



## THE REFLECTION OF TEACHERS' PRIOR LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN ESL TEACHING APPROACHES

Soyhan Egitim<sup>i</sup>

University of Chichester, United Kingdom

### Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to determine the role of teachers' prior language learning experiences in the formation of their teaching approaches in the context of one to one English language teaching. It intends to describe the correlation between teachers' practical knowledge and their current practices. Four English instructors participated in this investigation. The research was qualitative. Semi-structured interviews and observation checklist were used for data collection. The findings of this study indicated that teaching beliefs and practices differ for each individual and the differences are attributable to the influence of their practical knowledge and experiences. As a result of this investigation, recommendations were made to enhance teaching and learning in one-to-one lessons.

**Keywords:** learning, reflection, teaching approaches, knowledge, language

---

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Soyhan Egitim, Department of Science and Engineering, Tokyo University of Science, Tokyo, Japan  
email: [soyhanegitim@rs.tus.ac.jp](mailto:soyhanegitim@rs.tus.ac.jp)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ABSTRACT (Mandatory)	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
1.0. INTRODUCTION	3
2.0. CONTEXT	6
2.1. <i>TEACHING ENGLISH IN A ONE TO ONE SETTING</i>	6
2.2. <i>THE INSTITUTION</i>	10
3.0. LITERATURE REVIEW	12
3.1. <i>COMMON TEACHING STYLES AND APPROACHES</i>	12
3.2. <i>TEACHER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION VERSUS LEARNER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION</i>	16
3.3. <i>TEACHING APPROACHES AND ERROR CORRECTION</i>	18
3.4. <i>THE ROLE OF TEACHERS' PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE</i>	21
3.5. <i>THE ROLE OF TEACHER COGNITION</i>	23
3.6. <i>LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PRIOR LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES</i>	25
4.0. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY	26
4.1. <i>CASE STUDY</i>	26
4.2. <i>THE INSTRUMENTS</i>	28
4.2.1. <i>Interview</i>	28
5.0. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	36
5.1. <i>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS</i>	36
5.2. <i>OBSERVATION CHECKLISTS</i>	48

6.0. DISCUSSION	58
7.0. CONCLUSION	61
8.0. REFERENCES	62

## **1. Introduction**

This study aims to ascertain the role of prior learning experiences in the formation of teachers' beliefs and practices. The study was carried out at a prominent language institution in Japan where all lessons are conducted on a one-to-one basis. The institution's one-to-one system was created in response to Clients' needs for personalized attention to maximize their learning potential and make the process easier for them to achieve their goals.

Since all learners have different reasons for learning English, customization plays a significant part to help them accomplish their learning objectives. However, the fact that knowledge and experience differ for each person, learning styles also differ. An effective means of accommodating different learning styles for teachers is to adapt their own teaching styles to their learners'. In other words, teachers may need to present different approaches and strategies for each individual. However, teaching styles are made up of approaches and strategies that are shaped by prior experiences (Gollombek, 1998). That is to say, teachers' own personalities, learned prejudices, and individual psychological histories influence the way they determine their attitudes and responses to certain behaviors.

Despite the fact that customization is the prior goal of the institution, every teacher demonstrates beliefs and practices that are peculiar to themselves. There may be multiple factors involved in the formation of this belief system. Nunan & Lamb (1996, p. 1) suggests that "the competent teacher is the one who creates a positive pedagogical environment in the classroom and is able to make professional decisions to ensure that learning takes place effectively".

Teacher self-development is the key to ensure effective management of teaching and learning processes in every class situation. Teachers' own development depends on their willingness to take risks and ability to determine how their own behaviors are helping or hindering their personal and professional growth. Defining the factors behind the formation of certain teaching behaviors can lead to enhanced teacher awareness. That is to say, if teachers of the institution become aware of the factors

behind their teaching approaches and strategies, there will be more room for improvement in teaching and learning in the institution.

Gold and Roth (1993, p. 141) defined self-awareness as “a process of getting in touch with your feelings and behaviors”. Increased self-awareness involves a more accurate understanding of how students affect teachers' own emotional processes and behaviors and how teachers affect students, as well. Self-awareness is particularly important for teachers who work with students in one-to-one situations. Teachers and students are involved in a direct interaction in one-to-one instruction. This may sometimes cause a great deal of pressure on both the teacher and the student. The student may feel under pressure to succeed and the teacher may feel pressure when building a rapport with the student. In one-to-one lessons, when the student has a specific need, the teacher normally would do anything to meet the need as far as possible. This can mean research and preparation of materials specially designed for the individual student which may take up a lot of extra time of teachers. Sometimes, there are a case where the student may also feel the course is not sufficiently tailored to his or her needs despite all the efforts made by teachers.

In order to cope with all these challenges one-to-one instruction presents, it is important for teachers to become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Only teachers that are able to monitor and assess themselves can achieve a better understanding and control over their own

Behavior (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 34). Once the teacher is aware of how their own behaviors are affecting their personal and professional growth, they will become more open and receptive to new ideas and have willingness to take risk. Risk taking encourages experimentation with different ways of solving problems and allows teachers to develop a perspective that would help them become more independent in their choices in teaching. This perspective can also bring positive reflections on students' learning behaviors. As well as teaching approaches and strategies, students' learning behaviors would also play a significant role to sustain effective learning in one-to-one lessons.

In order to engage students in autonomous and effective reflection on their own learning, teachers need to constantly reflect on their own role in the classroom, monitoring the extent to which they constrain or scaffold students' thinking and behavior. There is a sense, then, in which teachers and students can learn together and together become more empowered in the course of pedagogy for autonomy combined with reflective teaching (Smith 2001, p. 43-47).

McGrath (2000) suggests that in order to promote learner autonomy teachers may need to have;

- A capacity for self-directed teaching
- Freedom from control over their teaching
- A capacity for self-directed teacher-learning

If we can help promote teacher self-awareness and learner autonomy, we can empower our learners to take their language learning the next step. The research carried out in this study adopted a qualitative approach and used multiple data sources including semi-structured interviews and an observation checklist. More than one investigative tool was used in order to minimize bias and to help with the triangulation of data (Cohen and Manion, 2000, p. 112; Bell 1999, p. 102).

The paper is organized as following; Section one outlines the context in which the investigation took place. Section two presents some relevant literature about teaching styles, common teaching approaches on error correction, the influence of teachers' practical knowledge in the formation of their beliefs and practices, teacher cognition and the role of teachers' prior learning experiences in their practices. Section three presents the preferred research methodology along with the explanation and justification of the method. Section four presents the investigative tools used for this study. Section five presents the analysis of the findings of the study and finally, further steps are discussed in the conclusion.

## **2. Context**

### **2.1 Teaching English in One to One Setting**

One-to-one teaching often gives the teacher a satisfaction that can be difficult to achieve when teaching a group. The student obviously learns from the teacher, but the teacher can also acquire a great deal from their interactions with students. There is also the satisfaction of helping the student to progress quickly in the language since the individual approach allows the teacher to target the student's exact linguistic requirements and to focus upon these in a manner that is not possible in the group classroom. Nunan and Lamb (1996, p. 152) think that responding to the needs and interests is the most obvious advantage of one-to-one situation.

In one-to-one instruction, the teacher can devote 100% of their attention to every aspect of a single student's requirements; all elements of the course depend upon the individual. In other words, the teacher tries to create the environment in which students can develop their capacity and readiness to take charge of their own learning. This personalized approach can give the one-to-one student a great deal of control over their own learning.

Holec (1981, p. 3) describes the meaning of autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning". Benson P. and Voller P.(1997, p. 1) suggest that in language education the word has been used in at least five different ways;

- For situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
- For a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;
- For an inborn capacity which suppressed by institutional education;
- For the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning;
- For the right of learners to determine the directions of their own learning.

However, the complexity of the process of learning and teaching may sometimes force tutors to take charge of the overall learning situation. Knowledge, understanding and skills may differ for each learner. In other words, all learners have a different ability to determine the right learning strategies for themselves. Some learners may fail to take control of their own learning. That is when the teacher takes on the role of a facilitator. Learning involves risk-taking and therefore, presents numerous challenges for teachers and learners. It is mainly the teacher's job to ascertain each learner's own preferred learning style and adapt their lesson to learners' needs and expectations.

Nunan and Lamb (1996) point out that "From the learner's perspective, one-to-one learning offers flexibility, the opportunity for personal attention and being able to choose the teacher that the student wants". Osborne (2005, p. 3) suggests that the main aim of a one-to-one lesson is to base the lesson around students' individual needs and circumstances. This can be achieved by

- Using the student's interests and experiences as the focus of lessons
- Using any documentation that the student has brought with him or her
- Practicing business skills within the context of the student's job.

These individual requirements dictate the course content and once the programme is written, the teacher can change it any time to suit new or evolving requirements on the part of their students. Therefore, in a one-to-one situation, teachers are more independent from the curriculum though may be more dependent on authentic materials in order to meet the students' specific wants and needs.

Until the past few years, teaching one-to-one lessons was quite a challenging task for many teachers since students usually have very specific needs, which in the past were often impossible for teachers to fulfill, or required a great deal of time and effort. With the invention of the Internet, teachers have been able to access materials from the web, designed for both language schools and wider public, readily available for classroom use.

One of the shortcomings of a one-to-one lesson is lack of exposure to conversations taking place between two English speakers. This may serve as a deterrent

to students' listening abilities. Ellis and Johnson (2005, p. 189) suggest that using audio and visual materials from the Internet is crucial to expose the learner to new voices and accents which they think will allow teachers to create a more diverse learning environment for learners.

Another disadvantage of one-to-one instruction is that it removes the student's opportunity to work in a group dynamic. Students of all ages may not be confident to discuss areas of weakness when they are on their own. In those cases, a group dynamic may help the student feel more comfortable expressing themselves. Having said that group dynamic may not always serve as an advantage. According to Hofstede's (1986) individualism versus collectivism dimension, collectivist societies encourage individuals to see themselves as an inseparable part of the in-group; they expect and are expected to accord first priority to the views, needs, and goals of the group rather than "stand out" as individuals. On the other hand, in individualist cultures, people are expected to develop and display their individual personalities and to choose their own affiliations. Therefore, in a conformist society like Japan, individuals may not always feel comfortable expressing themselves in front of a group of people. For those people one-to-one instruction may seem as a more suitable option.

There are also certain advantages to one-to-one instruction. In-group lessons, the teacher can be flexible, but is unlikely to be in a position to change a lesson plan completely if an activity does not suit one or two members of the group. The teacher in a one to one class can be completely flexible; if a prepared activity does not suit the student for some reason, the teacher can modify or dismiss that activity and move onto something different. Students' ability and prior learning experiences may also vary within a group, and this can present a problem for the teacher. In a one-to-one class though it is easier to tailor all activities to the abilities and learning experiences of an individual. The teacher can work to the student's pace and allow him or her to control the timings of activities. As well as learners' abilities and experiences, Individuals in a group may also have very diverse learning styles and the teacher has the task of providing a teaching style, which will fit the overall group. In a one-to-one scenario, the teacher only has to tailor their approach to fit one individual learning style.

In a one-to-one class, the experience and knowledge which students bring to the classroom can more easily be exploited for both input and output activities, meaning less work for the teacher and more information exchange with the student. For instance; the business knowledge that the teacher accumulates in teaching a business student who is specialized in a specific field, can help the teacher in their teaching of other business students in the same field.

To tailor lesson activities for each student, the teacher will sometimes have to take on the role of a colleague, a friend and a psychologist as well as a language expert. These role-play activities in a one-to-one situation often helps the teacher to build a close relationship with their learners which is often less artificial than that of the group classroom (Nunan and Lamb, 2005, p. 154). Good people skills are essential for all teaching, however, the fact that one-to-one instruction so depends on understanding the psychology of the student and working out the best way to respond to them, the teacher's interpersonal skills become paramount. Establishing a good rapport with the student is the key to successful one-to-one teaching.

Another key strength of a one-to-one lesson is the possibility to customize a lesson according to each individual student. This allows teachers to prepare for each student and teach him or her a material that is relevant to them. Therefore, teachers may need to think of ways to use the textbook content in a more customized fashion for their student. Firstly, the level of the content may need to be adjusted to the level of the student. This will aid with the student's engagement and motivation. If the content occurs too difficult for the student, He or she may gradually lose interest in it. Since every individual has their own reasons to learn a language, providing a personalized content plays a significant role in maintaining a high learner engagement in a one-to-one situation. For effective customization, it may also be helpful for teachers to gather adequate information about their learners beforehand. Students' biographical information could greatly aid to serve this purpose. It also helps with the lesson preparation which can lead to a successful learning outcome in a one-to-one lesson.

One-to-one teaching is also carried out in self-access and individualized language centers where teachers available as resource persons to assist students who may or may not be concomitantly involved in the class.

## **2.2 The Institution**

The research was conducted at a language institution which provides English language lessons over 30 learning studios throughout Japan. The institution was founded in 1995 based upon the idea of providing customized English language lessons in one-to-one setting. Prior to the foundation of the institution, group classes and a "one size fits all" approach were the norm among English "chain" schools in Japan. However, the fact that people learn languages for different reasons, have different interests, and move at different paces has made customization an indispensable part of language learning and teaching in Japan. The institution's one-to-one system was created in response to Clients' needs for personalized attention to maximize Clients' learning potential and make the process easier for them to achieve their goals.



The institution developed their own method and associated curriculum supported by their on-line information system to suit each individual clients' specific needs. The method consists of four steps namely; warm-up, practice, application and feedback. It also allows instructors to monitor client progress while teaching. Whether using the standard curriculum or working from something unique, instructors is required to adjust their approach and adapt the material to ensure tailor-made lessons for each client. The institution provides clients with both conversation and business series of textbooks which are designed for use with the institution's specific method. The textbooks are supported by study guides and supplementary materials offered through the institution's web system.

