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**Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching the Present Perfect Tense
through the Grammar Translation Method and
Communicative Language Teaching: A Comparative Study
Case Study: Ouargla's EFL Teachers, Middle school, High
school, and University**

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Dedication

To my beloved parents, whose unwavering love, endless patience, and constant encouragement made every step of this journey possible. Your sacrifices and belief in the value of education have been my greatest source of strength.

To my dear family and friends, who stood by me through every challenge and celebrated every small victory. Your support has been a lantern on this long road.

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates EFL teachers' perceptions of two prominent pedagogical approaches used in the teaching of the Present Perfect tense in Algerian educational institutions: the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The study was conducted at middle schools, secondary schools, and Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla, drawing on semi-structured interviews with six purposively selected teachers. Guided by a qualitative descriptive research design, the study sought to explore participants' experiences with both methodological traditions, the pedagogical challenges they encounter when teaching this grammatically complex tense to Arabic-speaking learners, and their professional preferences regarding the most effective instructional approach. Data were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Findings reveal that teachers hold nuanced views of both GTM and CLT: while GTM is valued for its clarity in explaining structural and morphological aspects of the Present Perfect, CLT is appreciated for its emphasis on meaningful communication and learner engagement. Nevertheless, all participants expressed significant reservations about applying CLT in its pure form within the Algerian educational context, citing overcrowded classrooms, exam-oriented curricula, and learners' limited communicative exposure. A dominant theme emerging from the data is teachers' preference for a blended pedagogical approach that strategically integrates explicit grammar instruction with communicative practice. The study concludes with pedagogical implications and recommendations for teachers, curriculum designers, and researchers, arguing that context-sensitive methodological pluralism is essential for effective grammar instruction in EFL settings.

Keywords: Grammar Translation Method, Communicative Language Teaching, Present Perfect tense, EFL teachers' perceptions, qualitative research, semi-structured interviews, Algerian EFL context.

Résumé

Cette étude qualitative examine les perceptions des enseignants d'anglais langue étrangère (EFL) concernant deux approches pédagogiques importantes utilisées dans l'enseignement du temps Present Perfect au sein des établissements éducatifs algériens : la méthode de traduction grammaticale (GTM) et l'enseignement communicatif de la langue (CLT). L'étude a été menée dans des collèges, des lycées et à l'Université Kasdi Merbah d'Ouargla, en s'appuyant sur des entretiens semi-directifs réalisés avec six enseignants sélectionnés de manière raisonnée. Guidée par un dispositif de recherche qualitatif et descriptif, l'étude visait à explorer les expériences des participants avec les deux traditions méthodologiques, les difficultés pédagogiques qu'ils rencontrent en enseignant ce temps grammaticalement complexe à des apprenants arabophones, ainsi que leurs préférences professionnelles quant à l'approche pédagogique la plus efficace. Les données ont été analysées à l'aide de l'analyse thématique selon le cadre en six phases de Braun et Clarke (2006). Les résultats révèlent que les enseignants ont des perceptions nuancées des deux méthodes : si la GTM est valorisée pour la clarté avec laquelle elle explique les aspects structuraux et morphologiques du Present Perfect, la CLT est appréciée pour l'importance qu'elle accorde à la communication authentique et à l'engagement de l'apprenant. Néanmoins, tous les participants ont exprimé des réserves importantes quant à l'application de la CLT sous sa forme pure dans le contexte éducatif algérien, évoquant la surcharge des classes, des programmes axés sur les examens, ainsi que l'exposition communicative limitée des apprenants. Un thème dominant se dégageant des données est la préférence des enseignants pour une approche pédagogique mixte, intégrant de manière stratégique l'enseignement explicite de la grammaire à la pratique communicative. L'étude se conclut par des implications pédagogiques et des recommandations destinées aux enseignants, aux concepteurs de programmes et aux chercheurs, soutenant qu'un pluralisme méthodologique sensible au contexte est essentiel pour un enseignement grammatical efficace dans les contextes d'enseignement de l'anglais langue étrangère.

