

EFL TEACHER COGNITION IN GRAMMAR  
TEACHING: AN INVESTIGATION IN THE  
SAUDI ARABIAN BILINGUAL EDUCATIONAL  
CONTEXT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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Doctor of Philosophy

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## **SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION**

We hereby declare that we have checked this thesis and in our opinion, this thesis is adequate in terms of scope and quality for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics.

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## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at Universiti Malaysia Pahang or any other institutions.

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## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini ialah satu penyelidikan terhadap aspek kognisi guru dalam pengajaran tatabahasa bagi bahasa Inggeris Sebagai Bahasa Asing atau *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL) kepada para pelajar universiti di Arab Saudi. Seperti yang didapati daripada tinjauan literatur, sungguhpun terdapat banyak penyelidikan yang telah dijalankan terhadap domain kognisi guru dalam konteks tatabahasa, namun sedikit sahaja kajian yang menyelidiki domain ini dalam konteks dwibahasa yang melibatkan EFL. Oleh yang demikian, kajian ini bertujuan mendalami aspek berkaitan dengan kepercayaan dan amalan guru-guru EFL dalam pengajaran dan peranan kedwibahasaan dalam pengajaran tatabahasa. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah bercampur yang merangkumi soal selidik kepercayaan guru, pemerhatian berstruktur di dalam bilik darjah dan temu bual separa berstruktur. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada 132 orang guru dalam kalangan penutur asli bahasa Arab dan guru EFL dalam kalangan bukan penutur asli bahasa Arab untuk soal selidik. Lapan orang guru terlibat dalam setiap pemerhatian berstruktur bagi mendapatkan sampel soal selidik sementara pensampelan tujuan digunakan bagi mendapatkan sampel untuk pemerhatian dan temu bual. Sampel itu juga terdiri daripada empat pelajar dan empat pentadbir, yang ditemuramah untuk mengukur dan mengesahkan faktor-faktor kontekstual yang mempengaruhi kognisi mereka dalam mengajar tatabahasa kepada pelajar universiti di Arab Saudi. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kepercayaan guru berpunca daripada idealisasi proses pengajaran tatabahasa yang menghasilkan beberapa bentuk paradox yang mencerminkan ketaktekalan antara pelbagai kepercayaan yang telah berakar umbi dalam diri mereka dengan kepercayaan yang ingin mereka tonjolkan, agar kelihatan lebih menepati dasar-dasar institusi. Dengan cara yang sama, beberapa perbezaan antara kepercayaan dan amalan guru tatabahasa telah diterokai. Para guru didapati menonjolkan diri mereka sebagai sebagai pengajar yang inovatif dan mendakwa bahawa mereka yakin terhadap pengajaran tatabahasa berpusatkan pelajar yang menggunakan pendekatan komunikatif sedangkan hakikat sebenarnya yang berlaku ialah pengajaran mereka bersifat berpusatkan guru dan tradisional serta hanya memberi peluang yang sedikit kepada pelajar untuk menggunakan tatabahasa dalam konteks yang sesuai. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa terdapat beberapa faktor dari segi konteks yang menyebabkan perbezaan ini berlaku iaitu agama, budaya, sosial, institusi, dan pelajar yang kurang bermotivasi. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru yang kurang berpengalaman tidak bertolak ansur dengan kesilapan pelajar dan bersikap tegar dalam pendekatan pengajaran tatabahasa. Hal ini menunjukkan kurangnya pemahaman guru tentang aspek dinamik konteks pengajaran. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru dalam kalangan bukan penutur asli bahasa Arab percaya penggunaan bahasa Arab boleh digunakan tetapi secara terhad dan bijak manakala guru-guru dalam kalangan penutur asli bahasa Arab pula percaya pada penggunaan bahasa Arab yang kerap dalam pengajaran tatabahasa, dan tidak menghadkannya sebagai alat pedagogi dan sokongan kepada pengajaran. Kajian ini adalah penting untuk guru EFL dalam aspek pengajaran tatabahasa kepada pelajar universiti dan juga bagi penggubal dasar untuk memanfaatkan sumber bahasa untuk pengajaran yang lebih berkesan dan cekap. Sumbangan kajian ini adalah kepada penyelidikan kognisi guru dan kaitannya dengan. Kajian ini telah mengemukakan cadangan beberapa prosedur tertentu kepada guru-guru, para pembuat dasar dan juga penggubal sukatan pelajaran untuk memperbaiki pengajaran tatabahasa EFL dalam konteks di Arab Saudi. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan beberapa implikasi terhadap penyelidikan lanjut dalam bidang yang sama.

## ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of EFL teacher cognition in teaching grammar to university students in the Saudi Arabian bilingual educational context. As reflected in literature review, much research has been conducted in the domain of EFL teacher cognition in monolingual context but little in bilingual context. Working on this under-researched area, the present study seeks to understand EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in grammar teaching and the role of their bilinguality in grammar teaching. The study employs a mixed methods approach involving belief questionnaire, structured classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The sample of the study comprises 132 native Arabic speaking and non-Arab EFL teachers for questionnaire, based on stratified random sampling, and eight teachers each for structured classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, based on purposeful sampling. The sample also consists of four students and four administrators, who were interviewed to triangulate teachers' interviews, and confirm teachers' identification of the contextual factors influencing their cognition in teaching grammar to university students in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study reveal that teachers' beliefs stem from idealization of the grammar teaching process resulting into several paradoxes. The paradoxes reflect inconsistencies between their own deep seated beliefs and the beliefs they perform to project, to be more in line with the institutional policies. In the same way, several differences have been explored between beliefs and practices of grammar teachers. Teachers project themselves as innovative practitioners and claim to believe in teaching grammar through student-centered methods following communicative approach; in reality their practices are teacher-centered and traditional, with little opportunity for students to use grammar in context. The study finds out that these differences are due to the contextual factors: social, institutional, and demotivated students. The results also reveal that less experienced teachers do not tolerate students' errors and are rigid in their grammar teaching approach. This indicates their lack of understanding of the dynamics of the teaching context. The findings indicate that non-Arab teachers believe in limited and judicious use of Arabic, while Arab teachers believe in frequent use of Arabic in grammar teaching, rather than using it as a pedagogical tool and scaffolding. The study is significant for its practical implications for EFL Arab and non-Arab teachers, male and female teachers, and experienced and less-experienced teachers in teaching grammar to university students. The study has suggested procedures for the teachers, policy makers and teacher trainers to improve grammar teaching in the bilingual EFL context in Saudi Arabia. The study has also suggested recommendations for further research in the same area.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
CELTA	Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
PPP	Presentation, Practice and Production
PYP	Preparatory Year Programme
QUAL	Qualitative
QUAN	Quantitative
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
TL	Target Language



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