Every client has an on-line profile complete with biographical information, study goals, strengths/weaknesses and special requests to allow instructors to customize lessons for learners and ease their lesson preparation. Each Learning Studio consists of individual booths equipped with everything that is needed to conduct a lesson: a laptop computer with Internet access, learning materials, and lesson paper to reflect the fact that clients are primarily adults who are often learning English as a tool to help them advance their careers and compete on the global stage.

The institution also provides instructors with training modules and workshops to enhance lesson and service quality. During training modules and workshops, instructors are offered a wide selection of areas to improve their shortcomings. The institution also asks its senior instructors to mentor instructors of lesser experience in teaching. They believe that mentoring helps to prepare new individuals for greater productivity or achievement in the future. The environment also gives instructors ample freedom and flexibility to develop their own teaching styles. Since all lesson booths are closely located, instructors are able to hear each other's lessons. In other words, they are directly exposed to different teaching approaches and strategies their fellow instructors present in each lesson. This opportunity allows all instructors a unique variety of inspiration to develop their own teaching style.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Common Teaching Styles and Approaches**

All learners have different motivations to learn English. It is also common for learners to have different levels of understanding of the language. Teachers may need to use different teaching approaches and strategies for each learner to accommodate their needs and expectations. A variety of teaching strategies, knowledge of student levels,

and an implementation of which strategies are best for particular students can help teachers to know which teaching methods will be most effective for their class.

However, teaching is much more difficult than many are willing to acknowledge. Teaching is spectacularly unlimited. Ayres (2001, p. 5) emphasizes the complexity of teaching and thinks that "Teaching as the direct delivery of some preplanned curriculum teaching as the orderly and scripted conveyance of information, teaching as clerking, is simply a myth. Teaching is much larger and much more alive than that; it contains more pain and conflict, more joy and intelligence, more uncertainty and ambiguity. It requires more judgment and energy and intensity than, on some days, seems humanly possible." Teaching and learning should be inseparable, in that learning is a criterion and product of effective teaching. In essence, learning is the goal of teaching. Research indicates that teachers teach in a manner consistent with their own way of learning (Shulman, 1990; Tobin et al., 1994). Studies of teaching and learning led to classification of teaching styles into three general categories; discipline-centered, instructor-centered, and student-centered (Dressel and Marcus, 1982; Woods, 1995).

In discipline-centered teaching style, the course has a fixed structure. The needs, concerns, and requirements of teacher and student are not considered because the course is driven by and depends mainly on the disciplinary content that must be presented. The teacher transmits information, but the content is dictated by some separate authority such as a department syllabus committee or textbook author.

In instructor-centered teaching style, the teacher acts as a model of the educated person. He or she is regarded as the authoritative expert, the main source of knowledge, and the focal point of all activity. The student is the passive recipient of the information already acquired by the teacher. The teacher selects from the discipline the information to be taught, studied, and learned.

Student-centered teaching focuses on the student and, in particular, on the cognitive development of the student. The teacher's goal is to help students grasp the development of knowledge as a process rather than a product. The focus of classroom activities and assignments is on the student-centered process of inquiry itself, not on the products of inquiry. Since attitudes, values, beliefs and motivation differ for each individual, teaching approaches adopted by those individuals may also vary.

However, it is virtually impossible to judge what the most effective teaching style could be as in all classrooms, regardless of the subject matter; there will be students with multiple learning styles with different needs and expectations. Student-centered courses focus on the learner rather than the teacher. Student-centered teaching is based on the constructivist model in which students construct rather than receive or assimilate knowledge. Constructivists believe that for higher levels of cognition to

occur, students must build their own knowledge through activities that engage them in active learning. Effective learning happens when students take stock of what they already know and then move beyond it.

Hiltz (1995) describes the student-centered constructivist model of teaching as; “Constructivist learning models require active input from students and requires intellectual effort and aids retention. The role of the teacher in student-centered learning is to facilitate the students' learning by providing a framework (i.e. activities for students to complete) that facilitates their learning. (Harasim, Hiltz, Teles, and Turoff, 1995)”. Active participation of students helps them construct a better framework from which to generalize their knowledge. As a result, students create their own conceptual or cognitive models. Content, teaching style, and methods are adapted to aid the cognitive and intellectual growth of students. Student-centered teaching combines an understanding of the way that humans process information with other factors that affect learning such as attitudes, values, beliefs, and motivation (Mishra, 2007, p. 3). Weimer (2002) explains that in order to be learner-centered, instructional practice needs to change in five key areas: the balance of power, the function of content, the role of the teacher, the responsibility for learning, and the purpose and processes of evaluation.

***The balance of power:*** The shift in power in the classroom from teacher control to shared decision making with students is a necessary step toward achieving a learner-centered classroom. The teacher does not abdicate legitimate instructional responsibility; the teacher enables student ownership, comfort, and enthusiasm of the learning process.

***The function of content:*** The function of content changes in the learner-centered classroom when the content is also used as a tool to develop learning skills. The function of content then takes on a dual purpose; to acquire knowledge and to develop learning skills. It enables learners to become aware of themselves as learners, recognize and understand their strengths and weaknesses, acquire strategies to build on their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses, become confident in their learning skills, and become self-directed learners, which leads to life-long learning.

***The role of the teacher:*** By changing the paradigm of the role of the teacher in the learner-centered classroom, teachers become guides and facilitators for learning. This change in teacher role places the emphasis on the learner and away from the teacher as the focus for learning. In other words, the teacher's role is to offer guidance and teach skills and concepts, to provide inspiration, and meaningful choices with the goal of finding a balance between freedom and structure, process and product.

***The responsibility for Learning:*** The responsibility for learning shifts from teachers to students as students grow more autonomous. They must accept the

responsibility for learning. This involves developing the intellectual maturity, learning skills, and awareness necessary to function independent, autonomous learners. Wiemer (2002) asserts that teachers contribute to this process by creating and maintaining conditions that promote student growth and movement toward autonomy.

*The Processes and Purposes of Evaluation:* The purpose of evaluation in the learner-centered classroom is both to provide feedback (i.e., grades) and generate learning. In a learner-centered climate, students learn to assess their own work and participate in the assessment of their peers' work, which leads students to becoming self-directed learners. The responsibility of the teacher as evaluator remains the same. What changes is that students participate in the assessment process because it has the effect of teaching learning skills and further develops the student toward becoming an autonomous learner. These five key changes to Practice are a necessary resource to facilitate teachers' own reflection and assessment of their classrooms and the relationship between their teaching strategies and skills and the outcomes of student learning.

### **3.2 Teacher-centered Instruction Versus Learner-centered Instruction**

The teacher centered approach features the teacher primarily as a lecturer who presents material to the class by defining and explaining (Anderson & Lawrence, 2007, p. 495). Even though student participation is actively solicited and encouraged, the teacher is the primary provider of the information and directly guide learning activities. In other words, the teacher has all the knowledge of the subject being studied and the student will only gain knowledge that the teacher allows or finds appropriate.

The main advantage of this method is that students will learn the content in an organized and structured manner under the guidance of their teachers. Especially, this method could be useful for beginner learners who need to build the basic skills at first hand. However, teacher centered instruction does not take into account different learning styles which may sometimes lead to a conflict between different teaching styles and students' learning styles. In this case, learner-centered approach can be applied as an ideal model to counter classroom challenges because of its viability for meeting diverse needs. McCombs & Miller (2006, p. 33) listed the key processes involved in developing learner-centered principles and practices:

- Building ways to meet learner needs for interpersonal relationships and connections.
- Finding strategies that acknowledge individual differences and diversity of learner needs, abilities and interests.
- Tailoring strategies to differing learner needs for personal control and choice.

- Assessing the efficacy of instructional practices to meet diverse and emerging individual learner and learning community needs.

Learner-centered classrooms place students at the center of classroom organization and respect their learning needs, strategies, and styles. In learner-centered classrooms, students can be observed working individually or in pairs and small groups on distinct tasks and projects. The transition from teaching the entire group to meeting individual learner needs involves extensive planning and task-specific classroom management.

However, teacher-centered approach is still a widely applied method in classrooms according to the study conducted by Luk and Lin on Cantonese secondary school teachers (Luk and Lin, 2007, p.72). Some of the teachers identified themselves as adopting more or less teacher-centered approach in teaching and believe that the reason for this is the influence of their past learning experiences. The study also revealed that in Hong Kong, English is mainly used for utilitarian purposes such as further study and finding jobs with good prospects. Many students think English as a communication vehicle is only confined to classroom situations and, the actual purpose of studying the language is to pass the examination.

Teachers as well felt that the skill assessed in public examinations reflected what students need in their future career and it was the teachers' responsibility to enable students to cope with these requirements in the exams. Although all the teachers agreed in principle to the rationales of some of the current teaching approaches such as communicative and task-based learning, they thought that successful implementation of these approaches depends on whether the environment is appropriate whether the teacher is ready to do it and whether the students are mature enough and have mastered the necessary skills to do it well (Luk and Lin, 2007, p. 72).

### **3.3 Teaching Approaches and Error Correction**

Another key element which plays a significant part in teaching approaches is mistake correction. Every teacher has a different perception of correcting errors. Some teachers correct every mistake made by their students. Other teachers rarely or never correct their students' mistakes. Two of the most common teaching approaches are meaning-focused and form-focused (Ellis, 2001, p. 13). The former approach is an example of communicative language teaching, which is based on the idea that a target language is acquired through communication rather than through direct instruction. This communicative approach places less emphasis on accuracy and gives more importance to the effectiveness of communication.

Conversely, the latter, form-focused instruction, involves the process of inter language construction by drawing learners' attention to or providing opportunities to practice specific linguistic features (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ellis et al., 2001). Since teachers adopt different teaching approaches based on their knowledge and experiences, we could then expect them to have different views on error correction as well. Ur (2006, p. 111) categories different teaching approaches and their perceptions on error correction:

**Audio-lingualism:** Learner mistakes are, in principle, avoided by the limiting of progress to very small, controlled steps: hence, there should be little need for correction. The latter is, in any case, not useful for learning; people learn by getting things right in the first place and having their performance reinforced.

**Cognitive code learning:** Mistakes are regrettable but unavoidable part of learning: They should be corrected whenever they occur to prevent them occurring again.

**Inter-language:** Mistakes are not regrettable but an integral and important part of language learning; correcting them is a way of bringing the learners' inter language closer to the target language.

**Communicative approach:** Not all mistakes need to be corrected: the main aim of language learning is to receive and convey meaningful messages, and correction should focus on mistakes that interfere with this aim, not on inaccuracies of usage.

**Monitor theory:** Correction does not contribute to real acquisition of the language but only to the learner's conscious 'monitoring' of speech or writing. Therefore, the main activity of teacher should be to provide comprehensible input from which the learner can acquire language, not to correct. However, research indicates that teachers' tendency to correct errors is heavily influenced by their prior learning experiences.

Mishra's study (2005) revealed that teachers of English in India possess a rigid attitude towards students' errors in English. Mishra thinks that this attitude has its base in the deep-rooted grammar teaching tradition in India which emphasizes overt and deductive method of teaching grammar and does not recognize the importance of students' role in their own learning (Mishra, 2005, p. 3).

"Kundu (1994) observes in this regard that the tendency on the part of teachers to correct maximum number of errors in the students' scripts' only develops in them a fear and negatively affects their self-confidence. Arguments against focus on form, in their strongest version are represented by researchers like Krashen (1985), Terrell (1977), Schwartz (1986) and Hammond (1988)" (cited in Mishra, 2005, p. 50). Hammond (1988, p. 414) claims that error correction is of "no value" in speeding up L2 acquisition and

thinks that error correction can be harmful and should be avoided, since it may activate the “affective filter” by raising the students' level of anxiety, which in turn, prevents the learner from actually acquiring communicative ability.

Although recent communicative approaches downplay the role of form-focused instruction in general and explicit error correction in particular, a growing number of researchers as well as second language educators (e.g., Higgs and Clifford, 1982; Valette, 1991, Long, 1992; Mings, 1993; Allen, 1990 et al) believe that lack of consistent and unambiguous feedback is likely to have a detrimental effect on learning. Terrell (1991, p. 60), a strong advocate of the natural approach, points out that because the incorrect input or (even their own incorrect input) which students are exposed to in classroom interaction is as easily acquired as correct input, “approaches relying heavily on monitored output activities instead of input for acquisition will probably have to resort to strict error correction to avoid wholesale acquisition of incorrect forms and structures”. Despite all different views on form-focused instruction and error correction, very few studies have examined and compared student and teacher view on the issues (Espurz, 1988, p. 50).

Horowitz (1990) thinks that mismatches in teacher and student perceptions can have negative effects on instructional outcomes. Kern (1995, p. 71) supports the view that learners' and teachers' views are important to our understanding of language learning in institutional settings, that research on teachers' and learners' beliefs can help “predict conflicts that may contribute to student frustration, anxiety, lack of motivation, and, in some cases, ending of foreign language study”.

However, Espurz's (1988, p. 56) study on ESL and Latin teachers indicates that teachers view on error correction greatly differs depending on their practical knowledge and prior experiences. According to her study, While Latin teachers display a generally more positive stance toward grammar and error correction than do FL teachers; ESL teachers reflect more negative attitudes. The more negative stance taken by responding ESL teachers could be due to their different educational background which generally does not emphasize analytical aspects of language over language use and fluency. We may then argue that teachers' view on error correction is heavily influenced by their prior knowledge and experiences.

### **3.4 The Role of Teachers' Practical Knowledge**

Despite the fact that researchers in the field of teaching have defined practical knowledge from different points of view, there is no concrete agreement about what practical knowledge actually means. Zanting (2001) suggests that there are two major types of teacher knowledge. Formal knowledge, primarily introduced by researchers,

described as knowledge for the teacher and practical knowledge, knowledge of the teachers, is generated by the teachers themselves, as a result of their experiences and their reflections. This type of knowledge is believed to have a very complex nature (Kirk, MacDonald, O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 409).

