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Alternative grammar teaching vs. traditional grammar teaching in Albanian tertiary education

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ABSTRACT

Owing to the complex nature of the English Grammar, teachers of English language and linguistics face many challenges when teaching Grammar. Besides, it is difficult for students to master grammar structures though English teachers in Albania try hard to make grammar teaching as engaging as possible but through the traditional grammar teaching approach. The traditional approach and techniques have produced ineffective learning and inert knowledge problems. However, through alternative teaching approaches, especially the communicative one, students learn the language in all its three dimensions, form, meaning and use. This helps them to make use of grammatical structures meaningfully, accurately, and appropriately. With the view to investigate Albanian University lecturers' perspectives in teaching English grammar in foreign languages departments in Albania, this research paper aimed to survey English Language lecturers' most effective grammar teaching approaches and strongly suggest them teaching grammar communicatively. With the aid of a questionnaire, lecturers provided their opinions on the effectiveness of this alternative teaching approach and its impact on their students' success. As an integral component part of language, as a mechanism that makes language move, grammar improves the quality as well as accuracy of English language writing and fluency, and the best approach to integrate it into English language teaching skills, should be applied by all English language lecturers. The questionnaire's results show an integration of both approaches. Lecturers prefer teaching grammar communicatively to the traditional approach; however, they also use elements of the traditional one.

Contribution/Originality: This research paper on teaching English grammar in Albanian foreign language faculties serves the lecturers of English as a foreign or second language in improving their approaches of teaching English grammar, strongly suggesting the communicative approach. Unlike other studies that focus on the difficulties of teaching grammar, this study examines teachers' perspectives and the role grammar knowledge and grammar teaching play in second language acquisition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Grammar teaching approaches have been an issue of controversy in Applied Linguistics and Foreign and Second Language Acquisition disciplines. Burgess and Etherington (2002) claim that the role of grammar teaching has always been disputable in foreign and second language teaching. English language lectures' perspectives on

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approaches to grammar teaching differ in what they choose as effective and in what they mostly practice in their classes.

In English teaching and learning, grammar is a key component, forasmuch as it provides the student with the structures required to arrange sentences and thoughts comprehensively. Using grammar accurately enables students or other language learners and users to communicate efficiently and to avoid misunderstandings. Thornbury (1999) considers grammar a description of the rules for sentence formation, comprising the meanings that these forms bring. Grammar is not only a competence but also a skill, and as such must be considered and practiced, alongside the other skills.

English language lecturers differ regarding grammar teaching beliefs and perspectives. How they conceptualize, grammar might be affected by their mother tongue, grammar learning and their concept of grammar teaching or learning. As asserted in the Cambridge dictionary, grammar is the study or the use of the rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to express meaning. This definition implies that rules should be learned, to use them in sentences or utterances alongside meaning.

Ellis (1997) considers grammar as a cornerstone in helping language learners to communicate meaningfully and accurately and improve their communicative competence in language proficiency. Grammar provides information and produces meaning through communication and expression. It is indispensable for a language learner and user. Moreover Crystal (2004) states that Grammar is the structural foundation of our capacity to express ourselves. The more we understand how it functions, the more we observe the essence and efficacy of the manner we make use of language. It can promote accuracy, identify ambiguity, and accomplish communication in English. Therefore, it is much more complex than just rules to learn and use in sentences.

Thornbury (1999) claims that the grammar debate has preoccupied theorists and practitioners more than any other issue, with a long history of language teaching for and against grammar teaching. Differences in perspective to the grammar role have brought about differences in approaches among lecturers and students. Teachers' attitudes have shifted from traditional approaches to more interactive approaches, whose focus is on using grammar rather than learning its rules. Nowadays lecturers have mostly embraced the communicative approach (Thornbury, 1999).

Freeman–Larsen (2001) regards Grammar as a dynamic system of meaningful structures and models, controlled by certain pragmatic restrictions. Grammar is considered as 'form', used to produce meaning. If lecturers see grammar as a rich system, their attitude changes and their students will regard grammar knowledge as empowering. This implies learning grammar by involvement in real-life communication and using it to discuss actual issues.

For Richards and Schmidt (2002), grammaring often refers to the process by which learners create messages through grammaticalization or add grammar to a series of words to create great meaning distinctions. Grammar teaching does not focus on transmitting knowledge but on teaching the students to use accurate and meaningful grammatical structures. This implies that the grammar function is the production of appropriate meaning.

Should we teach grammar explicitly or implicitly? This is a question that many second and foreign language lecturers and researchers face. For some theorists there is no other way to teach grammar than explicit grammar teaching. In contrast, other researchers are in favor of implicit grammar teaching or communicative. Harmer (1991) quotes "When teaching grammar, a teacher must show his students the meaning of language and its use; the grammatical form of the target language and how it is spoken or written". Teaching grammar in context will provide learners with an opportunity to understand language functions and will improve their communication competence (Harmer, 1991). Harmer supports the concept of *grammaring* as a way of improving students' communication and writing skills.