Mots-clés : méthode de traduction grammaticale, enseignement communicatif, Present Perfect, perceptions des enseignants, recherche qualitative, entretiens semi-directifs, contexte EFL algérien.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة النوعية تصورات معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول اثنين من المقاربات البيداغوجية البارزة المستخدمة في تدريس زمن المضارع التام (Present Perfect) في المؤسسات التعليمية الجزائرية: طريقة الترجمة والقواعد (GTM) والتعليم التواصل للغة (CLT). أُجريت الدراسة في المتوسطات والثانويات وجامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة، بالاعتماد على مقابلات شبه موجهة مع ستة معلمين تم اختيارهم بأسلوب قصدي. وباتباع تصميم بحثي نوعي وصفي، سعت الدراسة إلى استكشاف تجارب المشاركين مع كلا المنهجين البيداغوجيين، والتحديات التدريسية التي يواجهونها عند تدريس هذا الزمن المعقد نحوًا لمتعلمين ناطقين بالعربية، إضافة إلى تفضيلاتهم المهنية بخصوص أنجع طريقة تدريسية. خلّلت البيانات باستخدام التحليل الموضوعي وفق إطار براون وكلاارك (Braun & Clarke, 2006) ذي المراحل الست. وكشفت النتائج أن المعلمين يحملون آراء دقيقة ومتباينة حول كلا المنهجين: فبينما تُقدّر طريقة الترجمة والقواعد لوضوحها في شرح الجوانب البنيوية والصرفية للمضارع التام، يُقدّر التعليم التواصل لتركيزه على التواصل الهادف وإشراك المتعلم. ومع ذلك، أبدى جميع المشاركين تحفظات جوهرية بخصوص تطبيق التعليم التواصل بشكله الخالص في السياق التعليمي الجزائري، مشيرين إلى اكتظاظ الأقسام، والمناهج الموجهة نحو الامتحانات، ومحدودية التعرض التواصل لدى المتعلمين. وبرز من خلال البيانات موضوع مهمين يتمثل في تفضيل المعلمين لمقاربة بيداغوجية مدمجة تُدمج بشكل استراتيجي بين التعليم الصريح للقواعد والممارسة التواصلية. وتختتم الدراسة بتقديم انعكاسات بيداغوجية وتوصيات موجهة للمعلمين ومصممي المناهج والباحثين، مؤكدة أن التعددية المنهجية الحساسة للسياق ضرورية لتدريس فعال للقواعد في سياقات تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

الكلمات الدلالية: طريقة الترجمة والقواعد، التعليم التواصل، زمن Present Perfect، تصورات المعلمين،

البحث النوعي، المقابلات شبه الموجهة، السياق الجزائري لتعليم اللغة الإنجليزية.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Form
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
L1	First Language / Mother Tongue
L2	Second Language
PPT	Present Perfect Tense
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
CA	Communicative Approach
FonF	Focus on Form
TBL	Task-Based Language Teaching
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

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Chapter One:

General Introduction

.1.1 Background of the Study

The teaching of English grammar in foreign language contexts has long occupied a central position in language pedagogy. Among the various grammatical structures that learners of English encounter, the Present Perfect tense stands out as one of the most conceptually challenging - particularly for Arabic-speaking learners who have no structurally equivalent form in their native language. While considerable research has explored general approaches to grammar teaching in EFL contexts (Ellis, 2006; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011), comparatively fewer studies have examined how teachers in specific local contexts perceive the relative effectiveness of contrasting methodological traditions in addressing the unique difficulties this tense presents.

English Language Teaching (ELT) in Algeria has historically been influenced by a range of methodological orientations. The Grammar Translation Method (GTM), rooted in classical language pedagogy, has been widely employed at various educational levels, particularly in secondary and university settings. Its emphasis on explicit grammatical explanation and translation has rendered it familiar to both teachers and learners within Algeria's largely exam-focused educational culture (Benali-Mohamed, 2010). In contrast, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which emerged as a dominant paradigm in English-speaking countries during the 1970s and 1980s (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), has been gradually introduced into Algerian educational curricula - though its implementation has met with considerable resistance and practical limitations.

The present study responds to this methodological debate by foregrounding the voices of practising EFL teachers in Ouargla - teachers whose daily classroom experience positions them as uniquely informed observers of what works, what fails, and why. By capturing their perceptions through qualitative, in-depth semi-structured interviews, this dissertation seeks to generate locally grounded knowledge that can contribute meaningfully to ongoing discussions about grammar pedagogy in the Algerian EFL context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the widely recognised importance of the Present Perfect tense in communicative English, Algerian EFL learners continue to demonstrate persistent difficulties in both its receptive and productive use (Benmostafa, 2015; Harouni, 2019). The tense's multiple pragmatic functions - expressing recent past events, indefinite past experiences, actions with present relevance, and ongoing situations - make it particularly opaque for learners whose mother tongue lacks a grammatical parallel (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2016).

Critically, this problem is not merely a learner-side issue; it is also a pedagogical one. Teachers must decide not only what to teach, but how to teach it. The methodological choice - whether to foreground explicit grammatical explanation, as GTM prescribes, or to embed grammar within meaningful communicative tasks, as CLT advocates - profoundly shapes the quality and depth of learner acquisition. Yet, despite the centrality of this choice, the perspectives of Algerian EFL teachers on this matter have received insufficient scholarly attention.