Fenstermacher (1994, p. 29) argues that "Teachers' practical knowledge, as it is frequently referred to in research on teacher knowledge, involves a "grouping or categorizing sense of term to call all cognitive events or mental states "and also makes a distinction between formal teacher knowledge which he defines as "the concept of knowledge as it appears in standard or conventional behavioral science" and teachers' practical knowledge what teachers know as a result of experience (Borg, 2006, p. 29).

Elbaz (1981, p. 47) looks at the practical knowledge from a classroom perspective and suggests that "Teachers have a range of practical knowledge of subject matter; of classroom organization and instructional techniques; of students' needs, abilities, and interests; of the social framework of the school and its surrounding community; and of their own strengths and shortcomings as teachers". Connelly & Clandinin (1988, p. 25) think that "teachers' personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation". If teachers' knowledge encompasses their personal and professional experiences, then we may also argue that background must somehow interact with and potentially shape any new learning teachers attain. It may then be inferred that background knowledge shapes teachers' new learning and it eventually influences teachers' practical knowledge. Meijer (1999) and Rovegno (2003) describe the features of teachers' practical knowledge as follows;

- Each teacher's practical knowledge is unique and describes the idiosyncratic nature of what a teacher knows which reflects an individual teacher's biography, values, knowledge and experience in the school context and reflects personal and emotional dimensions.
- Teacher's practical knowledge is based on experience which develops with experience in the school settings and reflection on experience is an important aspect of the nature of teachers' practical knowledge.
- This type of knowledge is implicit or tacit and thus it has a complex nature. Teachers may not know they have it or find it difficult to articulate.
- Practical knowledge is a product of activities and situations in which it is produced. The individual, the activity and the environment are inter-related and will be treated as a unit.
- Knowledge is always under construction and is acquired in specific situations. It is contextually developed knowledge.



- Practical knowledge guides teachers' actions in the classroom.
- Practical knowledge is content-related; it is connected with the subject that is taught. (Kirk, MacDonald, O'Sullivan, 2006:409)

Research on teachers' practical knowledge further reveals the complexities and uncertainties of interactive teaching and the need for considerable thinking. Clark and Lampert (1986) argued that an important use of research on teachers' practical knowledge is that it can provide student teachers with a realistically complex picture of the cognitive aspects of teaching and that teachers' practical knowledge should be included in the knowledge base of teaching. Although extensive research has been made in understanding teachers' practical knowledge, it is still not clear how practical knowledge actually guides teachers' decisions.

### **3.5 The Role of Teacher Cognition**

Teacher cognition research investigates the thought processes of teachers, and it rests on the assumption that teachers are "rational professionals who make judgments and decisions in an uncertain and complex environment" (Shavelson & Stern 1981, p. 456). The term teacher cognition refers to unobservable or revealed cognitive dimension of teaching- what teachers know, believe and mentally carry out. There is a growing consensus that in order to understand language teaching better, we need to know more about what teachers know, how they come to know it, and how they draw on their knowledge (Freeman & Richards, 1996; James, 2001; Freeman, 2001; Borg, 2003).

Thus, increasing recognition is being given to the personal and biographical aspects of teaching that locate what teachers do and think within their overall life experience (Goodson, 1992; Hayes, 1996; Gutierrez Almarza, 1996). In the early 1960's, authors like Ryans argued that "A major, drawback to the improvement of teaching and, hence learning, has been lack of understanding of teachers' characteristics and the ways of estimating them. The effectiveness of teachers depends on the social or cultural group in which the teacher operates, the grade level and subject matter taught" (Ryans, 1960, p. 9).

Language teaching involves decision making at each stage in a lesson. Studies of language teaching have attempted to identify reasons commonly cited by teachers in explaining their instructional decisions. Borg (2006, p. 40) suggests that "teacher cognition research has provided evidence of the way in which teachers beliefs and knowledge influence what teachers do in the classroom" but he also emphasizes that the social, psychological and environmental factors which exists in schools and classrooms, which teachers may perceive as external forces beyond their control, could

impair their ability of implementing their own practices based on their beliefs and knowledge.

However, since teachers' knowledge exists in very personal terms, it is important to recognize the impact which teachers' experiences have on the formation of their professional knowledge, beliefs, and patterns of action. The study carried out by Johnson (1992) suggests that teachers' negative experiences of language learning may have direct effects on their teaching. The pre-service teachers in her study made ever, her own negative experiences of language learning discourage her from attending to accuracy as much as she would like to, for fear of making her students feel bad (Chandra, 2008, p. 87).

Golombek (1998, p. 459) suggests that "The teacher's personal practical knowledge informed their practice by serving as a kind of interpretive framework through which they made sense of their classrooms as they recounted their experiences and made this knowledge explicit. Because teachers use this knowledge in response to a particular context, each context reshapes that knowledge". Teachers do not, however, simply reproduce their own experience in the classroom. If they are to transcend its effects, it is reflection on the experience which is critical. As Bailey (1996) points out, the "apprenticeship of observation" or any other experience, will only determine our professional behavior to the extent that we permit. Borg (2006:40) also emphasizes the impacts of teacher education on teachers' prior cognition and suggests that "There is now growing evidence of the ways in which teacher education can make explicit and promote change in teachers' prior knowledge and beliefs".

### **3.6 Language Teachers' Prior Language Learning Experiences**

Prior knowledge is a key principle of the constructivist philosophy that is founded on the premise that by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in and our 'mental models' adjust to accommodate new experiences. Meijer (1999) regard prior experiences as part of the teachers' background variables that potentially affect teachers' practical knowledge. Borg states that "Teachers' prior learning experiences establish cognition about language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualizations of L2 teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives" (2006, p. 88).

Johnson (1994) and Numrich (1996) shed light on how prior experience relates to classroom practices. In her study Johnson found that pre-service teachers judged the appropriateness of certain theories, methods, materials, in terms of their own first hand experiences as second language learners. Numrich (1996), also working with teachers in

training, found that teachers decided to promote or to avoid specific instructional strategies on the basis of their positive and negative experiences of these respective strategies as learners.

In the study Numrich (1996, p. 139) carried out with non-native pre-service English teachers, 27% of the teachers reported in their diaries that they attempted to integrate a cultural component into their teaching because they had found learning about the L2 culture to be an enjoyable part of their own L2 learning experiences. In contrast, the teachers noted that they avoided teaching grammar or correcting errors because their own experiences of these aspects of L2 instruction had been negative. In his book, Numrich (1996) states that "Error correction was most often cited as a technique that had been used by their language teachers and that had inhibited them from speaking.

In some cases, it had even turned them off to language learning because they had felt so humiliated and uncomfortable being corrected. Because of correcting some teachers chose not to interrupt their students' flow of speech in the classroom or correct errors". Both studies indicate that prospective teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognition about learning and language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualizations of L2 teaching during teacher education (Borg, 2006, p. 54).

## **4. Proposed Methodology**

### **4.1 Case Study**

Bassey (1999, p. 47) defines a case study as the "study of a singularity conducted in depth in natural settings". In his view, key features of the case study are (1) that it must be conducted mainly within its natural context and (2) that sufficient data must be collected for the researcher to be able to understand significant features of the case, and propose interpretations for what has been observed. I chose the case study approach so that I would be able to study one aspect of a problem in some depth within a limited time scale.

In the beginning, I was hoping to conduct a comprehensive study to discover all the underlying factors behind the formation of teachers' beliefs and practices. However, as I carried on with my data collection, I realized that I would gain more insights into the subject matter and reach more meaningful findings if I investigated only one aspect of the problem to a large extent. Case study excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Researcher Robert K. Yin defines the case study

research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

However, the drawback of a single-case design is its inability to provide a generalizing conclusion, in particular when the events are rare. One way of overcoming this is by triangulating the study with other methods in order to confirm the validity of the process. Triangulation is broadly defined by Denzin (1978, p. 291) as “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon”. Researchers use different sets of data, different types of analysis, different researchers, and/or different theoretical perspectives to study one particular phenomenon. These different points of view are then studied so as to situate the phenomenon and locate it for the researcher and reader alike. At the same time, a careful reflection of what the researchers use as the particular points (of view) to triangulate the phenomenon tells us as much about the “location” of the researchers themselves as it does about the phenomenon itself.

However, the ability to relate a case study is particularly significant when benefits are concerned. Bassey (1981, p. 85) states that “Relatability of a case study is more important than its generalissimo”. If the findings are related to a particular organization, setting or circumstances, other researchers may then apply those findings to their situations. Bassey (1981, p. 85) also adds that “An important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision making to that described in the case study”.

Case studies, on the other hand, are also designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data. This method, therefore, would be useful for trying to test the theoretical models by using them in real world situations. In other words, I would have the opportunity to observe different teacher models in a real environment and test whether the theoretical models actually work in the real concept. Case study would be particularly suitable to conduct such comprehensive investigation as I work with teachers from different backgrounds. The detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies not only help to explore or describe the data in real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research (Zaidah, 2007, p. 4). Such comprehensive investigation also allows comparisons of multiple factors which may bear more diversified findings and also give researchers a broader perspective of their own field and enables them to cope with the difficulties of everyday life.

As the title of this study refers, "teaching styles" and "prior learning experiences" greatly differ from person to person. In order to collect accurate and insightful data, in-depth research is needed in the relevant subject matter. Case studies can deal with the increasing pace of change and complexity in teaching and learning, particularly where affiliations and motivations are difficult to track and understand. Yin (2003, p. 7) asserts that case study strategies are appropriate to study complex multivariate conditions and not just isolated variables).

## **4.2 The Instruments**

### **4.2.1 Interview**

As the title of this study suggests, in-depth research is needed to build sufficient understanding of the subject matter. Such research requires multiple data collection methods to present more reliable findings. One of the methods that were employed for this study is a semi-structured interview. Interviews can be defined as a way of getting information from the participants in a study (Freeman, 1998, p. 216), or as an instrument that enables two or more people to both discuss how they interpret facts and express their perceptions of different aspects of their lives (Cohen & Manion, 2000, p. 267).

As such, Interviews allow researchers to obtain precise data as key participants are individuals with wide knowledge and experience of the social situation the researcher is interested. Researchers can establish questions of their own interest and generate new questions to enhance the validity of their data. Interviewing involves direct interaction between the investigator and the research subject. Such flexible method of interviewing is particularly useful to collect more reliable and precise data. It also opens up the door for further examination of the phenomenon observed which means that respondents normally produce a high response rate and thus, error which might be introduced by many people refusing to co-operate in the survey is minimized (Crouch & Housden, 2003, p. 123).

The depth to which issues emerge or are discussed in an interview depends on its structure and the choice of a certain interview structure depends on the purpose of the investigation (Cohen & Mannion, 2000, p. 270; Nunan, 1992, p. 149). By way of explanation, the content and type of an interview can determine the way one wishes to conduct it. Personal interviews may be carried out in a number of ways as follows;

**Fully Structured Interviews:** The situation is structured or controlled through the medium of questionnaire. The interviewer must read out the questions and notes the respondents exactly as they appear on the questionnaire form, and may not add anything else, even by way of explanation to the respondent. This ensures that, the responses, from many individuals, are given to precisely the same question, even

though interviewers involved in the data collection process (Crouch & Housden, 2003, p. 123).

**Semi Structured Interviews:** In semi structured interviews, fully structured questions, as described above, are combined with open-ended questions. These questions are easy to design and to ask, but require more of the respondent in answering, and of the interviewer in recording those answers. The respondent is free to answer in whatever the way he or she pleases since no direction or structure is implied by the question. The interviewer may be required to encourage the respondent to think about the question by using the probing questions like "Do you think there are also other factors?" after one or two have been given. The use of open-ended questions and probes makes it possible to collect both qualitative and quantitative data in the same survey. The main difficulty lies under analyzing and interpreting the responses to open-ended questions.

**Unstructured Interviews:** In this type of interview, neither the interviewer nor the respondents are bound by the structure of questions. Interviewers have only a topic guide or checklist of questions that must be asked, or subjects that must be covered. They are normally free to word questions as they please and to vary the order in which the questions are asked rather than disrupt the flow or respondents answers which means that they can answer questions at considerable length and are encouraged to explore all their thoughts on a particular topic. Unstructured interviews are used to provide qualitative data. They also make it possible to identify the relevant points that must be included in the subsequent structured or semi-structured interviews if qualification of the data is needed.

For this study, I chose to make use of a less formal approach to interviewing, in which I would be free to modify the order of the questions, change the wording, ask follow-up questions to probe the informant's answer and add new questions as the need arose. This approach to interviewing has been categorized as "semi-structured" (Cohen & Manion, 2000, p. 275). I wanted the informants to be able to answer the questions in their own way and in their own words. The advantages of this approach are that (1) data collection can be fairly systematic because the topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, and (2) the interview remains conversational and situational.

A disadvantage of semi-structured interview approach is that important questions can easily be omitted, inadvertently. To avoid that, I prepared a guideline of topics and ticked them off as the questions arose during the interview. This allowed me to keep my questions focused and avoid the possibility of omitting the important details (see Appendix 1.1).

The first stage was the design of the questions. This involves translating the research objectives into the questions that will make up the main body of the schedule. This needs to be done in such a way that questions adequately reflect what it is the researcher is trying to find out (Cohen, Lawrence, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 356). Before I prepared the actual interview items, I took the following factors into consideration to effectively measure the question format;

- The objectives of the interview
- The nature of the subject matter
- Whether the interviewer is dealing in facts, opinions or attitudes
- The kind of information the respondent can be expected to have
- The extent of the interviewer own insight into the respondent's situation.