Considering grammar as a skill, Savage, Bitterlin, and Price (2010) examine three roles to emphasize the significance of grammar in language learning:

1. Grammar as a helping skill in other language areas.
2. Grammar as a motivator in other language learning areas.
3. Grammar as a technique to self-sufficiency enabling self-correction while using language.

The importance of practicing the grammaring skill as a dynamic process in language teaching is indisputable and should be the goal of every language lecturer or teacher.

To investigate our perception on the importance of the grammaring skill, the research questions raised are as follows:

1. What are the English lecturers' beliefs about grammar teaching?
2. Which are the most typical techniques and activities English lecturers use in grammar instruction?
3. Which are the most common difficulties encountered by English lecturers during grammar instruction?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Importance of Grammar Teaching

"The grammar value was never challenged," as Dalil (2013) stated, "Grammar is the central part of a language, and this should be of vital interest to any intelligent educated person. By means of grammar, students can understand language structures, which contribute to communication. An English student, who does not know grammar, is like a composer who does not know the music notes". This implies that grammar is essential to language learning. It is the central element of a language.

Mitchell (1994) asserts that 'Grammar Teaching' is a necessity for balanced language development helping comprehension and supporting communication. "Without grammar, clear comprehension cannot be realized, and communication cannot be correct" (Nunan,1988). Likewise, Rutherford (1987) specifying "grammar as a pivotal element of the syllabus," incorporates 'grammar' into the learner's syllabus, this way contrasting the traditional method for which grammar is a product and grammar rules need memorization and reproduction mechanically.

Grammar knowledge is indispensable to create fully developed sentences operating at the sentence level. As Emery, Kierzek, and Lindblom (1978) write "The more one knows about the form and function of the sentence parts, the better he is equipped to utter correct sentences". Wang (2010) mentions in his article 'The *grammaring* skill contributes to language competence. He also claims that grammar is absolutely the first liberal art. Pursuant to him, grammar studying has two objectives.

- First, it retains and improves understanding of great literature, and it contributes to fluent self-expression.
- Second, discussing the grammar value is like doubting whether farmers know their crops and animals' names. That means, if words represent the essence of intellectual life, a student unknowledgeable of grammar is like a surgeon unknowledgeable of the body parts.

Although grammar-teaching value has undergone a series of debates for years, it still plays an important role in literacy. Lecturers cannot avoid it and intertwine into language teaching.

3. GRAMMARING: THE FIFTH SKILL

Many researchers have tried for years to explain the term grammaring. Larsen-Freeman first put grammaring forward in 1992 as the fifth skill. Larsen-Freeman (2001) defined it as "the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately". This intends that grammaring is a dynamic process and not system of rules; it is a skill and not a competence. Pursuant to Larsen-Freeman (2001) "Teaching grammar is more a knowledge transmission than a skill development". This implies that grammar teaching empowers students, and it is of paramount importance.

Moreover, Richards and Reppen (2014) claim that grammar is knowledge as well as ability. If regarded as knowledge, the focus of sentence formation is rules. If regarded as ability, the focus is its use as a resource in the formation of spoken and written texts. Hence, grammar is a skill as well as competence. In addition, Nan (2015) says in his article that in real communication knowledge of only grammar rules does not suffice, but a lack of appropriate grammar brings ineffective communication. Grammar as a lexico-grammatical resource contributes to meaning provision. Moreover, for Roza (2018), grammar lessons are not about knowing language systems but knowing how to use language. Grammar cannot be seen as static knowledge but a process in which that knowledge is being applied according to semantics and context.

4. ALBANIAN LECTURERS' PERSPECTIVES IN TEACHING GRAMMAR COMMUNICATIVELY

Based on Celce-Murcia (1991) "Effective communication depends on grammatical accuracy, hence it must be mentioned that communication and grammar are interconnected". Teaching grammar communicatively should be considered by all grammar lecturers to enhance his/her students' learning of grammar and produce appropriate and accurate linguistic communication. Based on these results, the participants prefer teaching grammar communicatively, although at times they use the traditional way. Indeed, they use a mixture of both approaches' context and situation dependent. In the second research question the lecturers use mostly activities and techniques typical of the traditional way. However, they *often* use activities of communicative teaching grammar. In the third research question, the teachers provide responses to the students and their needs about grammar instructions, which mean that they use both approaches.

From our findings in the second research question, the students' expectations of the traditional way of teaching grammar may push Albanian lecturers to adapt their instruction towards the traditional approach rather than the communicative grammar approach. This comes because of their previous studies of this language. They are taught English grammar through the traditional way.

Albanian lecturers of our study case admit that it is their responsibility to find and apply alternative approaches to the teaching of grammar for an improvement of their students' communicative skills. This is their objective and is substituting the traditional approach nowadays.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Subjects

The present study is realized with English language lecturers from three Universities in Albania: namely the Department of Foreign Languages at Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës, the Department of English Language, at Tirana University, and the Center of Foreign Languages at Polytechnic University of Tirana. The subjects of the study consisted of 63 full and part-time lecturers, chosen at random. A total of 82 lecturers were contacted but only 63 of them completed the questionnaire. All the participants' working experiences varied from a minimum of 1-3 years teaching experience to a maximum of 21 years or more at respective Universities. Their participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary. The administration of the questionnaire was realized during the second semester of the academic year, 2020-2021 and all the participants were contacted via e-mail.