The present study therefore addresses the following problem: there is a gap in the research literature concerning Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of the comparative effectiveness of GTM and CLT in teaching the Present Perfect tense across educational levels. Without a clear understanding of how teachers conceptualise, evaluate, and enact these approaches, curriculum designers, teacher educators, and policymakers are ill-equipped to make informed decisions about the direction of grammar instruction in Algerian schools and universities.

1.3 Research Gap

The international literature on grammar teaching methodology is extensive (Dörnyei, 2009; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Thornbury, 2010), yet most empirical studies have been conducted in Western EFL/ESL contexts and may not adequately reflect the realities of grammar teaching in North African educational systems. Within the Algerian context specifically, existing studies have tended to focus on learner-side difficulties (e.g., Zerrouki, 2018; Melouk, 2020) or have employed quantitative methodologies that preclude rich, contextualised insight into the reasoning, values, and pedagogical decision-making of individual teachers.

To the researcher's knowledge, no qualitative study to date has specifically examined Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of GTM versus CLT in the teaching of the Present Perfect tense using semi-structured interviews. This study fills that gap by combining a theoretically grounded methodological comparison with a locally embedded qualitative inquiry.

1.4 Research Questions

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are EFL teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in teaching the Present Perfect tense?
2. What are EFL teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in teaching the Present Perfect tense?
3. Which methodological approach do teachers perceive as more effective for teaching the Present Perfect tense, and what reasons do they offer?
4. What pedagogical challenges do teachers encounter when teaching the Present Perfect tense in the Algerian EFL classroom?
5. Do teachers support a blended pedagogical approach that integrates elements of both GTM and CLT in teaching the Present Perfect tense?

1.5 Research Objectives

In alignment with the above research questions, the present study aims to:

1. Explore and document Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of GTM as a tool for teaching the Present Perfect tense.
2. Explore and document Algerian EFL teachers' perceptions of CLT as a tool for teaching the Present Perfect tense.
3. Identify the challenges teachers face when teaching this grammatical structure to Arabic-speaking EFL learners.
4. Determine whether teachers advocate for a combined methodological approach and understand the pedagogical reasoning behind such a preference.
5. Derive evidence-based recommendations for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and teacher educators in the Algerian context.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study operates at multiple levels. Theoretically, it contributes to the growing body of qualitative research on teacher cognition in EFL contexts (Borg, 2006; 2015), offering nuanced insights into how practising teachers conceptualise grammar pedagogy in under-researched, resource-constrained environments. Methodologically, the decision to use semi-structured interviews - rather than questionnaires - enables a depth of inquiry that is particularly suited to capturing the complexity of teacher beliefs and contextual reasoning.

Practically, the findings of this study have direct implications for teacher education programmes at Kasdi Merbah University, as well as for national curriculum reform efforts. A clearer understanding of what experienced teachers perceive as effective can help bridge the persistent gap between official pedagogical mandates and classroom realities. Furthermore, the study's focus on the Present Perfect tense - a structure that poses specific, well-documented difficulties for Arabic speakers - renders its findings immediately relevant to the daily challenges of EFL instruction across Algeria.

1.7 Scope and Delimitations

The present study is delimited to the perceptions of EFL teachers working in Ouargla, Algeria, at three educational levels: middle school, secondary school, and university. The study does not seek to measure learner acquisition outcomes, evaluate specific teaching materials, or assess the implementation fidelity of any pedagogical approach. It is exclusively concerned with teachers' subjective perceptions and professional judgements as expressed during in-depth interviews.

The sample is limited to six purposively selected teachers, which, by design, precludes statistical generalisation. Instead, the study aspires to analytic or theoretical generalisation (Yin, 2018) - the capacity to transfer insights to comparable EFL contexts with similar structural features. The scope of the grammatical focus is also deliberately narrow: while GTM and CLT are compared more broadly in the literature review, the empirical investigation centres specifically on the teaching of the Present Perfect tense.

1.8 Operational Definitions

Grammar Translation Method (GTM): A traditional language teaching approach characterised by explicit instruction in grammatical rules, translation exercises between L1 and L2, reading of literary texts, and a primary focus on written accuracy over spoken fluency.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT): A pedagogical approach that prioritises the development of communicative competence through meaningful interaction, task-based activities, authentic language use, and learner-centred instruction.

Present Perfect Tense (PPT): An English verb form composed of the auxiliary 'have/has' + past participle, used to express actions or states that have a connection to the present moment, including recent events, life experiences, and situations that began in the past and continue into the present.