Having given a prior thought to these matters, the researcher is in a position to design the kind of questions they wish to ask (Cohen, Lawrence, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 357). At first, I listed the variables that I would be dealing with during this study and then I designed eight open-ended questions mainly addressing "teaching styles and prior learning experiences". The questions in the interview guide were open-ended and reflected the objectives of the research (Nunan, 1992, p. 147).

The next stage of the interview was piloting my questions. This allows any potential problems or discrepancies to be highlighted. I performed a trial interview with one of my colleagues. The trial interview allowed me to narrow down my focus by excluding the irrelevant questions and reconstruct some of the questions to reach efficient data. Stanton (2005, p. 26) sees piloting as a very useful process in shaping the interview into its most efficient form and allows any potential problems in the data collection procedure to be highlighted and eradicated. The piloting stage was particularly useful for me to gain adequate understanding of the process and ways to cope with the unexpected problems occurred during the interviews.

Before I started interviewing each respondent individually, I informed them of the aim of my study, the approximate length of the interview and asked them about the place in which they would feel most comfortable being interviewed. In addition, I assured them that I would not use their names in the study and explained how I would use the information they provided in the study. In the end, these pre-informing sessions allowed me to reach more genuine and precise data from each respondent.

#### 4.2.2 Observation Checklist

The second method I used for data collection was an observation checklist. I designed thirteen items, which are tally and yes/no types of questions, based on the data I gathered from the interviews (see Appendix 1.2). The aim of the checklist was to gather

additional information and verify the data gathered from the interviews. The checklist questions were designed to identify certain differences in teaching behaviors and approaches in a one-to-one classroom setting based on the elements such as “mistake corrections, interruptions, the use of Japanese in class, text book use, teacher and student talk-time and the time spent on warm-up and feed-back”. The use of observation as a method of research is also valuable for several reasons. Observation allows the investigator to study human behavior as it naturally occurs, with or without the researcher’s influence on the behavior. In other words, human activity is observed without the filtering effects of the subject’s interpretation of their interactions (Holliday, 2002). According to Kumar, observations are considered the best to collect the required information when the researcher is more interested in the behavior than in the perceptions of the individuals, and besides, they allow for the identification of behaviors that may not be apparent to the person and may not have been discovered through interviews (Kumar, 1996).

As for the observation method, I decided to use non-participant observation, which means, the observer will conduct the observation without being visible to the phenomenon. This was due to ethical constraints imposed by the institution. Holliday (1994, p. 206) points out that “Accessibility to situations for the purpose of observation is a common problem with ethnographic means analysis”.

To avoid the problem of accessibility, I followed the two standards suggested by Trochim to help protect the privacy of research participants. Firstly, almost all research guarantees the participants confidentiality, in other words, participants are assured that identifying information will not be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. The second standard is called the principle of anonymity which essentially means that the participant will remain anonymous throughout the study (William M.K. Trochim, 2006).

Since the researcher's presence in an observation may affect the reliability of the observation data, non-participant observation method was determined as the second stage of data collection. Adams emphasizes the role of Hawthorne effect in the outcome of the observation; if the person knows they are the subject of the research, they may act differently and invalidate the whole project (Adams, 2007, p. 138).

However, this may sometimes pose problems for researchers. Since there is no interaction with the observed, there is always a possibility that the researcher may misunderstand what they are seeing which may eventually lead to inaccurate results. To avoid this problem, I conducted the observation checklist being present during the lessons though I still made myself invisible to the phenomena and did not inform them of the observation in advance.



#### 4.2.3 Triangulation of Data

Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. Triangulation is one of the several rationales for "Multi-method Research". The term derives from surveying, where it refers to the use of a series of triangles to map out an area. The idea of triangulation is very much associated with measurement practices in social and behavioral research.

An early reference to triangulation was in relation to the idea of "Unobtrusive Method" proposed by Webb. Webb (1966, p. 3) suggests that "Once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced". Denzin (1978, p. 299-301) extended the idea of triangulation beyond its conventional association with research methods and designs. He distinguished four forms of triangulation:

- Data triangulation, which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered.
- Investigator triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data.
- Theoretical triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data.
- Methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data.

Qualitative researchers use methodological triangulation when they incorporate two or more research methods into one investigation. Methods triangulation can occur between at the level of design or data collection. Method triangulation at the design level also called between method triangulation, and method triangulation at the data collection level has been called within-method triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Denzin also drew a distinction between within-method and between-method triangulation. The former involves the use of varieties of the same method to investigate a research issue. Between-method triangulation involved contrasting research methods, such as a questionnaire and observation (Denzin, 1978).

By contrasting the two methods, a more complete set of findings can be provided than the administration of one method alone. This could also allow researchers to enhance the validity of research findings. When researchers combine methods at the design level, they should consider the purpose of the research and make a cogent argument for using each method. Also, they should decide whether the question calls simultaneous or sequential implementation of the two methods (Morse, 1991). If they

choose the simultaneous implementation, they will use the qualitative and quantitative methods simultaneously, whereas, if they choose sequential implementation, they complete one method first, then, based on the findings of the first technique, plan and implement the second technique.

For this study, I chose sequential triangulation method which I first collected the data through interviews and then, designed the observation checklist based on the data I gathered from the interviews. Sieber (1973) thinks that combination of quantitative and qualitative research can be effective at the research design, data collection, and data analysis stages. At the design stage, qualitative data can assist the quantitative component of a study by assisting with conceptual and instrument development. Also, at the data collection stage, qualitative data can facilitate the data collection process. Finally, during the data analysis stage, qualitative data can play a crucial role by interpreting, describing, clarifying and validating quantitative results, as well as through the modification of theory (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao & Bostick, 2004:141)

## **5. Analysis of Findings**

This section presents the analysis of the findings of this study. The data from the semi-structured interviews and observation checklist were used to perform the analysis. Both data sources suggest that all four participant teachers presented certain similarities and differences in their teaching practices and beliefs. For this study the interview data analysis was performed first as it was the only source of data available to analyze the teachers' prior learning experiences.

### **5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

For this study four respondent teachers were interviewed individually based on a set of premeditated interview questions to allow consistency and an adequate comparison of the findings. The teachers were asked to give their views on several issues pertaining to the role of their prior learning experiences in the formation of their teaching approaches. Firstly, all five teachers were asked to give a brief description of their own teaching styles and all came up with divergent responses to the question. When I asked "S1" about his teaching style (See Extract 1, below), he emphasized open communication and building trust with students. He believes this would enable teachers to create a suitable learning environment where learners would be given ample freedom to express themselves.

### **Extract 1**

S1: I think hum, I always aim at like...an atmosphere where there is free discussion, ability to have discussion and using the key phrases but certainly not where I'm or where the..eh..instructor is lecturing, I think..the goal not to just mouth Gaba's uhm...what would be the word "dogma" but just uhm...I'm just there to facilitate, the clients using the key phrases and expressing their ideas, ahm, so the language becomes very personal for them, ahm they are using the key phrases, they can relate to the target language, they can relate to the instructor, ahm, instructors basically just a guide on their path.

When he was describing his past learning experiences (See Extract 3, below), he felt he was lucky to have very inspiring teachers that focused on learner's motivation rather than studying through notes or books. He also emphasized that learning is not necessarily achieved to reach a certain goal but it should involve a lot of joy, passion and inspiration which would eventually allow learners to expand their minds.

### **Extract 2**

S1: I think for myself, I was lucky to have some very inspiring teachers. So uhm, I think you know, the teachers I had were great motivators, uhm, in terms of quite an inspiration and passion, rather than, I've just got to learn these bunch of notes and such a waste of time so I don't wanna be here, I think a lot of the teachers I had would really motivate and inspire me and uhm, learning is, it's not necessarily uhm, to...to reach a goal at the end but it is a process, enjoying the process of learning.

S1's response indicates that he favors a learner-centered classroom environment where the instructor only takes on the role of a facilitator and encourages self-directed learning. Since attitudes, values, beliefs and motivation differ for each individual, teaching approaches adopted by those individuals may also differ. In this regard, S3 had a distinctly different way of looking at the matter. He mainly emphasized the role of grammar in teaching and rules associated with the language (See Extract 3, below). He believes that teachers should maintain full control over their classrooms.

### **Extract 3**

S3: I'm..I'm grammar minded right, like..when I learn Japanese I'd like to see the grammar..uhm..that means as a teacher I tend to be kind of grammar minded too, very rule-based and structural. S3: In my language lessons..I'm letting the teacher run the show, like I don't..I don't make requests, I just I come in and I just kind of let him...do what he wants to do with my lesson and I'm fine with that, right, right? Uhm.....so..perhaps just from my own student experience...I'm..more one to say let the teacher do what he wants to do.

In this regard, he drew on his own learning experiences and made connections between his preferred way of teaching and learning (See Extract 4, below). He said as a student he would prefer his classes to be led by the teacher and as a teacher he would prefer the same way. He attributed his preference to the instructional methods he was exposed to at high school which he described as being very teacher-centered and form-focused.

**Extract 4**

S3: I mean the vast majority of my education...right..uhm...like my writing..my high-school writing education, which I think was great...was...was very much like you said..how does a baby learn to walk, you you know , he..basically assigned papers and he gave very harsh grades, right...and..he had them curbed so that..when you got D's..they didn't hurt but like...Everybody turned in their papers and everybody got D's. Because they were all our first papers as fresher from high school and they all sucked, right...It..it was a real real kind of harsh way to learn, he was..he was like write...and then, once you're writing we'll work on it from there, and then...and then he also did..what I think they were an ingenious vocabulary building...ah..exercises.

The term teacher cognition refers to unobservable or revealed cognitive dimension of teaching. In other words, what teachers know, believe and mentally carry out. There is a growing consensus that in order to understand language teaching better, we need to know more about what teachers know, how they come to know it, and how they draw on their knowledge (Freeman & Richards, 1996; James, 2001; Freeman, 2001; Borg, 2003). Thus, increasing recognition is being given to the personal and biographical aspects of teaching that locate what teachers do and think within their overall life experience (Goodson, 1992; Hayes, 1996; Almarza, 1996).

Perhaps, the differences in their teaching approaches may be attributable to a number of other factors. However, their responses indicate a corresponding tendency towards their educational background. All four participant teachers emphasized the connection between their prior learning experiences and its role in the formation of their beliefs and its reflection on their practice. Research indicates that teachers teach in a manner consistent with their own way of learning (Shulman, 1990; Tobin et al., 1994). The responses I received from all four teachers confirm this theory. "S4" told me that she has a tendency to teach the way she likes to be taught. She suggested that this may have its roots in her grade school education which she described as form focused and content-based. She also emphasized the need to teach grammar in one-to-one situations as she believes her own learning would not have taken place as effectively if she had not studied that way.

In this regard, S3's response to teacher's control over their classroom corresponds to S4's (See Extract 5, below). Both teachers made connections between their prior learning experiences and their own teaching approaches. They both prefer to teach the way they were taught at school which indicates that their learning and teaching preferences are heavily influenced by their learning experiences.

#### **Extract 5**

S4: I tried to teach the way I..I like being taught..by the way I liked learning or whatever so...which why it's kind of difficult at Gaba because you can't always teach people the way..the way you want to or the way you. S4: Yeah, I mean I went to French immersion..even though...I was like in..in Saskatchewan which is all English or whatever. I took a French immersion when I was a kid and we we did a lot of like...ehh..we were supposed to speak French in class and stuff, we were always like corrected and...and taught like..I mean we focused more on grammar which we don't do but sometimes I do think that it's...more necessary cause sometimes like clients have no idea what a verb is...you know...sometimes I think that...that should be...they should have the basics you know...cause I think that if I didn't know anything in French if I didn't know what a verb was what a...noun was or whatever I would be really lost.

Golombek (1998, p. 459) suggests that "Teacher's personal practical knowledge informs their practice by serving as a kind of interpretive framework through which they make sense of their classrooms as they recount their experiences and make this knowledge explicit as teachers use this knowledge in response to a particular context, each context reshapes that knowledge". In other words, this knowledge informs their practice by filtering experience so that the teachers reconstructed it and acted in response to the exigencies of a teaching situation and by giving physical form to their practice; it is their knowledge in action.

I asked S2 about her preferred lesson style based on the following two indicators; "working on the text book or having a free conversation with students" (See Extract 6, below). Her preference indicated a correlation between her teaching approaches and her background. She told me that if she had her way, she would prefer to have a free conversation rather than follow a strict guide lined book.

#### **Extract 6**

S2: if I had my choice, if even the lower level clients could have a normal conversation with me, I would have a conversation rather than....a strict guide lined book, you know. Because I think that it's more useful to have a...uhm...normal like a conversation about daily life, about uhm...things that are happening in your...you know..in your life, or whatever. Because it's more practical for the client and for the client you know.

Although she did not precisely explain the reason for her preference above, when I asked her later about her background, she told me that she was raised in an interactive environment where people are generally congenial and approachable. She thinks that being exposed to such environment has reflected in her own personality and enabled her to build the confidence to communicate with different types of people without any hesitation or problems (See Extract 7, below).

#### **Extract 7**

S2: I went to..University of Michigan, in..Michigan of course and..uhm. It's a really super liberal town..and I think in a liberal town...people have this like uhm...outward..ahh...like persona that is really uhm.. inviting to other people, you know and of other cultures, of other backgrounds, of other, you know, walks of life so yeah, I think they're really rubbed off on me, where..you know, I'm able to meet different types of people and teach different types of people without any...kind of hesitation or problems.

Her response to the question of her prior school learning experiences correlates with her response to the question of her preferred teaching practices (See Extract 6, above and Extact 8, below). When she was describing her prior learning experiences at school, she mainly described her favorite teacher from high school. S2 described him as a caring and an interpersonal individual who was always engaged in his students' lives. She thought this affected her positively and made the learning process easier for all students. She now thinks that teachers' interpersonal skills are the key to promote effective learning and teaching.