5.2. Instruments of the Study

In our study, a questionnaire was used, which was adapted from that of Burgess and Etherington (2002). It had two main parts. In the first part, the participants were requested to provide background information such as the age group they belong to, their gender, their teaching experience etc. The second part of the questionnaire contained three blocks of statements related to three different categories. The first one was named "Lecturers beliefs in English grammar instruction". It consisted of 31 statements, which revealed lecturers' viewpoints on grammar instruction where the Likert scale was used with values ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. More

specifically, the statements reflected four main types of grammar instruction: Instruction through direct items, instruction through indirect items, form-focused instruction, and meaning-focused instruction. The four of them were presented and analyzed individually further on. The second block was named "Techniques and activities applied in grammar instruction" and as the title suggests here were listed a variety of techniques and activities that lecturers might use in teaching grammar. It consisted of 24 statements, where the Likert scale was used with values ranging from 'Never' to 'Always". The third and last block was named "Difficulties related to grammar instruction". It consisted of 20 statements where the Likert scale was used with values ranging from 'Strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Quantitative methods were used to inspect the data in all the above blocks.

## 6. RESULTS

6.1. Data Analysis

At first, the analysis was focused on the lecturers' age group. Based on the data provided by them in the first part of the questionnaire it was found that the participants belonged to four age groups. As it is noticed in the distribution in figure number 1, 20.3 % belong to the age-group 22-31 years old (13 lecturers), 47.6% belonged to the age-group 32-41 years old (30 lecturers), 27% to the age-group 42- 51 years old (17 lecturers). Only 4.8% belonged to the age-group 52 years old or more, corresponding to 3 lecturers.

The lecturers' age groups are presented in Figure 1.
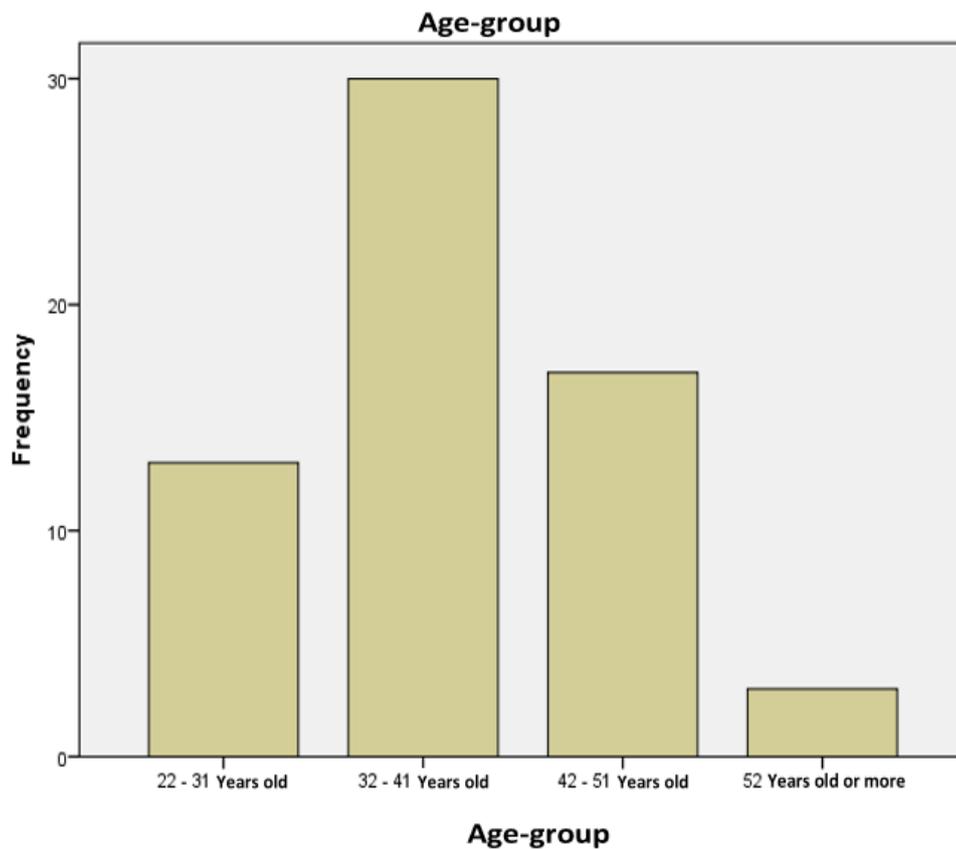
Figure 1. The lecturers' age group.

