

A STUDY ON THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR AS SECOND LANGUAGE (L2) AND THEIR EFFECTS ON INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN WEST BENGAL

By

SUGATA SAMANTA

Research Scholar, Techno India University, Kolkata, India.

Date Received: 30/04/2017

Date Revised: 05/05/2017

Date Accepted: 17/05/2017

ABSTRACT

In the arena of English as Second Language (ESL), the teachers play the most significant role in the bilingual pattern of contemporary India. For an effective teaching, teachers' attitudes have an important role in their decision-making regarding the type of materials, activities, and instruction they will use in their lessons. This study is an effort to find out various attitudes of teachers towards teaching English grammar and their effects on actual instructional practices. Some researches in this area have been conducted in the context of English teaching in schools in different parts of the world. However, no such study had been found conducted on the teachers in eastern India and so the present attempt was made. The study was conducted on 100 English teachers in both rural and urban areas of the Howrah Sadar subdivision of West Bengal. Data are analysed by using percentages and descriptive statistics. The study found that teachers possess a set of complex, interconnected and sometimes conflicting attitudes towards grammar teaching and the relation between their attitudes and actual classroom practices is complex.

Keywords: Attitudes, ESL, Grammar, Instruction.

INTRODUCTION

In olden days, teaching of English as a second language was typically symbolized by hours of grammar instruction which involved prescriptive grammar teaching through the presentation and study of rules. It is not surprising that learners found it incredibly tedious and often grew within themselves an intense detestation of grammar. However, the 1980's experienced an anti-grammar movement perhaps influenced primarily by Krashen's (1982) idea that grammatical competence can be developed in a fluency-oriented environment without conscious focus on language forms and grammar had taken a back seat. Again, recent years have seen resurgence in the role of grammar in English language teaching. Naturally, English teachers are heavily influenced by those developments and their attitudes towards grammar teaching and classroom practices show the signs of high impacts of them. Therefore, needs are felt to investigate various

attitudes of teachers regarding grammar teaching and to analyse their impacts on classroom practices. All over the world, many works have been done regarding the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards English grammar and their classroom practices. For example, a research in this area has been conducted earlier by Farrell et al., (2005) in the context of English teaching in schools of Canada. When this researcher goes through these studies, he feels that there is a dire need of conducting a similar type of study on the teachers of West Bengal also and this inspired and motivated him to conduct the present study.

1. Brief Statement of the Problem

Different attitudes of teachers towards teaching grammar of English as a Second Language (ESL) and their effects on classroom instructions.

2. Operational Definitions of the Terms

Teachers' attitude refers to a set of complex ideas of teachers, a kind of accumulation constructed mainly from

experience and serve as implicit theories to direct their thoughts and actual classroom teaching. Instructional practices refer to different techniques and strategies used by teachers in classroom situations to make the teaching-learning process effective.

3. Research Questions

Following research questions were selected for this study.

- What kinds of attitudes the English teachers sustain regarding teaching of English grammar?
- What are the strategies that the English teachers employ in their grammar classes?
- What are the effects of teachers' attitudes towards teaching English grammar on their actual instructional practices?

4. Objectives of the Study

Following were the objectives selected for the present study.

- To find out different attitudes of English teachers towards teaching different components of grammar.
- To find out the actual classroom practices of teaching English grammar by the teachers in secondary schools.
- To find out the effects of the attitudes of teachers towards teaching English grammar on their actual instructional practices.

5. Delimitations of the Study

For this study, following delimitations were identified.

- Only schools of Howrah Sadar subdivision of Howrah district are selected.
- Only Government- Sponsored secondary schools are selected.

6. Methodology of the Study

The study employed both the features of qualitative and quantitative research methods with a descriptive approach to establish the existence of phenomena through explicit description. An attitudinal questionnaire and a self-report questionnaire yielded quantitative data, whereas the structured, open-ended interviews, and the classroom observations formed the body of the qualitative data. The study was conducted on 100 English teachers in both in rural and urban areas of the Howrah Sadar