#### **Extract 8**

S2: So, my favorite teacher..not even in university but in high school,okay. He was..It was..a math..math teacher, but uhh...He was just really engaged in students' lives, you know..and he didn't care, you know, in in University you are kind of expected to give up your..your..personal life for..your students, you know, you give them your cell-phone number, you give them your e-mail whenever you're available.. there, you know whatever they need you. But in high school you're not obligated to do that you know their parents are supposed to be there to guide you..But this guy was really engaged in people's lives and really cared about people. So it really made the learning process easier too..So I guess that has affected me in some what you know in some what of a...positive way when I teach my clients. because I feel like If you don't get to know somebody, you're not gonna be...you're gonna be..that much of a..more of an effective teacher than if you get to know somebody.

All four teachers' approaches to error correction also suggest corresponding tendencies to their teaching styles. S1 previously emphasized open communication and building trust with students as well as creating an environment where they would find more freedom to express themselves (See Extract 1, p: 36). He believes in self-directed learning and sees the role of instructor as a facilitator. His responses to the question of error correction indicated a similar tendency to his perspective over his own teaching style (See Extract 9, below). He measures the degree of correction based on the student's level of confidence and tends to become more lenient with students who lack confidence. He also said that he focuses his corrections on major grammatical mistakes and corrects them gently.

The motivation behind this approach can be attributable to his emphasis on open communication and building trust with students. Meaning-focused approach is based on the idea that a target language is acquired through communication rather than direct instruction. This approach places less emphasis on accuracy and gives more importance to the effectiveness of communication (Ellis, 2001, p. 13). In order to achieve the two aims S1 suggested, teachers may need to allow students adequate freedom to express themselves.

#### **Extract 9**

S1: Ah, it's a good question, I think it depends ah, on...if I'm if they are really quite and if it is a high level student I might be more strict, if it is somebody who lacks confidence I'll be quite lenient. Ahm, Unless they're major ah grammatical mistakes, I'll gently more have a gently correction style to helping them use the correct language.

Although S4's approach towards error correction is considerably different from S1's, the tendencies behind their approaches suggest a similar implication (See Extract 5 and Extract 9, above). She previously mentioned that she would like to be corrected on absolutely everything when she was studying a new language, thus she would prefer to teach the same way to her own students. She attributed this to "form focused teaching instruction" she was exposed to when she was studying at French immersion.

Form-focused instruction involves the process of inter language construction by drawing learners' attention to or providing opportunities to practice specific linguistic features (e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998; Ellis et al., 2001). She also suggested that it would be useful for students to become aware of all different forms if they intended to learn a language. If she had not learned what a verb or a noun was she would have been so confused when she was learning French. S3's response to error correction also indicated a similar tendency to S4's (See Extract 10, below and Extract 5, above). S3 was

also exposed to form focused instruction during his school days. When I asked him about his own stance over error correction, he said that he used to correct all student errors without making any judgments. Although he said he is currently trying to be less form focused, he still believes that certain errors have to be corrected before the student gets into the habit of using the wrong forms.

Terrell (1991, p. 60), a strong advocate of the natural approach, points out that because the incorrect input or (even their own incorrect input) which students are exposed to in classroom interaction is as easily acquired as correct input, "approaches relying heavily on monitored output activities instead of input for acquisition will probably have to resort to strict error correction to avoid wholesale acquisition of incorrect forms and structures".

#### **Extract 10**

S3: Now I'm trying to be more judgmental, right, before I was trying to correct everything. But now I'm...now I'm letting something slide...May be..may be only..concentrate on a few key points and knock them bar them...like new things, I'm pretty..I'm pretty strict on the articles, cause I feel like the only way you get better with articles is if you are constantly corrected, right...right. Because if you develop bad habits...right. You're starting with no habits...but you don't want them to develop bad habits, so I don't think articles are something you let slide to later, right. Because, that's in the..that needs constant reinforcement before they get it.

I also asked all four instructors whether they had the experience of learning another language. S1, S2 and S4 had this experience at certain points in their lives though S3 have never had this opportunity (See Appendix 1.1). I asked S3 whether he saw any disadvantages of not having this experience to his teaching (See Extract 11, below). He pointed out that going through the hardship of learning another language would help the person develop a better understanding of students' problems and make them more sympathetic towards them. When I asked him earlier the question about error correction, he said that he used to correct all student errors regardless of their levels or personality types. This direct approach may be attributable to his lack of knowledge of the language learning process which may have resulted in developing a more demanding style towards students.

The ESL teacher will have learned English either as a first language, and be a native speaker, or will have learned it as a second language, and be a non-native speaker. The native speaker teacher's learning of English as a first language took place in early childhood, is unavailable for reflection and is considered by most second language acquisition researchers to be of a very different nature from learning a second language as an adult. If such teachers are monolingual, they do not have direct



experience of what students are learning (adult language learning). There is virtually no other subject in which the teacher does not have the experience of learning the content in the same way as the student. In science, in mathematics, in research methods, in driver education, in management education or in any subject we could name except second language learning, the teacher has been a conscious learner of the content before undergoing training to impart it to a new generation of learners (Ellis, 2006).

However, S3 also said that he has lately become more tolerant towards errors and allows his students to take more risk (See extract 10 above). Connelly & Clandinin (1988, p. 25) suggest that “teachers' personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation”. We may then say that his teaching experience is influencing the way he delivers corrections and making him more tolerant towards his students.

#### **Extract 11**

S3: Even if it's..even if you don't have the experience of learning the language you're trying to teach at least you have the experience of trying to learn a language, right? and some of the problems that come with it, right. So...you know...maybe you struggle in different ways, right? May be..may be the..may be the problems you experience as a...student of English are different than the problems you experience as a student of German or true different than..as the student of Farsi and Japanese but may be those...may be those problems while different are born of similar difficulties the brain has when...uh..attempting to learn new material, maybe languages are different but the way the brain functions...isn't necessarily different and so...you know as being a student of a language at all...you're at least aware that there are difficulties, right. You're...just makes you more understanding and more sympathetic.

S1 believes that having the experience in learning a new language makes teachers more sensitive towards their learners (See Extract 12, below). He described language learning as a humbling process which helps teachers to build a rapport with their learners and gives them the ability to anticipate certain learner needs which he illustrated as not to be afraid to make mistakes. S4's response also suggested similar implications to S1's and S3's as she suggested that going through the hardship of learning a language gave her the ability to guide her students to the right path and advise them on the challenges of the language learning process.

If teachers have learned English post-childhood (i.e., are non-native speakers), they have direct experience of what students are doing, in task and content. If the teachers' first language is English, but they have learned another language post-childhood, they have experience of the task (learning a language as an adult) with

slightly different content (a second language, but not English). The language itself, however, is accessible as an available source for comparison and contrast with English, giving the L2 speaker insights into similarities to and differences from English: in other words, the potential for performing cross-linguistic comparison. This linguistic awareness will eventually enable those teachers to develop their own teaching strategies, give them the ability to provide learners with more information anticipate language difficulties and make them more emphatic to the needs and problems of their learners (Ellis, 2006b). In addition, if *teachers' language awareness* is raised, it seems reasonable to affirm that there is a better opportunity to spread this awareness and valorization of linguistic diversity amongst their students.

In this way, they will play a role that goes beyond the teaching of language structures and school contents, becoming thus main players in the promotion of multilingualism and multiculturalism and the integration of different languages (Lasabagaster, 2007, p. 238). All three responses indicate a direct correlation between teachers' prior language learning experiences and their awareness of the learning process.

### **Extract 12**

S1: Personally, I certainly do, because, I find it creates a sense of ahm...a rapport, what a client is going to do and makes an instructor humble I think too. Because learning a foreign language is very humble, you have to become the empty vessel, and uhm. It can be a very humbling process. You know to realize how little we know in learning a totally new system of learning and ahh not to be afraid to make mistakes, uhm, I think that's that's very important...Interviewer: yeah S1: personally I'd I'd certainly think so. S4: I can only...give them like..tips from how I learned or what helped me so that kind of helps I understand how hard it is to learn a language and..different things you need to do to practice...to become more fluent.

### **5.2. Observation Checklist**

The analysis of the interview data suggests that the responses to the questions revealed a strong connection between the teachers' educational background and their preferred teaching style. However, responses to the interview questions may not always reflect the true feelings of respondents. This could be attributed to a number of reasons. Sometimes the respondent may misinterpret the purpose of the question or he may be biased about certain matters or otherwise he may have a poor memory of the incident.

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the interview data, an observation checklist was performed with each instructor. I decided to observe a first lesson of each student to draw meaningful comparisons between the participant instructors. As I agreed with each instructor, the observation checklist was performed

without informing them beforehand. The purpose of this agreement was to ensure the validity and accuracy of the observation data. I focused the interview questions mainly on teachers' educational background and their preferred teaching styles. Whereas I focused the checklist questions merely to ascertain what has led the teachers to adopt their preferred teaching style. As performing an observation checklist would not be an appropriate method to collect data concerning the teachers' educational background.

The data obtained from the observation checklist also revealed significant differences in the way each instructor implemented their teaching practices. The first item that I wished to ascertain was how much time each teacher spent on their warm-up. In an ordinary lesson at the institution, the suggested time for a warm-up activity is approximately five minutes according to the guidelines. The aim of a warm-up activity is to allow teachers to exchange information with students and engage them in a conversation before the lesson starts. Taking these aims into account, I looked at the time dedicated for the text book and free conversation and also tried to determine teacher and student talk time during the lesson. These two items in the checklist allowed me to draw comparisons with the relevant interview data and later determine the ground for some of their preferred teaching approaches.

I also ascertained the number of direct and delayed corrections delivered during the lesson to elevate the validity of the data from the first five items. In relation to that, I also looked at whether the teachers delivered any grammatical instructions or not. Finally, I looked at how each instructor delivered their feedback. The suggested time for feedback is also five minutes according to the guidelines. The aim of feedback is to help students assess their own learning and reflect on their development. Teachers of the institution are mainly required to focus on praising students for their good work, emphasizing the major corrections delivered during the lesson and advising students on their future study methods. Therefore, I mainly focused my questions on the length of time dedicated for feedback, the review of the corrections delivered during the lesson and whether the teacher gave any advice to the student or not. In the end, all thirteen items in the checklist allowed me to identify the distinguished features of each teacher along with the comparison of the data from the interviews. Below is a sample of the checklist items used for this study.

- How much time did the teacher spend on the warm-up?
- How much time did the teacher spend on the text book exercises?
- How much of the lesson time was dedicated for free conversation?
- How much was the teacher talk time?
- How much was the student talk time?
- How many times did the teacher correct the student?

- How many of them were delayed corrections?
- How many of them were direct corrections?
- Did the teacher teach any grammar in the lesson?
- How much time did the teacher spend on the feedback?
- Did the teacher go over any error corrections during the feedback?
- If so, how many corrections were reviewed during the feedback?
- Did the teacher give any advice to the student during the feedback?

As I was expecting, all four instructors presented different teaching approaches during the observed lessons. S1 started the lesson with a warm-up activity which was slightly longer than the recommended time (7 minutes and 36 seconds). He asked the student general questions about his occupation, hobbies and reasons to study English and only provided basic information about himself. After the warm-up, he proceeded to the text book and gave the student some background on the target language points. He then gradually expanded the lesson outside of the text and used the information he elicited during the warm-up to customize it for the student.

He focused all his strategies on enhancing the student's participation in the lesson. He achieved this by allowing him ample opportunity to communicate his ideas. Thus, he tried not to interrupt the student except for the times he delivered corrections. In the end, he delivered his feedback which was comprised of the strengths and weaknesses of the student and advice on how to turn those weaknesses into strengths. Just as his warm-up, his feedback also exceeded the suggested time (7 minutes and 34 seconds).

S1 maintained approximately 75% student talk time during the lesson. In warm-up, he prompted the student with questions in order to elicit information so that he could later use the information to customize the lesson. There were only two occasions in the lesson that he took the control from the student; first, when he gave a brief explanation on the target language points and next, when he was delivering the feedback. He demonstrated quite a flexible stance on the use of the text book. He dedicated 15 minutes and 24 seconds of the total lesson time for the text book exercises and spent 13 minutes and 28 seconds on an expanded conversation.

During the lesson he delivered a total of seven corrections, one direct and six indirect. He only focused on major grammatical errors. Other times, he did not interrupt the student to maintain the student's active involvement in the lesson. The number of corrections he delivered also indicates his urge to make the lesson more learner-centered. He reflected this strategy by his efforts to ensure effective communication and high student talk time during the lesson.

Firstly, he provided only basic information about himself in warm-up and tried to limit his involvement during the lesson. His approximately 35% talk time was an indicator. Instead, he elicited information from the student and related the information to the target language points in the book. This allowed him to maintain high student talk time and provide a more customized lesson. Although, his response to the question about his prior learning experiences lacks details, it may still suggest that part of his education took place in a more learner-centered environment. He suggested this by emphasizing his teacher's stance on learner motivation and engagement. This may indicate a connection between his tendency towards learner-centered and his prior learning experiences.

Contrary to S1's flexible style, S4 conformed to the company guidelines and conducted an approximately five minute warm-up activity (4 minutes and 50 seconds). This mainly included a brief introduction of the student and the teacher. The student was at upper intermediate level. After the warm-up, she proceeded to the text book and worked through the exercises she planned in a timely manner. She conducted most of the lesson from the text book (26 minutes and 14 seconds) and only allowed expansion outside the text at the end of each section which made up 4 minutes and 43 seconds of the total lesson time. When the student asked a grammar question, she gave a brief explanation and continued working through the text. In the end, her desire to progress in the text enabled her to manage her time more effectively. She also tried to minimize her explanations and mainly focused on the student which enabled her to maintain approximately 70% student talk time.