EFL Teachers' Perceptions: The beliefs, attitudes, and professional judgements that teachers hold regarding the relative effectiveness, feasibility, and appropriateness of pedagogical approaches in the context of their own classrooms.

Semi-Structured Interview: A qualitative data collection instrument that combines predetermined open-ended questions with the flexibility to explore emerging themes and follow-up on participants' responses in an interactive dialogue.

Thematic Analysis: A qualitative analytical method involving the systematic identification, organisation, and interpretation of patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organised into five chapters. Chapter One has introduced the study's rationale, problem, research questions, objectives, and significance. Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review of the theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to grammar teaching methodology, the GTM, CLT, and the linguistic features of the Present Perfect tense in EFL contexts. Chapter Three outlines the qualitative research design, including participant selection, the development of the interview guide, data collection procedures, thematic analysis

approach, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents and interprets the findings of the thematic analysis, organised around six major themes that emerged from the interview data. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature, answers each research question in turn, and offers recommendations for teachers, curriculum designers, and future researchers.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has established the intellectual and contextual foundations of the study. By articulating the background, problem, gap, research questions, and scope, it has laid the groundwork for a theoretically informed and empirically grounded investigation of a topic that is at once timely, locally significant, and globally relevant. The following chapter turns to the existing body of scholarship that has shaped the theoretical landscape within which this study is situated.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The theoretical and empirical landscape surrounding grammar instruction in EFL contexts is rich, contested, and continuously evolving. This chapter surveys the key intellectual threads that inform the present study. It begins with a discussion of grammar teaching in foreign language education before examining the historical development, principles, and pedagogical implications of the Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching. A comparative analysis of these two approaches follows, addressing central debates in language pedagogy such as accuracy versus fluency and explicit versus implicit instruction. The chapter then turns to the linguistic and pedagogical dimensions of the Present Perfect tense, before concluding with an overview of the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study.

2.2 Grammar Teaching in EFL Contexts

The role of grammar in language teaching has been a source of sustained controversy for over a century. Early language pedagogy was dominated by formal grammatical analysis, with the study of Latin and Greek providing the dominant model. The twentieth century, however, witnessed multiple 'anti-grammar' movements, most notably the Direct Method and the Audiolingual Approach, which sought to replicate the conditions of first language acquisition by minimising overt grammatical instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The communicative turn of the 1970s renewed scepticism about explicit grammar teaching, and for a period, the field appeared to operate under the assumption - largely derived from Krashen's (1982) acquisition-learning distinction - that conscious grammatical knowledge plays at best a peripheral role in language development.

By the 1990s, however, a theoretical and empirical backlash had begun. Long's (1991) influential concept of 'focus on form' rehabilitated the notion that drawing learners' attention to formal features of language, when embedded within meaningful communicative interaction, can significantly accelerate acquisition. Ellis (2006) provided a comprehensive synthesis of the research, concluding that grammar instruction does facilitate L2 acquisition, particularly when it is responsive to learner needs and is integrated with opportunities for meaningful language use. This synthesis position - that neither pure form-focused nor purely meaning-focused instruction is optimally effective - has since become something of an orthodoxy in

applied linguistics, though practical implementation remains contested and context-dependent.

In the specific context of North African EFL education, grammar instruction continues to reflect a complex interplay between inherited colonial pedagogical traditions, national educational policies, and the realities of under-resourced classrooms (Benmostafa, 2015). Algeria's educational system, shaped in part by a post-independence emphasis on Arabisation and subsequently by the gradual introduction of English as a foreign language from middle school onward, has produced a teaching culture in which explicit grammatical instruction and translation-based approaches remain prevalent at many levels.

2.3 The Grammar Translation Method

2.3.1 Historical Background

The Grammar Translation Method has its roots in the classical tradition of teaching Latin and Greek in European schools during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its primary pedagogical goal was not oral communication - which was largely irrelevant given the classical languages' status as 'dead' languages - but rather the ability to read and analyse literary texts, as well as the cultivation of intellectual discipline through the study of complex grammatical rules (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). When modern European languages began to be taught in schools during the nineteenth century, educators borrowed the same methodology, adapting it to French, German, and English instruction. The method's defining characteristics - explicit rule learning, translation exercises, reading of literary passages, and a bilingual (L1/L2) instructional environment - remained largely unchanged.

Despite widespread criticism from applied linguists beginning in the mid-twentieth century, GTM has proven remarkably resilient, particularly in educational systems where large class sizes, high-stakes examinations, and limited teacher training make communicative approaches difficult to implement (Celce-Murcia, 2014). In many developing nations, including Algeria, GTM continues to serve as the dominant instructional framework at secondary and tertiary levels, sometimes without teachers being consciously aware of its methodological origins.