subdivision of West Bengal. For the purpose of data collection, 50 teachers from 17 urban schools and 50 teachers from 18 rural schools were finally selected for structured open-ended interview by using online randomizer tool. The final analysis was however made without taking urban and rural division into consideration. Two types of questionnaire, i.e. attitudinal questionnaire and self report questionnaire adopted from Borg & Burns (2008) were sent to the selected teachers to get data on their attitudes and classroom practices. As these questionnaires were already standardized, they did not need further standardization. The researcher only made some minor alterations in the questionnaires to make them more comprehensible and suitable to the ESL teachers of West Bengal. Telephonic and face-to-face mode structured, open ended interviews were conducted and recorded. Finally, classes of a convenient sample of 20 teachers were formally observed to assess the validity of the responses about the classroom practices recorded in the self report questionnaire. The whole collected data was consequently analysed and interpreted. The analyses were used to study different attitudes of teachers towards teaching of English grammar and the effects of those attitudes on their actual classroom practices. The underlying factors behind such attitudes and the effects were tried to explore and presented in the research findings and the implications of the findings were also presented.

7. Analysis of Data

The data on the attitudes of teachers found from the attitudinal questionnaires are analysed by using frequency tables. The data of Part A of the self report questionnaire is also processed in the same way. Next, the data gained from Part B and Part C of the self report questionnaire are presented comparatively and analysed by using descriptive statistics. In addition, frequency tables are also offered for all the statements in this category. The information obtained from the structured open ended interviews has been processed by analysing and comparing different responses of different questions. Finally, the data of the classroom observation are also

interpreted through descriptive statistics.

7.1 Analysis of Attitudinal Questionnaire

The responses to all the 12 statements of the questionnaire are analysed and interpreted separately by using frequency tables.

7.1.1 Statement No 1: A learner can acquire English as a Second Language (ESL) without grammar instruction

Table 1 reveals that most teachers of the sample strongly disagreed/ disagreed with the view that students can acquire English without teaching grammar, i.e., in the same manner as they have learnt their mother tongue. A majority of 77% teachers opine that without formal grammar instruction, it is impossible to learn English as a Second Language while only 20% teachers of the sample hold the belief that English can be learnt exactly in the same way like mother tongue without any special grammar instructions.

7.1.2 Statement No 2: Grammar is best learned in a natural way in the process of performing language functions

From Table 2, it is clear that a majority of 75 teachers, i.e. 75% of the sample strongly disagreed/disagreed with that grammar of English as a second language can be taught naturally through communication. Only 18% teachers believe that grammar is best learnt in the process of performing language functions.

7.1.3 Statement No 3: Grammar should be one of the main focuses of an English language course

Table 3 shows us that 74% teachers of the sample did not

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
9	11	3	33	44
(9%)	(11%)	(3%)	(33%)	(44%)

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 1 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
14	4	7	26	49
(14%)	(4%)	(7%)	(26%)	(49%)

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 2 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

consider grammar as one of the main focuses of any English language course. To the language teachers, grammar is not in a position of an utmost importance in English courses.

7.1.4 Statement No 4: Grammar should be taught to all levels of students

From the table of this statement (Table 4), it is evident that once again 72% teachers of the sample totally deny the statement that it is important to teach grammar to all levels of students. Only 22% teachers accept the necessity of teaching grammar to all students.

7.1.5 Statement No 5: Grammar is best learned when it grows from language in use

A close observation of the frequency count of Table 5 reveals that majority of teachers (75%) do not believe that the best way to learn grammar of ESL is to learn it indirectly without any pre-planned grammar lesson. Only 19% teachers agreed with the idea of indirect grammar teaching. Therefore, teachers are in favour of teaching grammar separately. These opinions show conformity with the opinions of statement no. 2, where most of the teachers disregarded the view that grammar is best learned in a natural way of performing language

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
10	11	5	47	27
(10%)	(11%)	(5%)	(47%)	(27%)

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 3 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
12	10	6	29	43
(12%)	(10%)	(6%)	(29%)	(43%)

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 4 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
16	3	6	31	44
(16%)	(3%)	(6%)	(31%)	(44%)

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 5 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

functions.

7.1.6 Statement No 6: It is essential to familiarize learners with correct grammatical terminologies

Regarding the importance of familiarizing the learners with correct grammatical terminologies, Table 6 shows that there is a strong consensus among the teachers about its effectiveness as 83% teachers of the sample believed it to be highly important/ important. Only a meager 17% teachers believed it to be less important.