As a second step, the aim was to find out the gender of participants in the survey. The analysis showed that 11% were male (7 lecturers) and 89% were female (56 lecturers). The lecturers' gender are presented in Figure 2.
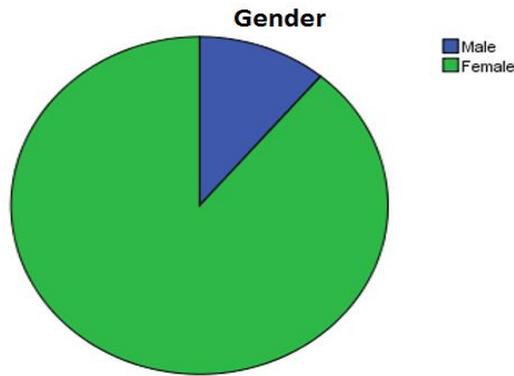
Gender

Figure 2. The lecturer's gender.

Another interesting element of this study was to concentrate on the teaching experience of the participants. The results indicate that English language lecturers' experience varies from 1-3 years to 21 years or more. What attracts the attention in Table 1 is the fact that 73% of the lecturers surveyed have 11 or more years of teaching experience, which are approximately two-thirds of the sample. To have a better visual presentation, the same information is presented in Figure 3.

Table 1. Teaching experience expressed in percentage.

Valid	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
1-3 Years	5	7.9	7.9	7.9
4-6 Years	7	11.1	11.1	19.0
7-10 Years	5	7.9	7.9	27.0
11-15 Years	21	33.3	33.3	60.3
16-20 Years	19	30.2	30.2	90.5
21 Years or more	6	9.5	9.5	100.0
Total	63	100.0	100.0	100.0
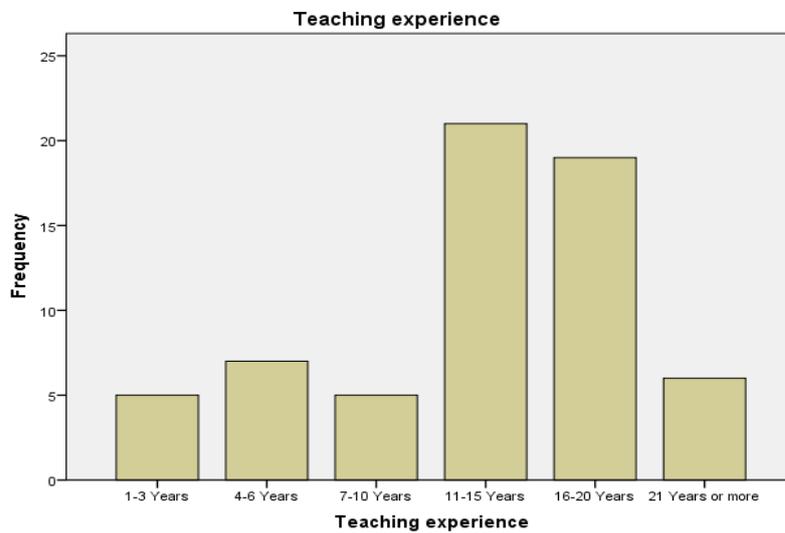
Figure 3. Teaching experience varying from 1-21 years.

The next step in this analysis was the first block of questions of the second part of the questionnaire named *"Lecturers beliefs in English grammar instruction"*. As mentioned earlier, it was analyzed and divided into four main groups: Instruction through direct items, Instruction through indirect items, Form-focused instruction, and Meaning-focused instruction. This division turned out to be very useful in specifying the lecturers' favorite approach between the communicative or traditional one grammar translation method.

6.2. Instruction through Direct Items

The items in this block of statements are related to the traditional way of teaching grammar, as it is easily noticeable by statements, which incorporate characteristics of this method. The Likert scale was used for this block. The mean values were highly significant in interpreting the results. The answers from $1 - 1.8$ were calculated as *strongly disagree*. From $1.81 - 2.6$ were calculated as *disagree*. From $2.61 - 3.4$ were calculated as *not sure*. From $3.41 - 4.2$ were calculated as *disagree* and from $4.21 - 5$ were calculated as *strongly agree*. Based on the mean values, for 9 out of the 12 statements, the participants either disagreed, as was the case of statement no.5, with a mean value M = 2.05, or expressed their uncertainty, as in the case of statements number 1,3,7,8,9,10,11,12. This is noticeable from the mean values that range between 2.86 and 3.30.

Concerning statements number 2, 3 and 6, the lecturers expressed their agreement, which is clear from the respective mean values. For statement number 2 (Learners in knowledge of grammar rules use language more effectively than those that lack that knowledge) M =3.48, for statement number 3 (Grammar structures exercises, help learners in using grammar fluently) M =3.70 and for statement number 6 (Repeated practice allows students to use grammar structures fluently) M = 3.83. Apparently, lecturers showed a certain preference for repeated practice of grammar rules, perceive exercises of grammar helpful in developing fluency and consider learners knowledgeable of grammar rules as more effective users than those who were not. These findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Teachers explain grammar students before expecting students to use it.	63	3.22	1.288
Learners in knowledge of grammar rules use language more effectively than those that lack that knowledge.	63	3.48	1.216
Grammar structures exercises help learners in to using grammar fluently.	63	3.70	1.087
Teaching English grammar rules directly is more appropriate for older learners.	63	3.17	1.171
Grammar teaching should, not be integrated with reading and writing.	63	2.05	0.991
Repeated practice allows students to use grammar structures fluently.	63	3.83	1.086
The grammar teacher's main role is rule explanation.	63	2.86	1.318
Direct grammar explanation is more direct to enable learners' comprehension.	63	3.21	1.124
Grammatical terminology is important for students.	63	3.25	1.121
One of the teacher's main roles is correcting spoken grammatical errors.	63	2.83	1.212
To speak a foreign language fluently studying grammar indispensable.	63	3.02	1.085
While teaching grammar, teachers should inform the rules to their students and let them do the respective exercises afterwards.	63	3.30	1.213
Valid N (list wise).	63		