2.3.2 Core Principles of GTM

The Grammar Translation Method is guided by a set of distinctive principles that set it apart from communicative approaches. These include: (1) the primacy of reading and writing over listening and speaking; (2) the explicit and deductive teaching of grammatical rules; (3) the use of the learner's L1 as the primary medium of instruction and explanation; (4) the memorisation of vocabulary lists and paradigm tables; (5) translation exercises as the central learning activity; and (6) assessment through tests of grammatical accuracy and translation (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Within this framework, the teacher occupies an authoritative, central role as the repository and transmitter of knowledge, while the learner's task is principally one of reception and reproduction.

2.3.3 Teacher and Learner Roles in GTM

In GTM classrooms, the teacher functions as the undisputed linguistic authority. The teacher selects texts, explains rules, provides translations, and evaluates learner performance. Error correction is immediate and systematic, as accuracy is considered the primary marker of language learning success. Learners, meanwhile, occupy a predominantly passive role: they listen, copy, memorise, and reproduce. Learner-to-learner interaction is minimal, and speaking in the target language is largely incidental to the instructional process (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

2.3.4 Advantages of GTM

Despite its unfashionable status in much of the applied linguistics literature, GTM retains several practical advantages that account for its enduring presence in many educational systems. First, it provides learners with an explicit metalinguistic framework that supports conscious understanding of grammatical structures - a resource that many learners, particularly older and more cognitively advanced students, find reassuring and analytically productive (Sheen, 2003). Second, because instruction is mediated through L1, GTM reduces the cognitive load associated with processing entirely in the target language, making it accessible to beginners and low-proficiency learners. Third, GTM aligns well with the demands of grammar-focused examinations, which remain the dominant form of assessment in many educational systems, including Algeria's. Fourth, large classes of forty to fifty students - common

in Algerian secondary schools - can be managed more easily within a teacher-fronted, GTM-oriented framework than within the pair-work and group-work activities typical of communicative approaches (Benali-Mohamed, 2010).

2.3.5 Disadvantages of GTM

The criticisms levelled at GTM are equally significant. Its most fundamental limitation, from the perspective of communicative competence theory (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980), is its failure to develop learners' capacity for real-world language use. A learner who can analyse the structure of the Present Perfect and translate sentences involving it may nevertheless be unable to deploy the tense fluently and appropriately in spoken interaction (Thornbury, 2010). GTM's neglect of pronunciation, listening, and speaking skills renders it inadequate preparation for genuine communicative performance.

Furthermore, the heavy reliance on translation can foster L1 interference, encouraging learners to construct L2 sentences by mentally translating L1 structures rather than developing genuine L2 competence (Krashen, 1982). Translation from Arabic to English in the domain of the Present Perfect is particularly problematic, as Arabic lacks a structurally equivalent tense, so translation exercises may simply generate confusion rather than insight. Finally, the passive, teacher-centred nature of GTM classrooms can stifle learner motivation and agency, particularly among younger learners who benefit from interactive, experiential approaches to language learning (Dörnyei, 2009).

2.3.6 GTM and the Present Perfect Tense

When used to teach the Present Perfect, GTM typically follows a presentation-practice-production sequence in which the teacher first explains the structural formula (have/has + past participle), presents a set of grammatical rules governing its uses, and then assigns translation or gap-fill exercises. The method's strength in this context lies in its ability to systematically introduce the distinctions between the Present Perfect and the Simple Past - a distinction that is particularly problematic for Arabic-speaking learners and for which explicit explanation has been shown to be more effective than purely incidental learning (Ellis, 2006). Its weakness,

however, is the relative absence of meaningful contextualised practice that enables learners to internalise the tense's pragmatic dimensions.

2.4 Communicative Language Teaching

2.4.1 Historical Background

Communicative Language Teaching emerged as a direct response to the perceived failures of the Audiolingual Method and, more broadly, to structuralist approaches to language teaching that treated language as a system of formal rules to be drilled and memorised. Its intellectual foundations were laid in the 1960s and 1970s through the work of British and American applied linguists, including Wilkins (1976), who introduced the notion of 'notional-functional syllabuses,' and Hymes (1972), whose concept of 'communicative competence' fundamentally redefined what it means to 'know' a language.