7.1.7 Statement No 7: There should be separate classes for teaching grammar only

Table 7 shows that respondents were divided in their opinions regarding statement no. 7, i.e. separate grammar classes are needed to teach grammar. While 41% teachers of the sample agreed with the statement, 58% of the teachers disagreed/ strongly disagreed with it.

7.1.8 Statement No 8: Practising different structures of grammar should be the main focus of a grammar class

In Table 8, there is even a common disagreement on focused practices of different grammatical structures in English in ESL class. Regarding the statement that practising different structures of grammar should be the main focus of a grammar class, there seems to be a common

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
21 (21%)	62 (62%)	0 (0%)	8 (8%)	9 (9%)

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 6 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
34 (34%)	7 (7%)	1 (1%)	52 (52%)	6 (6%)

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 7 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
7 (7%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	63 (63%)	26 (26%)

Table 8. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 8 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

disagreement as 89% of the teachers disagreed/ strongly disagreed with the view. Only 10% teachers believe in giving the practice of grammatical structures the main role in grammar lesson.

7.1.9 Statement No 9: It is important to identify and correct all grammatical errors in learner's written works

Statistical results in Table 9 prove that a large majority of 86 teachers (86%) agree with the statement that it is important to identify and correct all grammatical errors in learner's written works. Only a minority of 12 teachers, i.e., 12% out of a sample of 100 has disagreed with the importance of correcting all grammatical errors in the students' written works.

7.1.10 Statement No 10: It is important to identify and correct all grammatical errors in learner's oral works

From the numerical results of Table 10, it is evident that most of the teachers (83%) of the sample of 100 disagreed with the view that the oral grammatical errors of the students must be corrected, whereas 14 (14%) teachers agreed with the statement and hold the belief that students' grammatical errors are to be corrected minutely.

7.1.11 Statement No 11: Grammatically correct sentences are not always needed for an effective communication

Through the statistics in Table 11, it is found that majority of teachers (88%) strongly agreed/ agreed with the view that speaking grammatically correct sentences is not needed to communicate well. Only 11% teachers of the sample believe grammatically correct sentences to be necessary for effective communication.

7.1.12 Statement No 12: Terminologies of grammar often

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
59 (59%)	27 (27%)	2 (2%)	5 (5%)	7 (7%)

Table 9. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 9 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
11 (11%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	61 (61%)	22 (22%)

Table 10. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 10 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

stand in the way of learning a language for fluent use

Table 12 shows that majority of the teachers, i.e., 78 teachers (78%) out of a sample of 100 teachers strongly agreed/ agreed with the viewpoint that terminologies of grammar are barriers to students to use English fluently. Only 29% denied accepting terminologies of grammar as a hindrance to learn the language for fluent use.

7.2 Analysis of Self-Report Questionnaire, Part-A

The data on how the teachers teach grammar in classrooms are analysed and interpreted by the means of frequency table.

Table 13 shows that more than half of the teachers (51%) of the sample claimed that they use inductive method while teaching grammar. They first provide examples and then ask students to find out the rule. 38% of the respondents seem to follow the deductive approach while few teachers (11%) use the combination of both the approaches and none of the teachers follow neither inductive nor deductive approach. Thus, according to this self-report data, most of the teachers use inductive approach to grammar teaching. However, whether they really follow this approach will be revealed by classroom observations.

7.3 Analysis of Self Report Questionnaire, Part B & C

The interpretations resulting from processing of data obtained from Part B and Part C of the self report questionnaire are presented comparatively under 5 different strategies provided for this study. A description of

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
62	26	1	8	3
(62%)	(26%)	(1%)	(8%)	(3%)

Table 11. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 11 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly Disagree (1)
14	54	3	24	5
(14%)	(54%)	(3%)	(24%)	(5%)

Table 12. Frequency and Percentage Chart of Statement No. 12 of Attitudinal Questionnaire

the data analysis is provided. In addition, bar charts and frequency tables are offered separately for all the strategies.

8. Most Frequently used Strategies and Effectiveness of Strategies

8.1 Strategy No 1: The Teacher Provides as many Examples as Possible in Teaching Grammatical Structures

Table 14 shows that 86% of the respondents frequently or always use the strategy of providing ample examples of grammatical structures and in consonance with this data, Table 15 reveals that 76% teachers of the sample expressed their beliefs on the effectiveness of this strategy.