6.3. Instruction through Indirect Items

The items in this block of statements were related to the communicative approach of teaching grammar. Even for this block, the Likert scale was used, with values varying from 1- Strongly disagree to 5- Strongly agree. The analysis of this group revealed that for statement number 1 (A focus on grammar while teaching should come after communicative tasks, not before) with M=3.35 and statement number 3 (Formal grammar teaching does not help learners become more fluent) with M= 3.10. The participants expressed their uncertainty whereas for all the other statements, they expressed their agreement which is evident from the mean values that vary from M=3.51 to M=3.89. From these values, it can be pointed out that the participants tend to use numerous elements of communicative grammar during their instruction in class. Statement number 6, with M=3.89, (Teaching new grammar points should start by providing examples) is only one of these elements. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
A focus on grammar while teaching should come after communicative tasks, not before.	63	3.35	1.220
Grammar is not taught directly in a communicative teaching approach.	63	3.59	1.072
Formal grammar teaching does not help learners become more fluent.	63	3.10	1.132
Indirect grammar teaching is more appropriate with younger learners than with older ones.	63	3.51	1.243
Grammar learning becomes more effective when learners formulate the rules for themselves.	63	3.62	1.069
Teaching new grammar points should start by providing examples.	63	3.89	1.094
The teacher's role is to assist learners work out the grammar rules by themselves.	63	3.63	1.112
Valid N (List wise).	63		

6.4. Form-Focused Instruction

The statements of this group were related to the traditional way of grammar teaching, with their focus mainly on form rather than on meaning. Even in this case the Likert scale was used, with values varying from 1- Strongly disagree to 5- Strongly agree. Based on the mean values presented here, it can be said that the participants agree only with the first two statements, namely statement number 1 (English learners' accuracy can be developed by Grammar instruction) M=3.71 and statement number 2 (For a successful learning of new language grammatical drilling is indispensable) M=3.60. Concerning all the other statements they declared "not sure". What attracts the attention is statement number 3 with the lowest mean value, respectively M= 2.67 (Grammar teaching should focus on the form). Overall, it was noticed a kind of hesitation from the English language lecturers to accept and apply form-focused instruction in their presentation of grammar in class. These findings are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
English learners' accuracy can be developed by Grammar instruction.	63	3.71	0.958
For a successful learning of new language grammatical drilling is indispensable.	63	3.60	1.040
Grammar teaching should focus on the form.	63	2.67	1.016
One of the most important criteria by which language performance should be evaluated is Grammatical accuracy.	63	2.92	1.195
In order to prevent the formation of bad habits, students' mistakes must be corrected immediately.	63	2.78	1.184
Teacher must use learners' L1 to explain grammar rules.	63	2.98	1.100
Rules memorization is indispensable to the successful learning of new language forms.	63	2.86	1.318
Valid N (List wise).	63		

6.5. Meaning-Focused Instruction

The items in this block of statements relate to the communicative approach of grammar teaching. It is noticeable from the statements, which include characteristics of this approach. Even in this case the Likert scale was used. The group consisted of 5 statements. Analyzing the mean values, it was interesting to highlight the fact that the participants agreed to all of them. What caught the eye was statement number 3, which had the highest mean score (Grammar is learned best through language exposure in natural contexts) with M=4.00. The analysis indicated a clear preference from the participants for meaning-focused instruction and consequently even for a communicative approach in teaching grammar. Furthermore, it showed that lecturers are knowledgeable of the communicative grammar approach and since they agreed with all the statements, they consider it beneficial and useful. The findings are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Learners become more fluent in English by grammar instruction.	63	3.46	1.119
Grammar teaching should focus on meaning.	63	3.41	1.010
Grammar is learned best through language exposure in natural contexts.	63	4.00	1.122
Grammar Practice must always be done in a communicative context.	63	3.60	1.199
A teacher must correct students' spoken grammatical errors only when they hinder understanding the meaning.	63	3.46	1.162
Valid N (List wise).	63		