Rather than defining language proficiency as mastery of grammatical rules, Hymes argued that true communicative competence involves knowing not only whether an utterance is grammatically possible, but whether it is contextually appropriate, practically feasible, and actually performed by native speakers. This broader conception of competence provided the theoretical engine for CLT, which grew into the dominant paradigm in English language teaching internationally by the 1980s (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

2.4.2 Core Principles of CLT

CLT is guided by a set of principles that stand in sharp contrast to those of GTM. Key among these are: (1) the primacy of meaning over form - language is used first and foremost as a vehicle for communication; (2) the integration of all four skills in purposeful, interactive activities; (3) the use of authentic materials and real-life communicative tasks; (4) an emphasis on learner-centredness and learner autonomy; (5) the teacher's role as facilitator and resource rather than authoritative transmitter; and (6) the tolerance of errors as a natural and informative part of the learning process (Littlewood, 1981; Richards, 2006). Within CLT, grammar is not ignored but is typically taught inductively or through implicit exposure, emerging from learners' communicative needs rather than being imposed as a precondition for communication.

2.4.3 Teacher and Learner Roles in CLT

In a CLT classroom, the teacher assumes a fundamentally different orientation from that prescribed by GTM. Rather than serving as the primary source of linguistic knowledge, the CLT teacher functions as a task designer, activity facilitator, and communicative partner (Richards, 2006). The teacher creates conditions for authentic interaction, provides feedback on communicative effectiveness, and scaffolds language development through well-designed tasks. Learners, in turn, are active, collaborative participants who negotiate meaning, take communicative risks, and contribute their own knowledge and experience to the learning process.

2.4.4 Advantages of CLT

The considerable appeal of CLT lies in its alignment with contemporary understandings of language acquisition and its capacity to prepare learners for real-world communication. Research has consistently demonstrated that communicative tasks promote greater depth of processing and more durable acquisition than mechanical drills or decontextualised grammar exercises (Long, 1991; Skehan, 1998). CLT is particularly well suited to developing pragmatic competence - learners' ability to use language appropriately across social contexts - a dimension of proficiency that GTM largely neglects. Furthermore, the interactive nature of CLT activities can generate higher levels of learner motivation, particularly when tasks are perceived as meaningful and relevant (Dörnyei, 2009).

2.4.5 Disadvantages of CLT

Notwithstanding these advantages, CLT has been widely criticised for its limited applicability in many real-world educational contexts. Researchers working in Asian, Middle Eastern, and North African EFL settings have repeatedly documented the obstacles to CLT implementation, including large class sizes, limited target-language exposure outside the classroom, assessment systems that reward grammatical accuracy over communicative fluency, insufficient teacher training in CLT methodology, and cultural norms that favour teacher authority and learner deference (Karavas-Doukas, 1995; Li, 1998; Benali-Mohamed, 2010). In the Algerian context, these obstacles are particularly acute.

Additionally, critics from within the communicative tradition - notably Widdowson (1978) and later Sheen (2003) - have argued that CLT's reluctance to engage in systematic grammar instruction leaves learners without the structural foundation necessary for accurate, complex language production. The result, in many cases, is learners who can communicate basic meanings but whose grammatical accuracy remains persistently low.

2.4.6 CLT and the Present Perfect Tense

Within a CLT framework, the Present Perfect tense might be taught through tasks that naturally elicit its use - for instance, an 'Information Gap' activity in which learners must find out what their partner has done before a particular deadline, or a 'life experience' interview task in which learners exchange personal anecdotes. The advantage of this approach is that learners encounter the tense in meaningful, contextualised use, which supports the development of pragmatic competence alongside structural knowledge. The challenge, however, is ensuring sufficient attention to form. Without explicit guidance, many learners fail to notice the distinction between the Present Perfect and the Simple Past - a noticing deficit that may persist even after extensive communicative exposure (Skehan, 1998).

2.5 Comparison of GTM and CLT

2.5.1 Accuracy Versus Fluency

The GTM/CLT debate can be framed, in part, as a tension between accuracy and fluency - two distinct but complementary dimensions of language proficiency. GTM, with its emphasis on correct form and error avoidance, prioritises accuracy; CLT, with its tolerance of error in the service of communication, prioritises fluency. Applied linguists have increasingly argued that both dimensions are necessary for full communicative competence, and that the pedagogical challenge lies in finding ways to develop them in a productive, mutually reinforcing relationship (Thornbury, 2010). The acquisition of the Present Perfect provides a useful case study: learners need both the structural accuracy to produce the correct form and the pragmatic fluency to deploy it appropriately in discourse.

2.5.2 Explicit Versus Implicit Grammar Teaching

A closely related debate concerns the relative merits of explicit versus implicit grammar instruction. Explicit instruction - exemplified by GTM - involves the conscious presentation and discussion of rules. Implicit instruction - associated with CLT - involves exposure to language in use, from which learners are expected to abstract rules unconsciously. Ellis (2006) reviewed the research evidence and concluded that explicit instruction is particularly effective for learners with developed metalinguistic awareness and for structures that are 'learnable' - that is, sufficiently rule-governed and salient to be learned through conscious attention. The Present Perfect, with its relatively transparent structural formula but complex pragmatic range, appears to benefit from both: explicit instruction for the structural dimension and communicative practice for the pragmatic one.