8.2 Strategy No 2: The Teacher Corrects Student's Grammatical Errors in the Class

From Table 16, it is found that 78% respondents frequently or always use the strategy of correcting students' grammatical errors in the class while only 4% teachers never or rarely correct the errors.

Table 17 shows that 69% teachers found the strategy to be very useful or useful while meager 9% teachers found it as less effective.

8.3 Strategy No 3: The Teacher Encourages the Learners to find out the Grammatical Rules from Examples

Table 18 shows that only 8% teachers of the study never or rarely used the strategy of encouraging the learners to find

The Approaches	Number	Percentage (%)
(a) First grammatical rules are presented, then examples are given, i.e, deductive method	38	38%
(b) First examples are given and then students are asked to find out the rule, i.e., inductive method	51	51%
(c) Combination of both a and b approaches	11	11%
(d) Neither (a) nor (b) Using another approach, which is ..	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Table 13. Percentage Data Showing how Grammar is actually taught in the Classroom

Frequency of Use				
Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Always 5
0	3	11	49	37
(0%)	(3%)	(11%)	(49%)	(37%)

Table 14. Frequency of use for Strategy No. 1

out the grammatical rules from examples in their own classroom instructions. 63% teachers use the strategy in the classroom frequently or always.

Table 19 shows that most of the teachers (57%) considered it as a useful strategy. Only 12% teachers of the sample doubt its effectiveness.

8.4 Strategy No 4: The Teacher uses Oral Pattern-Practice Drills

Table 20 shows that half of the teachers (i.e. 50%) of the sample admitted that they use the strategy occasionally in their classrooms, while 45% of the respondents said that they used the strategy always or frequently in the classrooms.

From Table 21, it is clear that teachers of the sample generally consider using oral-pattern practice drills in classrooms as neither too effective nor too ineffective. Whereas 47% of the respondents thought the strategy to be effective or highly effective, almost the same number of

respondents (44%) inclined to consider the strategy to be fairly effective only.

8.5 Strategy No 5: The Teacher uses Comparison and Contrast between the Grammatical Structures of English

Regarding the use of comparison and contrast between the grammatical structures in English, the respondents again showed their inclination towards the golden mean (as revealed in Table 22). While majority of teachers (52%) admitted that they use the strategy occasionally in the classrooms, 36% of the teachers said that they use it frequently (19%) or always (17%) during their instructional works.

Regarding the attitudes of teachers towards the strategy, Table 23 shows that 48% teachers considered it only fairly effective, while 41% respondents considered it effective or fairly effective.

9. Findings

9.1 Findings from Attitudinal Questionnaire

The analysis of data of the attitudinal questionnaire renders the following findings:

- When the way students learn English grammar is highlighted in statement nos. 1 and 2, it is explored from Tables 1 and 2 that, a vast majority of the teachers have the attitude that students cannot learn

Effectiveness in Teaching				
Not at all Effective 1	Not So Effective 2	Fairly Effective 3	Effective 4	Very Effective 5
2	5	17	35	41
(2%)	(5%)	(17%)	(35%)	(41%)

Table 15. Effectiveness in Teaching for Strategy No. 1

Frequency of Use				
Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Always 5
1	3	18	41	37
(1%)	(3%)	(18%)	(41%)	(37%)

Table 16. Frequency of use for Strategy No. 2

Effectiveness in Teaching				
Not at all Effective 1	Not So Effective 2	Fairly Effective 3	Effective 4	Very Effective 5
2	7	22	35	34
(2%)	(7%)	(22%)	(35%)	(34%)

Table 17. Effectiveness in Teaching for Strategy No. 2

Frequency of Use				
Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Always 5
2	6	29	32	31
(2%)	(6%)	(29%)	(32%)	(31%)

Table 18. Frequency of use for Strategy No. 3

Effectiveness in Teaching				
Not at all Effective 1	Not So Effective 2	Fairly Effective 3	Effective 4	Very Effective 5
3	9	31	28	29
(3%)	(9%)	(31%)	(28%)	(29%)

Table 19. Effectiveness in Teaching for Strategy No. 3

Frequency of Use				
Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Always 5
2	3	50	26	19
(2%)	(3%)	(50%)	(26%)	(19%)