6.6. Techniques and Activities Applied in Grammar Instruction

Our analysis proceeded with the second block of statements entitled "Techniques and activities applied in grammar instruction". It included numerous activities among which can be mentioned: Group discussion, translation, tables and graphs, problem solving, practice drills, games, songs, poems, contextualized practice, quizzes tests etc. The Likert scale was used. The participants were asked on the frequency they use the activities and techniques listed in the table. The mean value was taken as a reference point. Based on the mean scores the lecturers' answers were various. However, they admitted that they sometimes used activities like the Storytelling (activity 2), Translation (activity 6), Tables, figures, charts, and diagrams (activity 7), Music, songs, and poems (activity 8), playing games (activity 9), with the respective values M=3.38, M=3.11, M=3.37, M=3.16 and M=3.17. The analysis also revealed that the activities always used by the participants during grammar instruction resulted to be Group discussion / group work / pair work (activity 3) with M= 4.22, Practicing grammar exercises from the textbooks (activity 15) with M= 4.27 and dealing with workbook exercises on grammar (activity 23) with M= 4.25. Apart from activity 2, which was used in teaching grammar communicatively, the lecturers seemed to stick to the idea of teaching grammar in the traditional way. They often used the other activities listed in the table. In this group of activities, activities used in the traditional way as well as the communicative way, were noticed. The findings are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
Whole class teaching.	63	4.16	0.787
Using storytelling.	63	3.38	1.113
Group discussion/Group work/Pair work.	63	4.22	0.870
Using role-play.	63	3.87	1.100
Using pictures and images.	63	3.56	1.147
Translation.	63	3.11	1.049
Using tables, figures, charts and diagrams.	63	3.37	1.082
Using music, songs and poems.	63	3.16	1.110
Playing games.	63	3.17	1.040
Learners should participate in real life tasks to enhance their grammatical knowledge.	63	3.92	1.005
Using contextualized practice.	63	4.02	0.975
Using form-focused practice (Such as substitution drills).	63	3.81	0.820
Problem-solving.	63	3.57	0.928
Reading different kinds of texts.	63	4.17	0.773
Practicing grammar exercises from textbooks.	63	4.27	0.787
Listening to native speakers.	63	3.63	1.168
Speaking to others in English.	63	4.14	0.780
Listening exercises that practice specific grammar constructions.	63	3.70	1.102
Repetition drills.	63	3.56	1.012
Listening to audio CDs or watching films in real language.	63	3.71	1.084
Dealing with projects and activities that require the use of English.	63	4.05	0.851
Dealing with quizzes and tests that focus on grammar points.	63	3.87	0.975
Dealing with workbook exercises on grammar.	63	4.25	0.897
Explaining grammar rules.	63	4.06	0.948
Valid N (List wise).	63		

6.7. Difficulties Related to Grammar Instruction

The last but not the least important block of statements dealt with the difficulties encountered by the participants during the process of grammar instruction. It included both difficulties related to the students and to the lecturers. The Likert scale was used. Referring to the mean scores, the problems were presented through the following statements: Number 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20 (with mean values presented respectively: M=2.57, M= 2.38, M= 2.40, M= 2.33, M=2.43, M= 2.43 and M= 2.47). These were not issues of concern for the lecturers as they expressed disagreement in relation to them. However, it was noticed a certain hesitation from the participants regarding statements number 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13 and 19 (with mean values given respectively: M= 2.73, M= 2.67, M= 2.81, M= 2.87, M= 2.70, M=3.21 and M= 2.79). The most prominent issues were given in statement number 3, with the highest mean score (M= 3.67). It was followed by statement number 4, statement number 2, statement number 5, and statement number 14. Their mean scores were given respectively: M= 3.65, M= 3.63, M= 3.54 and M= 3.43). The findings are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Std. deviation
My students encounter difficulties while transferring their grammatical knowledge into communicative language use.	63	2.73	0.987
My students get motivation by problem-solving techniques for learning grammar.	63	3.63	0.747
My students require teachers to present grammar points explicitly.	63	3.67	1.047
My students like to learn grammar from one sentence examples.	63	3.65	0.936
My students like to find matches between meaning and structure on their own.	63	3.54	0.930
My students encounter difficulties in handling grammar given within real texts.	63	2.67	0.880
My students find real texts difficult because of various structures that appear.	63	2.81	1.030
My students find authentic texts difficult because they are too culture bound.	63	2.57	0.928
My students find authentic texts difficult because of the vocabulary used.	63	2.87	0.975
My students cannot find form-function matches in authentic texts without explicit direction from teachers.	63	2.70	0.944
Teachers find the use of authentic material too time-consuming.	63	2.38	0.958
Teachers encounter difficulties in producing tasks of a suitable level from real texts.	63	2.40	1.025
A lack of explicit grammar teaching makes my students feel insecure.	63	3.21	1.095
My students find grammatical terminology helpful.	63	3.43	0.911
Teachers face difficulties in correcting student grammar errors within a written communicative context.	63	2.33	1.016
Teachers face difficulties in correcting student errors of grammar within a spoken communicative context.	63	2.43	1.027
My students face difficulties in improving the accuracy of their grammatical language within a very communicative writing activity.	63	2.43	0.962
My students face difficulties in improving the accuracy of their grammatical language within a totally communicative speaking activity.	63	2.59	0.978
My students find using grammatical terminology difficult.	63	2.79	1.080
My students are frustrated by problem-solving techniques when learning grammar.	63	2.57	1.073
Valid N (List wise)	63		