Contrary to S1's lenient approach to error correction, S4 delivered a total of 19 corrections which mainly consisted of errors related to choice of verb tense, vocabulary, prepositions and articles. Ten of the nineteen corrections were direct which she interrupted the student and gave a brief explanation of the error and nine of the corrections were delayed which she took notes of the errors and explained them to the student afterwards.

Approximately five minutes to the end of the lesson time, she began her feedback. During the feedback, she mainly focused on the student's errors and made the student repeat all the corrected sentences from her notes. She wrapped up the lesson in a timely-manner. This systematic approach may indicate that she prefers to have a highly structured and logical sequence lesson plan which correlates with the form-focused educational philosophies she was exposed to at French immersion. When she was telling me about her educational background in the interview, she mainly described French immersion as a highly strict learning environment where teachers were quite demanding and forced students to speak French in class. In her lessons,

teachers delivered direct corrections and mostly focused on grammar. This may lead us to the conclusion that S4's teaching approaches are highly influenced by her prior learning experiences.

S2 demonstrated more flexible teaching approaches during the lesson. S2 dedicated more than half the lesson for guided conversation which she began with routine questions and gradually turned it into interactive information exchange where the student was actively involved (23 minutes 12 seconds). As she elicited responses to her questions, she related them to her own personal experiences to stimulate and maintain the student's interest in the conversation. Although the conversational activity contributed to the student's engagement, it did not entail any specific instruction on target language points. This may indicate that her main objective during the lesson was to ensure adequate communication between her and the student.

After the guided conversation, she proceeded to the text book though did not follow it as closely as S1 and S4 did. Instead, she picked out the target language points from each exercise and tried to relate them with the student's own experiences. Perhaps, her intention was to customise the lesson and generate more conversation using the text. During the lesson she praised the student when he successfully communicated his ideas and made the right choice of words and phrases for the right situations. She delivered a total of eight corrections which two of them were direct and six of them were delayed. She let many grammar-related mistakes go uncorrected and only corrected pronunciation and word choice related errors. This may indicate her preference on meaning focused approach as she emphasized during the interview. Finally, she gave the student feedback during the final part of the lesson (4.56). Her feedback included praising on the correct use of the target language and new phrases and some general advice on how to improve the student's overall conversation skills.

When S2 was describing her prior learning experiences, she mentioned that she was heavily influenced by her high school teacher who she thought was closely engaged in students' lives and made the learning process easier for students. During the lesson S2's main objective was to encourage the student to speak and communicate his ideas. She tried to achieve this by placing a strong emphasis on fluency and communicative activities. Perhaps, what lies behind this meaning-focused approach is the urge to communicate and build a relationship with the student. This approach may have its origin in the receptive home and school environment she was exposed to in Michigan. She indicates this in her response to the relevant interview question below.

S2: I went to..University of Michigan, in..Michigan of course and..uhm. It's a really super liberal town..and I think in a liberal town...people have this like uhm...outward..ahh...like persona that is really uhm.. inviting to other people, you know and of other cultures, of other backgrounds, of other, you know, walks of life so yeah, I think they're really rubbed off on me, where..you know, I'm able to meet different types of people and teach different types of people without any...kind of hesitation or problems.

However, Contrary to her flexible style during the lesson, S2 presented a stricter approach while delivering her feedback. She reviewed all eight corrections and gave the student a brief explanation of each error. S2 was exposed to both English and Japanese languages during her childhood. This experience may have an influence in the decisions she makes while teaching. Ellis (2006) suggests that second language is accessible as an available source for a comparison and contrast with English, giving L2 speakers insights into similarities to and differences from English: in other words, the potential for performing cross-linguistic comparisons. This linguistic awareness may have enabled S2 to provide clear explanations for all eight corrections and advice on further improvements.

The final observation checklist was performed with S3. He began the lesson with a warm up activity which lasted 3 minutes and 46 seconds. The warm-up only included a brief introduction of the student and no information about S3. As soon as he finished the warm-up, he proceeded to the text book. He dedicated 29 minutes and 21 seconds for the text book activities. He followed each activity closely with the student and provided detailed explanations for the new grammar, vocabulary and phrases. This tendency led to 65% teacher talk time in his lesson.

S3 also delivered the most number of error corrections of all four teachers. He delivered a total of 23 corrections which 19 of them were direct and 4 of them were delayed. He tried to monitor and correct every utterance of the student. The corrections were mainly focused on articles, prepositions and sentence structure related errors. The same as S4, he also made the student repeat the corrected sentences several times and gave the student an explanation of the associated grammar rule. During the interview, S3 emphasized that all article and preposition errors must be corrected. He believes that it is important to correct errors to prevent students from developing a bad habit of using wrong forms. This may also indicate his tendency towards rule-based and structural approaches.

Another thing he mentioned was teachers' control over their classroom. He believes teachers should always be in control of their class. He demonstrated this approach by closely following all text book activities and having relatively high teacher talk time (65%) during his lesson. His warm up, text-book oriented style and a relatively

high number of corrections also correlate with the responses he gave to the interview questions.

The approaches he presented during the observation suggest that he favors a teacher-centered instruction where the teacher imposes control on the student and mainly focuses on forms and structure. S4's responses to the interview questions represented similarities to S3's. Both teachers were exposed to highly strict and rule-based approaches during their prior education. They both prefer form-focused teaching approaches where the teacher follows the textbook closely and focuses on forms and structure. Similarly, both teachers presented these approaches in their lessons. For instance; they both delivered a high number of corrections and dedicated a high proportion of the lesson for textbook activities. This indicates that their prior learning experiences reflected in their teaching preferences and resulted in them adopting similar teaching strategies.

However, observation checklist results also suggest differences in their teaching strategies. Despite the fact that S4 described herself as a grammar-minded teacher, she also showed a tendency towards learner-centered approaches. One of her objectives during the lesson was to ensure high student talk time and therefore, while she was proceeding with text book, she allowed her student to express his opinions and share his experiences relevant to the textbook activities. This enabled S4 to maintain approximately 70% student talk time. S3 focused on forms and structure and he inclined to give a grammatical explanation for every new language point they came across. This approach led to 65% teacher talk time.

Perhaps, S4's knowledge of language learning processes may be helpful for her to produce a greater sensitivity to the needs of her student. This knowledge may also have enabled S4 to build a greater awareness of how she uses the language in her lessons. S1's preferred teaching approaches also indicate a similar linguistic awareness. During the lesson, his primary objective was to put the learner at the center of his learning and ensure that the student was effectively communicating his ideas. S1 achieved this aim by maintaining 75% student talk time in the lesson. Perhaps, S3's lack of knowledge of the second language learning process may have led him to adopt more content and structure based teaching approaches. This may lead us to the conclusion that the role of prior language learning experiences is as significant as all the other factors affecting the development of teachers' language teaching practices.

Overall, the results of the interviews and checklist observation suggest that the teaching approaches presented by all four instructors are influenced by their prior learning experiences. However, we may also need to emphasize the fact that there are multiple other factors involved in the formation of teachers' beliefs and practices.



Therefore, more research may be needed in the subject matter to determine the extent of this influence.

## 6. Discussion

This study was conducted at a private language school in Japan in which lessons are provided on a one-to-one basis using text book lessons and online language aids. The institution's one-to-one system was created in response to Clients' needs for personalized attention to maximize Clients' learning potential and make the process easier for them to accomplish their individual goals. Since people learn languages for different reasons, have different interests, and move at different paces, customization has become an indispensable part of language learning and teaching in Japan. However, just as students' preferred learning style, teachers' preferred teaching approaches play an equally significant role to achieve learning objectives in a one-to-one lesson.

Given the context above, it was imperative to ascertain the answers to the following questions;

- What is the role of teachers' preferred teaching styles in learning?
- How does teachers' practical knowledge influence their teaching strategies?
- What is the influence of prior learning experiences in the formation of different teaching styles?
- How does the knowledge of language learning processes affect one's teaching strategies?

Relevant literature was reviewed in order to generate responses to the above questions. The literature reviewed in this investigation indicates that:

- Every teacher has a different teaching style.
- Different teaching approaches come with different views on error correction.
- Teaching and learning should be inseparable and learning should be the goal of teaching.
- Teachers' beliefs and knowledge influence their teaching practice.
- Teachers' language learning experiences influence the way they determine their teaching strategies.

The results of this study showed that all four participant teachers presented certain similarities and differences in their teaching approaches and strategies. This may be the result of the differences in their knowledge and beliefs. Teacher's practical knowledge is based on experience and reflection on experience is an important aspect of the nature of teachers' practical knowledge. Since knowledge and beliefs differ for each

individual, their reflections in the ways teachers determine their own practices also differ. However, similar experiences may also lead to similar behavioral tendencies. For instance; two of the participant teachers in this study come from highly strict educational backgrounds and as a result, the reflection of their experiences resulted in showing tendencies towards form-focused instruction.

The results also indicate that teachers' personal practical knowledge is found in their teaching practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the difficulties of a present situation. All four teachers responded to the interview question about what led them to adopt their preferred teaching approaches. They all referred to their prior learning experiences. Their responses suggested that what they learned in the past may in some way be connected to the way they determine their teaching approaches.

The reflection of this personal practical knowledge was apparent in their strategies during the lesson observations. The teachers who were exposed to form-focused instructional methods in their prior school learning experiences exhibited similar tendencies in their teaching. Whereas, the teachers who received their education based on communicative and meaning-focused teaching approaches presented more flexible teaching styles during the observations.

In particular, this knowledge becomes more apparent when we look at the approaches they exhibited on error correction. The teachers who preferred meaning-focused instruction showed far more tolerance on student errors than the teachers' who preferred form-focused instruction. This tendency showed itself in their text book use. The teachers who delivered the most number of corrections tended to follow the text book activities more closely than the ones who were more tolerant on errors. This shows that their teaching approaches correlate with their perception on error correction.

Since teachers' knowledge exists in very personal terms, it is important to recognize the impact which teachers' experiences have on the formation of their professional knowledge, beliefs, and patterns of action. Teachers' prior learning experiences establish cognition about learning and language learning which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives (Borg, 2006, p. 88).

In this study, three of the four participant teachers had the experience of studying a second language. During the observations, their prior language learning experiences reflected in the way the teachers determined their teaching strategies. The teachers with prior language learning experiences were more concerned about their own talk time than the teacher who did not have any second language learning experience. Therefore, the teachers with the language learning experiences achieved higher student talk time in their lesson.

Teachers who have experienced the process of having to construct a second-language or bilingual identity are more likely to understand their learners' needs and difficulties in learning to function in English and negotiate first and second language use. Therefore, their understanding of the language learning process may be the key factor in their efforts to maintain high student talk time.

This study was of great relevance to one of the institutions I work with. Since the institution only provides lessons on a one-to-one basis, customization is the primary objective to fulfill the needs and expectations of its learners. I believe the results of this study will contribute to promoting teacher self-awareness which is imperative for successful customization of one-to-one lessons. Self-awareness can improve teachers' judgment and help them with their intuitive decision-making. It also allows them to identify opportunities for professional development and personal growth.

Successful teaching can be achieved by a desire for continuing self-improvement of teachers' language awareness, willingness and ability to reflect on language related issues, awareness of their own key role in mediating input for learning and awareness of potential learning difficulties. Successful learning can take place once all the above objectives are achieved.

## **7. Concluding Remarks**

This research aimed to investigate the role of teachers' prior learning experiences in the formation of their preferred teaching styles. The research involved four participant teachers from an English language institution in Japan in order to ascertain the influence of their prior learning experiences on teaching beliefs and strategies.

Firstly, the context of the study was outlined. Next, the relevant literature was reviewed to determine the background of teaching styles, the role of practical knowledge, teacher cognition and prior learning experiences in one's teaching strategies and approaches. After that, the research design and tools used for this study were described. The tools provided a set of qualitative data of teachers' beliefs about an ideal method of teaching, their learning experiences at school and their preferred teaching strategies. Next, the analysis of the data was conducted through the triangulation method. Finally, the implications of the findings were discussed and recommendations were given.

The study results indicate that teachers' practical knowledge is found in their practices. In particular, the influence of prior learning experiences was apparent on the way teachers determine their teaching approaches and strategies. There were certain limitations to this study. Due to time constraints, observation checklist was performed

only once with each instructor which posed impediments to the reliability of the data. In addition, there are multiple other factors are involved in the formation of teachers' belief system which limited my capability to measure the influence of teachers' practical knowledge on their teaching practices. Ethical constraints of the work environment emerged as another obstacle since recording or video-taping lessons are strictly prohibited by the institution.

Therefore, I believe more comprehensive research is needed in the subject matter to produce hard evidence of the links between practical knowledge and teachers' beliefs and practices. The list below provides suggestions on how to cope with the aforementioned limitations and enhance the validity and reliability of future research in the subject matter.

Recommendations	Reason/Details
1. Investigate all the other factors involved in the formation of teachers' beliefs and practices.	To build overall understanding of all the factors involved in the process and allow measuring the influence of each factor.
2. Conduct the study in different institutions.	Recording or videotaping lessons will allow gathering solid numerical data.
3. Perform the observation checklist multiple times with the same group.	To enhance the reliability of data. Teaching approaches and strategies are determined by various conditions.
4. Conduct a questionnaire with students after each observed lesson.	To determine what students think about their teachers' practices.

## References

1. Anderson, W.M., and J.E. Lawrence. (2007) *Integrating music into the elementary classroom*. Thomson Shirmer Publishing Corporation.
2. Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, Qun G. Jiao, and Sharon L. Bostick, (2004) *Library anxiety: Theory, research, and applications*, (Research methods in library and information studies, no. 1). Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press.
3. Ayers, W. (2001) *To teach: The journey of a teacher*. New York: Teachers College Press.
4. Bailey, K. M. (1996) *"The best laid plans. Teachers in-class decisions to depart from their lesson plans*. In K.M. Bailey & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the language classroom* (pp. 15-40). New York: Cambridge University Press.