Table 20. Frequency of use for Strategy No. 4

Effectiveness in Teaching				
Not at all Effective 1	Not So Effective 2	Fairly Effective 3	Effective 4	Very Effective 5
4	5	44	30	17
(4%)	(5%)	(44%)	(30%)	(17%)

Table 21. Effectiveness in Teaching for Strategy No. 4

Frequency of Use				
Never 1	Rarely 2	Occasionally 3	Frequently 4	Always 5
3 (3%)	9 (9%)	52 (52%)	19 (19%)	17 (17%)

Table 22. Frequency of use for Strategy No. 5

Effectiveness in Teaching				
Not at all Effective 1	Not So Effective 2	Fairly Effective 3	Effective 4	Very Effective 5
4 (4%)	7 (7%)	48 (48%)	21 (21%)	20 (20%)

Table 23. Effectiveness in Teaching for Strategy No. 5

English without the aid of formal grammar instruction and that grammar is best learnt formally, not naturally.

- From the statistics of statement nos. 3 and 4 of that questionnaire (Tables 3 and 4), it may also be concluded that regarding the teaching of English grammar, most teachers of the sample did not at all think grammar to be of supreme importance in a language course.
- Observing the frequency counts in statement numbers 5, 6, 7, and 8 (from Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8), it is found that in respect of approaches to grammar teaching, most of the teachers do not believe the approach of teaching grammar incidentally without pre-planning. Perhaps for this reason, many of them want separate grammar classes. However, there is a kind of contradiction in most of the teachers' attitudes towards the procedure of teaching grammar inside the classrooms. Though most of the teachers are in favour of separate grammar classes, they denied to focus on different structures of grammar or to explain different grammatical rules in a grammar class. In Table 8, there is even a common disagreement on focused practices of different grammatical structures in English in ESL class.
- Regarding error correction and communication in English (statement numbers 9, 10, 11, 12), majority of the teachers agreed with the idea of correcting grammatical errors in written works, but denied the necessity of correcting the grammatical errors during oral communication (Tables 9, 10, 11, and 12).

Therefore, to them, grammatically correct sentences are not a prerequisite of effective communication and majority of them even considered grammatical jargons as obstructive for learning ESL.

9.2 Findings from Self Report Questionnaire

The self report questionnaire was designed to find out the attitudes of teachers towards different strategies and approaches of grammar teaching and also to examine the frequency of their use of these strategies. For this reason, the questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part A explored the use of different approaches in teaching English grammar. Part B was framed to find out the frequency of use of different strategies by the teachers and Part C conducted a survey on the attitudes of teachers about the effectiveness of those strategies. The reported data elicit mixed findings:

- From the available statistics of Part A of the questionnaire (Table 13), it is evident that majority of teachers claimed they use inductive method while teaching English grammar.
- The frequency count of received data of Part B shows some strategies to be extremely popular among the teachers while some strategies are neglected. From the analyses of Tables 14, 16, 18, 20, and 22, following are the list of the strategies in descending order according to their popularity among the teachers:
 - The teacher provides as many examples as possible in teaching grammatical structures.
 - The teacher corrects student's grammatical errors in the class.
 - The teacher encourages the learners to find out the grammatical rules from examples.
 - The teacher uses oral pattern-practice drills.
 - The teacher uses comparison and contrast between the grammatical structures of English.
- The statistical analysis of data (Tables 15, 17, 19, 21, and 23) for Part C of the questionnaire shows a close relationship between teachers' attitudes towards the effectiveness of the strategies and the frequencies of their uses of those strategies in actual instructional practices. The analysis helps to arrange the strategies

in order and according to the teachers' responses, from very effective strategies to not all effective ones;

- i. The teacher provides as many examples as possible in teaching grammatical structures.
- ii. The teacher corrects student's grammatical errors in the class.
- iii. The teacher encourages the learners to find out the grammatical rules from examples.
- iv. The teacher uses comparison and contrast between the grammatical structures of English.
- v. The teacher uses oral pattern-practice drills.