7. DISCUSSION

Regarding the first research question "*What are the English lecturers' beliefs about teaching grammar?*" The participants showed a certain preference for teaching grammar communicatively; however, at times they also favored elements that belonged to the traditional way of teaching grammar. This result is found in other studies as well such as that of Borg (2003) who noted, "Teachers are active decision makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalized and context sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs". Furthermore, this viewpoint is also supported by Karabutova, Akinshina, Prokopenko, and Kobzareva

(2015). Their study results point out that foreign language teachers at Belgorod State National Research University postulate that grammar should not be introduced as a group of rules, with a set of vocabulary, to be remembered. It is acknowledged as a dynamic resource, which creates meaning in the teaching/learning process based on cognitive mechanisms, i.e., "the process of habit formation".

In respect to the second research question, *"What are the most typical techniques and activities they use in grammar instruction?"* The lecturers seem to use mostly activities and techniques typical of the traditional way of teaching grammar. However, many activities of teaching grammar communicatively are *"often"* used. In the same line with our finding is the Borg and Burns (2008) study. They found that teaching grammar in isolation is not a strong teachers' belief. The teachers manifest high levels of grammar integration in their teaching process. Onalan (2018) states that experienced instructors do not perceive rule explanation as the main role in grammar teaching, although a few new teachers find rule explanation as an important role of teachers. This intends that grammar lecturers and instructors are embracing and using alternative way nowadays.

Concerning the third research question *"What are the most common difficulties lecturers encounter during grammar instruction?"* All of them are related to the students and their expectations about grammar instruction. The students' expectations towards the traditional way may push lecturers to adapt their instruction towards the traditional one. According to Lee (2005) students strongly preferred implicit, inductive, and meaning-oriented grammar teaching. The teachers supported explicit teaching and students the implicit one. If students are taught rules without direct engagement in their use, they will never integrate into learners' implicit knowledge system. To support this view, he also quotes the proverb by Franklin, "Tell me and I will forget; teach me and I will remember; involve me and I will learn," to imply the student engagement is the key to their success.

Through this article, it is suggested that English grammar lecturers should use alternative grammar-teaching approaches, for their students' success. They should provide stimulating and motivating activities to ensure a better grammatical point understanding and practice. This approach improves communicative competence and contributes to second language acquisition.

8. CONCLUSION

To conclude, concerning the first research question, the analysis found out that the participants preferred teaching grammar communicatively to the traditional way and they were knowledgeable of the communicative grammar approach. However, at times they also favored elements that belonged to the traditional way of teaching grammar. This resulted in building four subgroups in the first block. Regarding the second research question, the results contradict their beliefs expressed in the first block; the lecturers seem to use mostly activities and techniques typical of the traditional way. However, many activities of teaching grammar communicatively are used *"often"*. In relation to the third research question, the analysis found out that all of them relate to the students and their expectations about grammar instructions, which implies an integration of both approaches. It can be assumed that the students' expectations towards the traditional way may push lecturers to adapt their instruction towards this approach as shown from the results in the second research question.

The data collected may help lecturers think twice about grammar teaching, and choose a better way to explain grammar, as well as a better way to deal with grammar mistakes. Grammar teachers should consider the influence of students' first language, the use of meta language, the role of communication and practice, as well as teacher preparation for grammar teaching. English teachers' role is not to cause the process of learning but help learning to happen. Hence, they should always seek to find the best approach to teach grammar.

9. STUDY LIMITATIONS

One of the main limitations in this study was a small sample used. A larger sample taken not only from public universities but also from various non-public ones might yield more comprehensive data. Another limitation of this

study was that it focused on the lecturer's perspective only. Future studies may analyze the same issue from a mixed perspective (lecturers and students) to get different results. Last, but not the least, though in the world there are many important studies concerning alternative grammar teaching, especially the communicative one, unfortunately it is difficult to find such studies in the context of Albania especially involving the tertiary education.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that lecturers of English Language should incorporate the alternative approaches of teaching grammar and integrate grammar rules wherever possible to meet the students' expectations about grammar. Practice makes a learner perfect and what counts today in the job market is practice rather than theory. Hence, the focus should be more on the alternative approaches although students seem to favor more the traditional approach.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

This appendix presents the questionnaire addressed to the participants of this study.

This questionnaire aims at collecting data concerning English lecturers/instructors' beliefs about teaching grammar as well as the techniques and approaches they use for this purpose. Through this questionnaire, I intend to collect detailed information related to various difficulties lecturers/instructors encounter while dealing with grammar instruction. The survey is completely anonymous, and the data will be used for study purposes only. Your personal opinions are very helpful and appreciated.

Thank you for your time!

Part I: Background information (Underline your answer)

A. Age-group

1. 22-31 years old   2. 32-41 years old   3. 42- 51 years old   4. 52 years old or more

B. Gender

1. Male   2. Female

C. Teaching Experience

1. 1-3 Years   2. 4-6 Years   3. 7-10 Years   4. 11-15 Years   5. 16-20 Years   6. 21 Years or more

Part II:

Part A. Lecturers' beliefs in English grammar instruction.