5. Borg, S. (2003) *Review article: teacher cognition in language teaching: a review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, do*. *Language Teaching* 36: 81 – 109.
6. Bell, J. (1999) *Doing your research project*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
7. Bassey, M. (1981) *Pedagogic research: on the relative merits of search for generalization and study of single events*. *Oxford Review of Education*, 7(1) 73-94.
8. Borg (2006) *Teacher cognition and language education*. Research and practice. London, Continuum.314
9. Chanda (2800) *Teaching and learning of English in secondary schools: a Zambian case study*. Commonwealth Secretariat.
10. Clark, C., & Lampert, M. (1986) *The study of teacher thinking: Implications for teacher education*. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(5), 27-31.
11. Clark, C. M. & Peterson, P. L. (1986) *Teachers' thought processes*. In M. C. Wittrock (ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching*. (pp. 255 - 296). New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan.
12. Cohen, L; Manion, L; Morrison, K. (2000) *Research methods in education*. Routledge Falmer.
13. Crouch, S., and Housden M. (2003) *Marketing research for managers* (3rd edn.). New York: Butterworth-Heinemann.
14. Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, F. M. (1988) *Teachers as curriculum planners: Narratives of experience*. New York: Teachers College Press.
15. Cohen & Manion & Morrison. (2007) *Research methods in education*. Routledge.
16. Denzin, N. K. (1978) *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
17. Dressel, P. L., and D. Marcus (1982). *Teaching and learning in college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
18. Elbaz, F. (1981) *The teacher's "practical knowledge": Report of a case study*. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11(1), 43-71.
19. Ilis, M. and C. Johnson (1994) *Teaching Business English Oxford handbooks for teachers*: Oxford University Press.
20. Ellis, R. (2001) *Form-Focused instruction and second language learning*. Malden, MA: Blackwell
21. Freeman, D. (2001) *Teacher learning and student learning in TESOL*. *TESOL Quarterly* 35 (4): 608 -609.
22. Freeman, D. & Richards, J. C. (1996) *Prologue: A look at uncritical stories*. In Freeman, D. & Richards,

23. C. (eds.) *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 1 - 9). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
24. Freeman, J. (1998) *Educating the very able: current international research*. London: The Stationery Office.
25. Espurz (1988) *Current issues in English language methodology*.
26. Golombek, P. (1998) *A study of language teachers' Personal Practical Knowledge*. TESOL Quarterly. Volume 32 Number 03.
27. Goodson, I. F. (1992) *Studying teachers' lives*. London: Routledge.
28. Gutierrez Almarza, G. (1996) *Student foreign language teacher's knowledge growth*. In Freeman, D. & Richards, J. C. (eds.) *Teacher learning in language teaching* (pp. 50 - 78). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
29. Holec, H. (1981) *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon.
30. Harasim, Hiltz, Teles, Turoff (1990) *Learning Networks: A field guide to teaching and learning*. MIT Press.
31. Hayes, D. (1996) *Prioritizing 'voice' over 'vision': reaffirming the centrality of the teacher in ESOL research*. System 24 (2): 173 – 186.
32. Hofstede, G. (1986) *Cultural differences in teaching and learning*. International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 10, 301- 320.
33. Hammond, R. (1988) *Accuracy versus communicative competency: The acquisition of grammar in the second language classroom*. Hispania, 71, 408-417.
34. Holliday, A. (1994) *Appropriate methodology and social context*. The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, United Kingdom.
35. Holliday (2002) *Doing and writing qualitative research.*, London, Sage.
36. Horowitz, E. (1990) *Attending to the affective domain in the foreign language classroom*. In S. Magnan (Ed.), *Shifting the instructional focus to the learner* (pp. 15- 33). Middlebury, VY: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
37. James, P. (2001) *Teachers in action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
38. Johnson, K. E. (1994) *The emerging beliefs and instructional practices of preservice English as a second language teachers*. Teaching and Teacher Education, 10 (4), 439–52.
39. Kern, R. G. (1995) *Students' and teachers' beliefs about language learning*. Foreign Language Annals.
40. Kirk, D. (2004) *New practices, new subjects and critical inquiry: possibility and progress*, in: J. Wright, D. Macdonald & L. Burrows (Eds) *Critical inquiry and problem-solving in physical Education* (pp. 199-208). London: Routledge.

41. Kirk, D., MacDonald, D., O'Sullivan, M. (2006) *The handbook of physical education*. Sage Publications Ltd.
42. Mishra (2007) *Teaching Styles*. A.P.H. Publishing Corporation.
43. Morse, J. (1991) *On the evaluation of qualitative proposals*. *Qualitative Health Research*, 1(2), 147-151
44. Numrich, C. (1996) *On becoming a language teacher: Insights from diary studies*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30 (1), 131-53.
45. Nunan, D. & Lamb, C. (1996) *The self-Directed teacher: managing the learning process*. Cambridge: CUP.
46. Nunan, D. (1992) *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge: CUP
47. Osborne (2005) *Teaching English one-to-one*. Modern English Publishing Ltd.
48. O'Sullivan, M. and Deglau, D. (2006). *Principles of professional development*.
49. Renate A. (1996) *Focus on form in the foreign language classroom: Students' and teachers views on error correction and the role of grammar*. *Foreign Language Annals*, 9(3): 343-364.
50. Kumar, R. (1996) *Research Methodology*. London, Long man. Available: <http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/march03.sub4.php>.
51. Lasagabaster. (2007) *Multilingualism in European bilingual contexts: language use and attitudes*. Multilingual Matters Ltd.
52. Liz Ellis. (2006) *Second language experience as a contributor to Esol teacher cognition*. *Tesl-EJ* Volume 10, number 1, Available: <http://tesl-ej.org/ej37/a3.html>.
53. Luk, J. C. M. & Lin, A. M. Y. (2007) *Classroom interactions as cross-cultural encounters: native speakers in EFL lessons*. Erlbaum Associates.
54. McCombs, B. L., & Miller, L. (in press, 2006). *Learner-centered classroom practices and assessments*. Corwin Press.
55. McGrath, I. (2000) Teacher autonomy. In B. Sinclair, I. McGrath and T. Lamb (eds.) *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: Future directions*. London: Longman. 100-110
56. Meijer, P.C., Verloop, N., & Beijard, D. (1999) *Exploring language teachers' practical knowledge about teaching reading comprehension*. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 15,59-84.
57. Mishra (2005) *Correction of errors in English teaching. A trainee course for the teachers of English as a second language*. Sarup & Sons.
58. Richards, J., & Farrell, T. (2005) *Professional development for language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
59. Ryan, D. G. (1960) *Characteristics of teachers*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

60. Shavelson, R. J. & Stern, P. (1981) *Research on teachers' pedagogical thoughts, judgments, decisions and behaviour*. *Review of Educational Research* 51 (4): 455 - 49
61. Shulman, L. (1990) *Aristotle had it right: on knowledge and pedagogy (Occasional paper no.4)*. East Lansing, Mich.: The Holmes Group.
62. Smith, R.C., & A. Barfield (2001) *Interconnections: Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy*. *Learning Learning* 7 & 8/1. 5-6.
63. Stanton (2005) *Human factors methods: a practical guide for engineering and design*. Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
64. Tobin, K., D. J. Tippins, and A. Gallard. (1994) *Research on instructional strategies for teaching science*. Pp.45-93 in *Handbook of Research on Science Teaching and Learning*. New York: MacMillan.
65. Trochim, W. (2000) *The research methods knowledge base, 2nd edition*. Atomic Dog Publishing, Cincinnati, OH. Available: <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/ethics.php>
66. Ur, P. (2006) *A course in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
67. Voller, P. (1997) *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. London: Lngman.
68. Weimer, M. G. (2002) *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
69. Woods, D. R. (1995) *Teaching and learning: what can research tell us?*. *Journal of College Science Teaching*.
70. Y, Gold. & Roth, R.A. (1993) *Teachers managing stress and preventing burnout : The professional health solution*. Falmer Press, London; Washington, D.C.
71. Yin, R.K. (2005) *Case study research. Design and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
72. Webb, E. J., Campbell, D. T., Schwartz, R. D., and Sechrest, L. (1966) *Unobtrusive measures: Nonreactive measures in the social sciences*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
73. Zainal, Z. (2007) *Case study as a research method*. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*, 9. pp.1-6. ISSN 1675-1930
74. Zanting, A. (2001) *Mining the mentor's mind: The elicitation of mentor teachers' practical knowledge by prospective teachers*. Leiden: Iclon Graduate School of Education.



## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### 1.1. Semi-structured Interview Questions

- What kind of classroom atmosphere do you favor more; fun and interesting or serious and informative?
- How would you describe yourself as a teacher? i.e. strict, authoritative, easygoing, lenient creative, energetic, predictable..etc
- Do you think teachers should have any control over their students' learning?
- Which do you feel more comfortable doing, following the text book exercises or having a guided conversation?
- Do you think being able to speak two or more languages is helpful by any means for your teaching?(if the teacher is bi-lingual)
- Do you see any advantages or disadvantages to being a monolingual English teacher?(if the teacher is monolingual)
- Does the society you were brought up in place more emphasis on individualistic or group values?
- Do you think the way you were taught back in school has any influence on the way you teach now.

#### *Semi-structured Interview Transcripts*

##### A. Interview with S1

Interviewer: How would you describe yourself as a teacher? S1:mm, ah  
Interviewer: It's a very very open...question

S1: Ah, as a teacher, I.I try to be careful to read clients, ah..assessing their comfort level, their comprehension in class, ahm..as well as things like enjoying them but ahm..ah..during the lesson I'm always conscious about..ahm..ah..having a connection with the client as well as they are using the target language in producing or reaching the lesson goal...the target of the lesson.

Interviewer: What kind of connection are you talking about if you don't mind my asking?

S1: I think yeah, open communication and trust

Interviewer: I see

S1: Ah that...the..client...ahh first of all can understand the instructor that I'm not using too simple or too complex level of language but as well as ahm, for example

having an atmosphere where they are free to express their mind or at least..be open or at least hopefully be open as much as they can.

Interviewer: I see, so...ahm,...so...Would you describe yourself then as a as a more sort of a lenient, easygoing teacher?

S1: Ah, it's a good question, I think it depends ah, on...if I'm if they are really quite and if it is a high level student I might be more strict, if it is somebody who lacks confidence I'll be quite lenient. Ahm, Unless they major ah grammatical mistakes, I'll gently more have a gently correction style to helping them use the correct language,

Interviewer: how would how you would you describe..? sorry ..sorry about that

S1: Basically, it very much depends on the actual level as well the personality of the client as well as their goals.

Interviewer: So uh, well, how would, how would you describe ehh the level of..strictness...that you...ehh ...you know...ehh...apply?

S1: Yeah, yeah, with uhm, with strictness, uhm, at Gaba it's quite easy, relatively easy because everything is quite customized but uhm...I think with fundamental grammar mistakes uhm, I'll I think I'll be quite..strict but in a gentle way about..writing down the mistake or correcting for example, ahm, yes like is and are...ahm, just explain them gently.

Interviewer: I see I see, ao what kind of classroom atmosphere do you favor more like you know in Gaba, we have like fun like..you know sort of more ehh..relaxed class atmosphere whereas like some teachers favor you know more serious and calm...atmosphere so well, there is actually, I can't I can't really put it in two different categories, it's it's a very wide thing but I mean it also depends on the clients as well but what about I mean your your preference as a teacher?

S1: I think uhm, I always aim at like...an atmosphere where there is free discussion, ability to have discussion and using the key phrases but certainly not where I'm or where the..eh..instructor is lecturing, I think..the goal not to just mouth Gaba's uhm...what would be the word "dogma" but just uhm...I'm just there to facilitate, the clients using the key phrases and expressing their ideas, ahm, so the language becomes very personal for them, ahm they are using the key phrases, they can relate to the target language, they can relate to the instructor, ahm, instructors basically just a guide on their path.

Interviewer: What is the significance of that like being a facilitator as an instructor and allowing the client ehh...to give their ideas and to take ehh...the control of their own learning?

S1: I think it's very empowering because it takes the power base away from the instructor, it's not like a big ego trip, like look at me I'm a native speaker and you know

you're just a student. I mean it's it's I try to create more of a...I guess a mutual respect as well as...I think through using the language the client is gonna remember rather than listening to things and writing it down or just trying to memorize something, I mean it's a very interactive process,...so open-ended questions to the client, a lot of talking time, ah I'm just there to guide maybe stir the conversation to something creative rather than getting conversation bogged down when they...for example, uhm..don't have the vocabulary to express themselves.

Interviewer: I see, uhm, Do you see..well uhh....do you see any connection uhh...between your teaching style, I mean this style, uhh...it's very very very sort of a flexible uh teaching style uh with your educational background,....with your,with your, with the education you received uh back in University or or you know back in

S1: through past...Interviewer: high school?...S1: I think for myself, I was lucky to have some very inspiring teachers. So uhm, I think you know, the teachers I had were great motivators, uhm, in terms of quite an inspiration and passion, rather than, I've just got to learn these bunch of notes and such a waste of time so I don't wanna be here, I think a lot of the teachers I had would really motivate and inspire me and uhm, learning is, it's not necessarily uhm, to...to reach a goal at the end but it is a process, enjoying the process of learning and expanding your mind, uhm, and I think speaking a foreign language is very empowering specially, but any kind of learning can be very exciting. That's why I think perhaps education in Japan has been lacking that respect. For example, history is learning dates or geography is learning capital city names. There is no fun or passion in that, it's basically waste of time and organizations.