9.3 Findings from the Structured Open Ended Interviews

From the interviews, it was found that the majority of the teachers of the sample was taught English grammar through grammar translation with the help of blackboards, chalks, books, and notebooks in teacher dominated classes. Most of them also admitted that their language learning experiences have a deep impact on forming their attitudes towards teaching and learning of English grammar and methodologies. But they also claimed to have developed their teaching methodologies as they constantly endeavour to modernize themselves in respect of teaching-learning processes. Many teachers of this study also identified pre-service or in-service training courses (mainly B.Ed) as being a significant source of influence for them. A significant number of teachers also commented that during several in-service orientation and refresher courses, meeting with other colleagues and sharing of ideas and experiences seem to them to be rewarding and informative. However, they also confessed that they seldom use any special kind of grammar activities in the classrooms.

9.4 Findings from Classroom Observations

At the time of classroom observations, it was found that almost all the teachers had used deductive method of teaching with a special emphasis on the structures rather than the usages. The classes were mainly teacher-centric and few students responded actively as in most classes the participation group was not very large.

10. Discussion of Results

The results and main findings of the study, reported in the

previous sections, brought out several beliefs and attitudes that teachers in government-sponsored secondary schools of Howrah Sadar shared regarding grammar and its role in learning and teaching English. It may also be assumed that this is the common picture of almost every government-sponsored school in West Bengal. To help guide the discussion, this section has been divided into six subsections keeping in mind the research questions that the study seeks to answer.

10.1 Different Attitudes of Teachers towards English Grammar

In line with the findings of many research scholars (e.g. Berliner, 1987; Borg, 1999, 2006), the present study unveils that teachers in the secondary schools of Howrah Sadar possess a wide array of complex attitudes on pedagogical issues regarding the teaching of English grammar. The results of the attitudinal questionnaire adopted from Borg, & Burns (2008) match with their findings as the participants' responses to the questions do not differ a lot statistically. It is evident from the survey report that though majority of the teachers hold a strong disbelief in either the natural or incidental learning of grammar or the learning of English without formal grammar instruction, they do not also give much emphasis on the importance of grammar in English language course. For the last attitude towards the importance of grammar, the impact of functional communicative approach is clearly discernible here. Most of the teachers also strongly disagree to focus on grammatical structures. They acknowledge the necessity of correcting grammatical errors in written works, but are sceptical about the need of grammatical accuracy for an effective oral communication. However, these attitudes are directly antithetical with the view that majority of them prefer separate classes for teaching grammar. It appears that teachers have internalized the essences of functional communicative approach only in parts.

10.2 Different Teaching Strategies Rated by Teachers and used by them in Classrooms

The uses of different teaching strategies by the teachers and their ratings according to their effectiveness again show some inherent contradictory attitudes of the teachers. During the interviews, the majority of the teachers

claimed that they are continuously upgrading themselves. However, the data of this study uncover the fact that teachers hardly prefer to encourage the learners to find out the grammatical rules from examples or to use oral-pattern practice drills. These attitudes and practices are at variance with the modern practices. Thus, although some degree of congruence between teachers' stated attitudes and their reported classroom practices is noticed, this study has also unveiled several conflicts between their beliefs and classroom strategies and also between their beliefs and modern theories. This confirms Pajares (1992) view that stated beliefs are an unreliable indicator of actual practice.

10.3 Various Factors behind Different Attitudes and Teaching Strategies

During the open ended interviews, it was noticed that a variety of factors are responsible for the formation of different attitudes and use of different teaching techniques with the teachers' own learning experiences being a strong influence here. This is congruent with the views of previous researchers (e.g. Farrell, and Thomas, 1999; Hollingsworth, 1989; Johnson, 1994; Sato & Kleinsasser, 2004) that the teachers judged whether a teaching technique or method was useful, applicable or effective largely based on their previous experiences, mainly of language learning, and to a lesser degree, of teaching. A thorough analysis of the interview data also reveals that close to half of the survey respondents admitted three factors as their motivational forces of change to either attitude or practice. The factors are (1) experimenting with new ideas; (2) self-discovery; or (3) trial and error. From here, it may be assumed that these teachers frequently attempt new instructional strategies and are quick to pick up an effective strategy to teach grammar. However, from classroom observations, it appeared that since these are made of their own volition, based on feelings of what their students need and what is lacking in their teaching, such voluntary changes are often minor and inconsequential. Richardson (1998) argues that these kinds of voluntary changes are often based on unwarranted assumptions and suggests that for major instructional changes to occur, outside mandates may be necessary. Therefore, it is desirable that teachers will modify their

attitudes and instructional practices by attending various interactive in-service orientation courses or workshops.