2.5.3 Teacher-Centred Versus Learner-Centred Instruction

At a broader level, GTM and CLT represent contrasting pedagogical philosophies regarding the locus of authority and activity in the classroom. GTM assumes a knowledge-transmission model in which the teacher possesses and conveys knowledge; CLT assumes a constructivist model in which knowledge is co-constructed through interaction. While both models have their pedagogical merits, research on learner engagement and motivation tends to favour learner-centred approaches, at least in contexts where learners have sufficient proficiency to participate meaningfully in communicative activities (Dörnyei, 2009). In EFL contexts characterised by low entry-level proficiency - as is common in Algerian schools - a degree of teacher-centredness may be both inevitable and appropriate.

2.6 The Present Perfect Tense

2.6.1 Definition and Structure

The Present Perfect is a tense that, as its name implies, combines a present auxiliary with a past participial form, creating what Comrie (1976) describes as a 'current relevance' relationship between a past event and the present moment. Structurally, it is formed as follows: Subject + have/has (auxiliary) + past participle (V3). Examples include: 'She has lived in Paris,' 'They have finished the report,' 'I have never eaten sushi.' The auxiliary 'have' agrees with the subject in the third person singular, producing the form 'has.'

2.6.2 Functional Uses of the Present Perfect

Applied linguists and grammarians have identified several distinct functional uses of the Present Perfect in contemporary English, the most commonly cited of which include the following. First, the experiential use, which denotes whether or not a particular experience has occurred within an unspecified period up to the present: 'Have you ever visited Rome?' Second, the resultant state use, which describes a past event whose result remains relevant at the moment of speaking: 'She has broken her arm.' Third, the hot news use, which conveys a recent event of immediate relevance: 'The president has just resigned.' Fourth, the continuative use, which expresses a situation that began in the past and continues into the present, typically occurring with 'since' or 'for': 'He has worked here for ten years' (Comrie, 1976; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2016).

Each of these uses presents distinct challenges for learners, both in terms of form (particularly the irregular past participle forms) and in terms of meaning (particularly the distinction between the Present Perfect and Simple Past, which English alone among major European languages maintains in precisely this way).

2.6.3 Common Learner Errors with the Present Perfect

The errors made by EFL learners in using the Present Perfect are well-documented and follow predictable patterns. The most common include: (1) substitution of the Simple Past for the Present Perfect ('I saw him yesterday' for 'I have seen him'), which may reflect L1 transfer or overgeneralisation of the more salient Simple Past form; (2) incorrect auxiliary agreement ('She have finished her homework'); (3) use of incorrect past participle forms, particularly for irregular verbs ('She has caught the bus'); (4) confusion between the experiential and continuative uses; and (5) inappropriate use of time adverbials inconsistent with Present Perfect semantics (e.g., 'I have seen her yesterday') (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2016; Swan, 2005).

2.6.4 Difficulties for Arabic-Speaking Learners

Arabic, the mother tongue of Algerian EFL learners, does not possess a grammatical category equivalent to the English Present Perfect (Ryding, 2005). Arabic's aspectual system distinguishes between completed and incomplete actions,

but this distinction does not map neatly onto the English Present Perfect / Simple Past dichotomy. Specifically, Arabic's perfect aspect (expressing completed action) does not carry the 'current relevance' meaning that is central to the English Present Perfect; it functions more like a simple narrative past. This creates a systematic L1 transfer problem: Algerian learners tend to interpret all references to completed past actions as Simple Past constructions, failing to perceive the Present Perfect's distinctive present-anchoring function (Harouni, 2019; Benmostafa, 2015).

Additionally, the concept of 'indefinite time' expressed by the experiential Present Perfect - referring to 'at some unspecified point before now' rather than 'at this specific time yesterday' - has no direct equivalent in Arabic pragmatics, making it a particularly difficult meaning to internalise. These difficulties suggest that explicit instruction in the Present Perfect, with clear contrastive analysis of its differences from both the Arabic perfect and the English Simple Past, may be particularly valuable for this learner population.

2.6.5 Teaching the Present Perfect in EFL Contexts

A growing body of empirical research has examined effective strategies for teaching the Present Perfect to EFL learners. Studies by Ayoun (2004), Alotaibi (2016), and Zerrouki (2018) suggest that a combination of explicit form-focused instruction and meaningful communicative practice yields better outcomes than either approach alone. Timeline-based visualisations of the tense's temporal semantics, contrastive analysis activities comparing the Present Perfect with the Simple Past, and information gap tasks requiring genuine use of the tense have all been shown to support acquisition.

