-ended question and interview).

Needless to say that all these contribute to the students who are weak in command of English grammar learning and teaching, both knowledge about EFL grammar and the ability to put in use in communication.

## 5.2. Conclusions

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) Preparatory English language teachers play great roles to improve students' grammar. The questionnaires, classroom observation and interviews analysis results revealed that both Basso General Secondary and preparatory School and Haile Mariam Preparatory school English language teachers teach grammar in communicative way by employing both inductive and deductive ap-

proaches of teaching grammar in order to develop students' communicative competence. They teach grammar lessons with form and meaning interactively.

- 2) The teachers teach grammar by changing the original method in to the new method if the students do not understand the lesson easily; the methods that they used to teach grammar. Also English language teachers teach grammar for the purpose of aware the students about the forms and functions of the English language.

### 5.3. Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) English language teachers in preparatory schools should adopt communicative approach of teaching grammar and they should apply it while they are teaching grammar in ELT classrooms.
- 2) By using both inductive and deductive approaches of teaching grammar, teachers should create opportunities for students to enhance their communicative competences in which the speaking skill or ability of the students is highly developed.
- 3) Teachers should create awareness for students about learning methods of grammar and to have their own method of learning grammar.
- 4) The students should be encouraged and actively participate in learning grammar.
- 5) The teachers' talk should not dominate the class as they are teaching grammar communicatively.
- 6) Teachers should use additional reference books in order to fill the gap that the text book of students lack and to have more knowledge on grammar points and to come up with different examples and exercises for students to understand the language easily.
- 7) The concerned bodies like material designers, textbook writers and classroom English language teachers should give high emphasis to the inclusion of more tasks and activities for students to practice grammar in the ELT classrooms and about learning and teaching English in particular and English language in general. And these concerned bodies should revise the way of teaching grammar and the approach of the preparation of the textbook.
- 8) Generally, since this study was focused on only in grade 11 at two different governmental schools of Debre Berhan town, it will be good if more researches conducted on this area by including primary, high schools to get further information on the practice of teaching English grammar.

### Abbreviations

A	Agree
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
D	Disagree

EFL	English as Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as Second Language
L2	Second Language
MoE	Ministry of Education
N	Neutral
Q	Question
SA	Strongly Agree
SD	Strongly Disagree
T	Total

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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