Please indicate with an **X** to what extent you agree with the following statements.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Lecturers should explain grammar to their students before expecting them to use it.					
2	Grammar instruction can help learners become more fluent in English.					
3	Learners who are aware of grammar rules can use the language more effectively than those who are not.					
4	During lessons, a focus on grammar should come after communicative tasks, not before.					
5	Exercises that get learners to practice grammar structures help learners develop fluency in using grammar.					

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
6	Grammar instruction can help learners develop their English accuracy.					
7	Teaching the rules of English grammar directly is more appropriate for older learners.					
8	Grammatical drilling is essential to the successful learning of new language forms.					
9	Grammar should be taught separately, not integrated with other skills such as reading and writing.					
10	Grammar teaching should focus on the form.					
11	Lecturers should begin teaching a new grammar point by giving examples.					
12	In a communicative approach to language teaching grammar is not taught directly.					
13	The teacher's role is to help learners induce the grammar rules by themselves.					
14	In learning grammar, repeated practice allows learners to use structures fluently.					
15	Grammar teaching should focus on meaning.					
16	Formal grammar teaching does not help learners become more fluent.					
17	Grammatical accuracy is one of the most important criteria by which language performance should be evaluated.					
18	In teaching grammar, teachers should inform students the rules and then let them do related exercises.					
19	In teaching grammar, a teacher's main role is to explain the rules.					
20	Learners learn grammar best through exposure to language in natural contexts.					
21	Indirect grammar teaching is more appropriate with younger than with older learners.					
22	Learners' mistakes should always be corrected immediately to prevent the formation of bad habits.					
23	Direct explanation of grammar is more precise to ensure students' understanding.					
24	It is important for learners to know grammatical terminology.					
25	Practice of grammar must always be realized within a communicative context.					
26	Lecturers should use learners' L1 to explain grammar rules.					
27	Correcting learners' spoken grammatical errors in English is one of the teacher's essential roles.					
28	Grammar learning is more effective when learners work out the rules on their own.					
29	It is indispensable to study the grammar of a foreign language to speak it fluently.					
30	A lecturer should correct students' spoken grammatical errors only when they cause difficulty in understanding the meaning.					
31	Memorizing rules is crucial to the successful learning of new language forms.					

Part B. Techniques and activities applied in grammar instruction.

Please indicate with an **X** how often you use these techniques and activities in teaching grammar.

		Always	Often	Usually,	Rarely	Never
1	Whole class teaching.					
2	Using storytelling.					
3	Group discussion/Group work/Pair work.					
4	Using role-play.					
5	Using pictures and images.					
6	Translation.					
7	Using tables, figures, charts and diagrams.					
8	Using music, songs and poems.					
9	Playing games.					
10	Learners should participate in real life tasks in order to enhance their grammatical knowledge.					
11	Using contextualized practice.					
12	Using form-focused practice (Such as substitution drills).					
13	Problem-solving.					
14	Reading different kinds of texts.					
15	Practicing grammar exercises from textbooks.					
16	Listening to native speakers.					
17	Speaking to others in English.					
18	Listening exercises that practice specific grammar constructions.					
19	Repetition drills.					
20	Listening to audio CDs or watching films in real language.					
21	Dealing with projects and activities that require the use of English.					
22	Dealing with quizzes and tests that focus on grammar points.					
23	Dealing with workbook exercises on grammar.					
24	Explaining grammar rules.					

Part C. Difficulties related to grammar instruction.

Please indicate with an **X** to what extent you agree with the following statements.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	My students encounter difficulties while transferring their grammatical knowledge into communicative language use.					
2	My students get motivation by problem-solving techniques for learning grammar.					
3	My students require teachers to present grammar points explicitly.					
4	My students like to learn grammar from one sentence examples.					
5	My students like to find matches between meaning and structure on their own.					
6	My students encounter difficulties in handling grammar given within real texts.					

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
7	My students find real texts difficult because of various structures that appear.					
8	My students find authentic texts difficult because they are too culture bound.					
9	My students find authentic texts difficult because of the vocabulary used.					
10	My students cannot find form-function matches in authentic texts without explicit direction from teachers.					
11	Teachers find the use of authentic material too time-consuming.					
12	Teachers encounter difficulties in producing tasks of a suitable level from real texts.					
13	A lack of explicit grammar teaching makes my students feel insecure.					
14	My students find grammatical terminology helpful.					
15	Teachers face difficulties in correcting student grammar errors within a written communicative context.					
16	Teachers face difficulties in correcting student errors of grammar within a spoken communicative context.					
17	My students face difficulties in improving the accuracy of their grammatical language within a totally communicative writing activity.					
18	My students face difficulties in improving the accuracy of their grammatical language within a totally communicative speaking activity.					
19	My students find using grammatical terminology difficult.					
20	My students are frustrated by problem-solving techniques when learning grammar.					