10.4 Comparison of Teachers' Self-Reported Practice and Actual Observed Practice

The researcher endeavoured to compare the reported attitudes of teachers with their actual instructional practices for verification of accordance or discordance between the two. In doing so, several incongruities have been identified. For example, most of the teachers claimed in the self report questionnaire that they follow inductive method of teaching grammar. But according to all the observations made, it was found that grammar was actually taught explicitly. Again it was observed that most of the teachers thoroughly correct students' grammatical errors in written works which is in consistence with their beliefs. But, students received little or no oral guidance regarding the nature of their errors. Again, though the teachers repeatedly claimed that they follow the functional communicative approach, the observations made it clear that the functional part of grammar is totally ignored. Though majority of the teachers consider the strategy of oral pattern practice drills as a very useful strategy and reported that they use it frequently, the class observations uncovered that in practice only a few teachers of the convenient sample used oral pattern practice drills in their classes. The focus is on memorizing rather than understanding and practicing as Coleman (2012) observed that English language teaching is treated as a subject in the schools of Indian subcontinent instead of a language for developing communication skills. Thus teachers need to be more cautious against "claim allegiance to beliefs consistent with what they perceive as the current teaching paradigm rather than consistent with their unmonitored beliefs and their behaviour in class" (Woods, 1996).

10.5 Effects of Teachers' Attitudes on Instructional Practices

Regarding the effects of teachers' attitudes on their instructional practices, a detailed analysis of the data provided by the teachers revealed that there is a close relation between teachers' attitudes towards the effectiveness of the strategies and the frequencies of their

uses of those strategies in actual instructional practices as most of the teachers use those strategies frequently in the classrooms which they rated as too much effective strategies. However, the classroom observations unearthed the fact that the actual instructional practices of only a few teachers were thoroughly according to their reported beliefs while for majority of teachers, only a considerable part of their teaching practices was according to their attitudes towards grammar teaching. In most cases, the major contrast observed were that although the teachers projected themselves as advanced and progressive in teaching as well as fully conversant with the functional communicative approach of grammar teaching, in practice their classroom instructions were mostly teacher-centric with emphasis on rote learning from blackboards or books, avoidance of error analysis, and negligence towards functional aspects of grammar teaching.

11. Implications of the Study

The research findings presented here may provide some clues to how to guide teachers towards the betterment of their grammar teaching techniques.

- To motivate teachers for their continuous professional development, it is necessary to create a supportive environment in schools to cultivate positive attitudes towards pedagogical changes. As Crookes (1997) asserts, in most countries school cultures are not conducive to the concept of teacher learning. The findings of this study also give evidence to this view.
- Several teachers admitted their indebtedness to the professional courses (mainly B.Ed) for their updated knowledge of latest pedagogical changes in grammar teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to give proper stress on B.Ed course and to ensure that the syllabus always be designed according to the latest pedagogical trends.
- In-service orientation programmes or workshops also remain a source of continuous professional development to a large number of teachers. These are the doors to them for self-development. These courses also provide the teachers opportunities to interact with fellow teachers. Therefore, it should be ensured that these orientation programmes are held at regular

intervals.

- This study shows that teachers have a hierarchy of beliefs or attitudes regarding teaching of grammar. While some attitudes are basic in nature, others are secondary or more peripheral. Some attitudes (e.g. the necessity of separate grammar classes) were formed early in life as a result of a person's education and learning experiences. As the basic attitudes affect all others, professional development sessions should be centered on the most fundamental attitudes.
- The study implicates that teachers should be more careful about the quality of their teaching. They should also become aware of their own instructional practices. It is revealed that many teachers of this study may have problems to have a proper understanding of inductive approach of teaching grammar. Therefore, along similar lines with Ezzi (2012), it may be suggested that teachers should be "regularly provided with feedback on their teaching behaviour" to make them aware of their strengths and weaknesses to ultimately lead them to self-development. To accomplish this task, class observation and inspection system may be strengthened and regularised.
- Almost all the teachers in this study confessed that they have come to this profession not for any special devotion to teaching, but for being attracted by handsome salary and job security. Therefore, it is not surprising that many teachers lack that motivational level necessary for professional development. The recruitment process should be reorganised in such an extent that only a truly motivated person can get the recruitment.