Interviewer: I see that's a very very interesting point that you've made, do you think ehm...do you think ehm....being able to speak two or more languages is helpful by any means for your teaching?

S1: Personally, aahm,

Interviewer: but you you you can speak.S2: I found. S1: you can speak

S1: That's right, That's right,

Interviewer: English and S2: some Japanese and Interviewer: some Japanese, S2: some French, Interviewer: French

S1: I had studied Korean for two months

Interviewer: Do you find it useful?

S1: Personally, I certainly do, because, I find it creates a sense of ahm...a rapport, what a client is going to do and makes an instructor humble I think too. Because learning a foreign language is very humble, you have to become the empty vessel, and uhm. It can be a very humbling process. You know to realize how little we know in learning a totally new system of learning and ahh not to be afraid to make mistakes,

uhm, I think that's that's very important...Interviewer: yeah S1: personally I'd I'd certainly think so.

Interviewer: Does the society you were brought up in ehh...place more emphasis on individualistic or group values?

S1: mm...mmm...mmm...because ah...I'd say individualistic, because uhm....ahh..I guess in my own family ,ah..everyone is and sort of encouraged to be independent, ahm..for example, you know, leave home at 21 years old , the latest, make their own land life, have their own opinions,ahm..you're kind of looked down on as being at your own if you sort of follow the group opinions,so uhm...but I guess yeah, my society is general,I mean, there is always, I think every culture has taboos or issues that you know I just like to be brought up, but uhm yeah, my own I guess learning background was pretty pretty free, I was I guess fortunate to be able to choose what direction I want to go and to move abroad, I had no one telling me I couldn't do things.

Interviewer: So Does that, Do you..do you feel any..any..any..kinds of influence ehh...of this on your teaching, on your approaches, eehh....to your clients?

S1: I I think so, I think so, that's a good point, because uhm...when it comes to giving opinions..I'm always think about clients having..having their own opinions, what do you think? What's your opinion? Never be afraid to..to give your opinion. I think that's one of the joys of learning a foreign language. We can transcend the limitations of our own society at times...but tries to you know the nail that stands up is beaten down kind of you can have your opinions and they are...valuable.

## B. Interview with S2

(I asked S2 if being able to speak two or more languages is helpful by any means for her teaching)

S2: I think that..uhm...you know, some people just need Japanese, you know. they If they don't speak any English they are gonna need some help..so...absolutely. I think it's just good to just be able to throw out a word or..you know, a sentence if I need to in Japanese.

(I asked her if she sees any influence of the society she was brought up in in her teaching)

S2: I went to..University of Michigan, in..Michigan of course and..uhm. It's a really super liberal town..and I think in a liberal town...people have this like uhm...outward..ahh...like persona that is really uhm.. inviting to other people, you know and of other cultures, of other backgrounds, of other, you know, walks of life so yeah, I think they're really rubbed off on me, where..you know, I'm able to meet

different types of people and teach different types of people without any...kind of hesitation or problems.

(I asked whether she felt more comfortable following the text book or having a free conversation with students)

S2: if I had my choice, if even the lower level clients could have a normal conversation with me, I would have a conversation rather than....a strict guide lined book, you know. Because I think that it's more useful to have a...uhm...normal like a conversation about daily life, about uhm...things that are happening in your...you know..in your life, or whatever. Because it's more practical for the client and for the client you know.

(I asked her if the way she was taught back in school had any influence in her teaching)

S2: So, my favorite teacher..not even in university but in high school,okay. He was..It was..a math..math teacher, but uhh...He was just really engaged in students' lives, you know..and he didn't care, you know, in in University you are kind of expected to give up your..your..personal life for..your students, you know, you give them your cell-phone number, you give them your e-mail whenever you're available..there, you know whatever they need you. But in high school you're not obligated to do that you know their parents are supposed to be there to guide you..But this guy was really engaged in people's lives and really cared about people. So it really made the learning process easier too..So I guess that has affected me in some what you know in somewhat of a...positive way when I teach my clients. because I feel like If you don't get to know somebody, you're not gonna be...you're gonna be..that much of a..more of an effective teacher than if you get to know somebody.

### C. Interview with S3

(I asked S3 about his approaches on mistake correction)

S3: Now I'm trying to be more judgmental, right, before I was trying to correct everything. But now I'm...now I'm letting something slide...May be..may be only..concentrate on a few key points and knock them bar them...like new things, I'm pretty..I'm pretty strict on the articles, cause I feel like the only way you get better with articles is if you are constantly corrected, right...right. Because if you develop bad habits...right. You're starting with no habits...but you don't want them to develop bad habits, so I don't think articles are something you let slide to later, right. Because, that's in the..that needs constant reinforcement before they get it.

(I asked him if he sees any disadvantages to being a monolingual teacher)

S3: Even if it's..even if you don't have the experience of learning the language you're trying to teach at least you have the experience of trying to learn a language, right? and some of the problems that come with it, right. So...you know...maybe you struggle in different ways, right? May be..may be the..may be the problems you experience as a...student of English are different than the problems you experience as a student of German or true different than..as the student of Farsi and Japanese but may be those...may be those problems while different are born of similar difficulties the brain has when...uh..attempting to learn new material, maybe languages are different but the way the brain functions...isn't necessarily different and so...you know as being a student of a language at all...you're at least aware that there are difficulties, right. You're...just makes you more understanding and more sympathetic.

(I asked him how he would describe himself as a teacher?) (22:45)

S3: I'm I'm grammar minded right, like..when I learn Japanese I'd like to see the grammar...uhm..that means as a teacher I tend to be kind of grammar minded too, very rule-based and structural.(Do you think that you should have the control of your class at some point?)(32:15)

S3: In my language lessons..I'm letting the teacher run the show, like I don't..I don't make requests, I just I come in and I just kind of let him...do what he wants to do with my lesson and I'm fine with that, right, right? Uhm.....so..perhaps just from my own student experience...I'm..more one to say let the teacher do what he wants to do.

(I asked him if there was any connection between his teaching style and past educational background)(34:00)

S3: I mean the vast majority of my education...right..uhm...like my writing..my high-school writing education, which I think was great...was...was very much like you said..how does a baby learn to walk, you you know , he..basically assigned papers and he gave very harsh grades, right...and..he had them curbed so that..when you got D's..they didn't hurt but like...Everybody turned in their papers and everybody got D's. Because they were all our first papers as fresher from high school and they all sucked, right...It..it was a real real kind of harsh way to learn, he was..he was like write...and then, once you're writing we'll work on it from there, and then...and then he also did.. what I think they were an ingenious vocabulary building...ah..exercises..Uhm....that..ah..that..that Gaba deemphasizes..but I think I think for anybody that wants to learn English they kind of...should..do some of these vocab building exercises like...yeah..that's one of my problems is just as a teacher. I'm too much I'm like for Gaba it's just real quick simple explanations..but I'm..I really wanna dive down into the depths of the language, right? It's like..it's like that's not just what this word means, it means is for a reason we use this word here and If you learn why

we would use this word, you can learn the reasons why we use 50 other words too, right? Probably, I'm I'm always tempted to dive into the deep...kind of..the base of the English language and talk about the root words and stuff like that, which...they are not as interested in.

#### D. Interview with S4

(I also asked her whether she could speak any other languages or not and she said she could speak French so I asked her whether being a bilingual English teacher helps her with her teaching) (3:30)

S4: I can only...give them like..tips from how I learned or what helped me so that kind of helps I understand how hard it is to learn a language and..different things you need to do to practice...to become more fluent.

(I asked her how she would describe herself as a teacher) (5:00)

S4: I think that I'm...naturally more strict like I want to correct more.

(I asked her what lies under this tendency)

S4: Well, yeah...I'm kind of a perfectionist so...I kind of...yeah, it's just natural for me to try and..correct things and put them..in the right order, so.

(I asked her whether her educational background had any influence in her teaching) (11:20)

S4: I tried to teach the way I..I like being taught..by the way I liked learning or whatever so...which is why it's kind of difficult at Gaba because you can't always teach people the way..the way you want to or the way you..Interviewer: What is the way you want to? S4: well, I mean...personally, if I was..when I'm learning a language I would want like to be corrected on absolutely everything.

(I asked her if she was corrected on everything at school)

S4: Yeah, I mean I went to French immersion..even though...I was like in..in Saskatchewan which is all English or whatever. I took a French immersion when I was a kid and we we did a lot of like...ehh..we were supposed to speak French in class and stuff, we were always like corrected and...and taught like..I mean we focused more on grammar which we don't do but sometimes I do think that it's...more necessary cause sometimes like clients have no idea what a verb is...you know...sometimes I think that...that should be...they should have the basics you know...cause I think that if I didn't know anything in French if didn't know what a verb was what a...noun was or whatever I would be really lost.

(I asked her which she feels more comfortable doing, following a text book exercises or having a guided conversation)

S4: I think I actually prefer uhm...I prefer the text. Because you can..at least you have like the structure of like what you're supposed to be learning. You can always..expand and teach other things but it gives you that..base and that idea...Sometimes...ah..conversation could be very...random and you don't know how to fit things and it' hard to...structure it, I guess.

## Appendix 2

### 2.1 Observation Checklist

1. How much time did the teacher spend on the warm-up?
2. How much time did the teacher spend on the text book exercises?
3. How much of the lesson time was dedicated for free conversation?
4. How much was the teacher talk time?
5. How much was the student talk time?
6. How many times did the teacher correct the student?
7. How many of them were delayed corrections?
8. How many of them were direct corrections?
9. Did the teacher teach any grammar in the lesson?
10. How much time did the teacher spend on the feedback?
11. Did the teacher go over any error corrections during the feedback?
12. If so, how many corrections were reviewed during the feedback?
13. Did the teacher give any advice to the student during the feedback?

### Observation of Speaker 1

- How much time did the teacher spend on the warm-up?/ 7 minutes 36 seconds
- How much time did the teacher spend on the text book exercises?/15 minutes 24 seconds
- How much of the lesson time was dedicated for free conversation?/13 minutes 28 seconds
- How much was the teacher talk time? 25%
- How much was the student talk time? 75%
- How many times did the teacher correct the student?/ 7 times
- How many of them were delayed corrections?/ 6 times
- How many of them were direct corrections?/ 1 time
- Did the teacher teach any grammar in the lesson?/ Yes, the teacher taught three grammar points in the lesson



- How much time did the teacher spend on the feedback?/ 7 minutes 34 seconds. The lesson extended into his break time.
- Did the teacher go over any error corrections during the feedback?/ Yes, he did
- If so, how many corrections were reviewed during the feedback?/ The teacher reviewed all seven corrections.
- Did the teacher give any advice to the student during the feedback?/ Yes, he did

### **Observation of Speaker 2**

- How much time did the teacher spend on the warm-up?/ none
- How much time did the teacher spend on the text book exercises?/ 10 minutes 32 seconds
- How much of the lesson time was dedicated for free conversation?/ 25 minutes 12 seconds
- How much was the teacher talk time?/ 40%
- How much was the student talk time?/ 60%
- How many times did the teacher correct the student?/ 8 times
- How many of them were delayed corrections?/ 6 delayed corrections
- How many of them were direct corrections?/ 2 direct corrections
- Did the teacher teach any grammar in the lesson?/ None
- How much time did the teacher spend on the feedback?/ 4 minutes 56 seconds for the feedback
- Did the teacher go over any error corrections during the feedback?/ Yes, she did
- If so, how many corrections were reviewed during the feedback?/ The teacher reviewed the two direct corrections she delivered.
- Did the teacher give any advice to the student during the feedback?/ Yes, she did.

### **Observation of Speaker 3**

1. How much time did the teacher spend on the warm-up?/ 3 minutes and 46 seconds
2. How much time did the teacher spend on the text book exercises?/ 29 minutes 21 seconds
3. How much of the lesson time was dedicated for free conversation?/ 3 minutes 36 seconds
4. How much was the teacher talk time?/ 65%
5. How much was the student talk time?/ 35%
6. How many times did the teacher correct the student?/ 23 times

7. How many of them were delayed corrections?/ 4 delayed corrections
8. How many of them were direct corrections?/ 19 direct corrections
9. Did the teacher teach any grammar in the lesson?/ Yes- The teacher gave the student a detailed explanation of some vocabulary, phrases and language points.
10. How much time did the teacher spend on the feedback?/ 4 minutes 48 seconds
11. Did the teacher go over any error corrections during the feedback?/ Yes, he did
12. If so, how many corrections were reviewed during the feedback?/ The teacher reviewed 12 of the direct corrections.
13. Did the teacher give any advice to the student during the feedback?/ No, he didn't.

#### **Observation of Speaker 4**

- How much time did the teacher spend on the warm-up?/ 4 minutes 50 seconds  
How much time did the teacher spend working on the text book exercises?/ 26 minutes 14 seconds
- How much of the lesson time was dedicated for free conversation?/ 4 minutes 43 seconds
- How much was the teacher talk time?/ 30%
- How much was the student talk time?/ 70%
- How many times did the teacher correct the student?/ 19 times
- How many of them were delayed corrections?/ 10 delayed corrections
- How many of them were direct corrections?/ 9 direct corrections
- Did the teacher teach any grammar in the lesson?/ Yes- she taught three grammar points from the text.
- How much time did the teacher spend on the feedback?/ 4 minutes 53 seconds
- Did the teacher go over any error corrections during the feedback?/ Yes, she did
- If so, how many corrections were reviewed during the feedback?/ The teacher reviewed 9 direct corrections and 3 delayed corrections.
- Did the teacher give any advice to the student during the feedback?/ Yes, she did

Soyhan Egitim  
THE REFLECTION OF TEACHERS' PRIOR LANGUAGE LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN  
ESL TEACHING APPROACHES

---

Creative Commons licensing terms

Author(s) will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Education Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflicts of interest, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated into the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).