Conclusions of the Study

To sum up the discussion it may be concluded that, teachers of English in Government-sponsored schools in West Bengal do indeed possess a set of complex, interconnected and sometimes conflicting attitudes towards grammar teaching and the relation between their attitudes and actual classroom practices is inextricably intertwined. Although a close relationship was noticed between teachers' reported practices and their ratings of different strategies in teaching grammar, observations of

the actual classroom practices revealed that several incongruities exist between their reported attitudes and actual classroom practices probably due to conflicting beliefs, the degree of teacher's professional motivation, teachers' personalities, and other unavoidable situational factors. Therefore, teachers need regular feedback on their classroom practices as well as in-service orientation and refresher courses for their professional development. Also, favourable situations for experimentation must be created in institutions so that teachers can do away with their age old detrimental attitudes towards grammar teaching in favour of modern communicative approach. There is an urgent need that teachers have continually brought about changes in their instructional practices of teaching grammar so that their students get what they need which is much required for the betterment of the present condition of language teaching in those schools.

References

- [1]. Berliner, D.C., (1987). "Ways of thinking about students and classrooms by more and less experienced teachers". In J. Calderhead (Ed.), *Exploring Teachers' Thinking*. London: Cassell, pp.60-83.
- [2]. Borg, S., (1999). "The use of grammatical terminology in the second language classroom: A qualitative study of teachers' practices and cognitions". *Applied Linguistics*, Vol.20, No.1, pp.95-126.
- [3]. Borg, S., (2006). "The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers". *Language Teaching Research*, Vol.10, No.1, pp.3-31.
- [4]. Borg, S., and A. Burns, (2008). "Integrating grammar in adult TESOL classrooms". *Applied Linguistics*, Vol.29, No.3, pp.456-482.
- [5]. Coleman, H., and T., Capstick, (2012). *Language in Education in Pakistan: Recommendations for Policy and Practice*, Islamabad: British Council.
- [6]. Crookes, G., (1997). "What influences what and how second and foreign language teachers teach?" *Modern Language Journal*, Vol.81, No.1, pp.67-79.
- [7]. Ezzi, N.A., (2012). "Yemeni teachers' beliefs of grammar teaching and classroom practices". *English Language Teaching*, Vol.5, No.8, pp.170-184.
- [8]. Farrell, and Thomas S.C., (1999). "The reflective assignment: Unlocking pre-service teachers' beliefs on grammar teaching". *RELC Journal*, Vol.30, No.2, pp.1-17.
- [9]. Farrell, Thomas S.C., and P.C.P. Lim, (2005). "Conceptions of grammar teaching: A case study of teachers' beliefs and classroom practices". *TESL-EJ*, Vol.9, No.2, pp.1-13.
- [10]. Hollingsworth, S., (1989). "Prior beliefs and cognitive change in learning to teach". *American Education Research Journal*, Vol.26, No.2, pp.160-189.
- [11]. Johnson, K.E., (1994). "The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of preservice English as a second language teachers". *Teaching & Teacher Education*, Vol.10, No.4, pp.439-452.
- [12]. Krashen, S.D., (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Pergamon.
- [13]. Pajares, M.F., (1992). "Teachers' beliefs and educational research". *Review of Educational Research*, Vol.62, No.3, pp.307-332.
- [14]. Richardson, V., (1998). "How teachers change". *Focus on Basics*, Vol.2, No.C. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsall.net/index.html?id=395.html>
- [15]. Sato, K., and R.C. Kleinsasser, (2004). "Beliefs, practices, and interactions of teachers in a Japanese high school English department". *Teaching & Teacher Education*, Vol.20, No.8, pp.797-816.
- [16]. Woods, D., (1996). *Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching: Beliefs, Decision-Making, and Classroom Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sugata Samanta is a Research Scholar in Techno India University, Kolkata. He has received Master of Education (M.ED.) from Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. Samanta works as an ESL teacher in Government Institutions and has published several articles on English language and literature in different National and International Journals. His area of interest comprises of the Indian diaspora and ESL instruction.