Importantly, research suggests that the order in which different uses of the Present Perfect are introduced matters pedagogically. The resultant state use, with its clear present-relevance meaning, appears to be the most accessible entry point for learners, while the continuative use with 'since' and 'for' tends to be more challenging and may be best introduced at an intermediate or upper-intermediate level (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2016).

2.7 Theoretical Frameworks

The present study draws on several theoretical frameworks from the applied linguistics and language education literature, each of which illuminates a different dimension of the research problem.

2.7.1 Hymes' Theory of Communicative Competence

Dell Hymes' (1972) reconceptualisation of linguistic competence as communicative competence provides the foundational theoretical lens through which the GTM/CLT debate is understood in this study. Hymes argued that 'knowing' a language involves far more than knowing its grammatical rules; it involves knowing when, where, with whom, and how to use language appropriately. This framework exposes the inherent limitations of GTM - which equips learners with formal knowledge while leaving communicative competence largely undeveloped - and establishes the theoretical rationale for CLT's emphasis on meaningful language use.

2.7.2 Canale and Swain's Model of Communicative Competence

Canale and Swain (1980) extended Hymes' concept into a more operationally useful model comprising four components: grammatical competence (knowledge of linguistic rules), sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of contextually appropriate language use), discourse competence (ability to produce coherent connected speech), and strategic competence (ability to manage communication breakdowns). This multi-component model is particularly relevant to the present study because it positions grammatical competence - the primary target of GTM - as one necessary but insufficient component of overall communicative ability.

2.7.3 Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Acquisition-Learning Distinction

Krashen's (1982) theoretical framework, while contested, has profoundly influenced debates about grammar instruction. His distinction between 'acquisition' (subconscious, communicative) and 'learning' (conscious, formal) led him to argue that only acquisition - not learning - leads to genuine linguistic competence, and that formally 'learned' rules can only ever serve as a 'Monitor' that edits output under limited conditions. Although subsequent research has challenged the strictness of this distinction, Krashen's framework continues to inform CLT's preference for

communicative over form-focused instruction and provides a theoretical basis for understanding why some teachers may be sceptical of GTM's long-term effectiveness.

2.7.4 Long's Focus on Form

Long's (1991) concept of 'focus on form' offers a theoretically sophisticated bridge between GTM's explicit grammar teaching and CLT's meaning-focused interaction. Focus on form refers to the incidental but intentional drawing of learners' attention to formal features of language in the context of communicative activity - as opposed to 'focus on forms' (systematic, pre-planned grammar instruction divorced from communication) or 'focus on meaning' (exclusive attention to message content). Long argues that this proactive orientation to form within communicative practice is the most effective approach to grammar instruction, a claim that has generated considerable empirical support (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

2.7.5 Ellis' Framework for Grammar Instruction

Rod Ellis's (2006) comprehensive synthesis of research on grammar instruction provides a nuanced, evidence-based perspective that is particularly relevant to the present study. Ellis distinguishes between explicit and implicit instruction, between deductive and inductive approaches, and between production-based and input-based instruction, arguing that different types of instruction are effective under different conditions and for different types of grammatical features. His conclusion - that a judicious combination of form-focused and meaning-focused instruction is likely to be most effective - aligns closely with the 'blended approach' that emerges as a dominant preference in the present study's findings.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed the theoretical and empirical terrain that frames the present investigation. The contrasting principles and pedagogical implications of GTM and CLT have been examined in relation to grammar teaching in EFL contexts, with particular attention to the specific challenges that the Present Perfect tense presents for Arabic-speaking learners. The theoretical frameworks of Hymes, Canale and Swain, Krashen, Long, and Ellis have been positioned as the conceptual architecture that informs the study's design and interpretive lens. The following chapter details the methodological decisions that guided the empirical investigation.

Chapter Three:

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological decisions that shaped the design and conduct of the present study. It explains and justifies the choice of a qualitative research paradigm, outlines the research design, describes the research setting and participant selection procedure, details the development and administration of the semi-structured interview guide, and describes the thematic analysis process employed for data interpretation. The chapter also addresses questions of trustworthiness and ethical responsibility.

3.2 Research Design

The present study adopts a qualitative descriptive case study design. Qualitative research, as Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 45) define it, is 'an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.' This paradigm is particularly well suited to the investigation of teacher perceptions and beliefs, which are inherently subjective, contextually embedded, and resistant to quantification. Unlike survey-based research, which may reveal patterns across large samples but offers limited depth, a qualitative approach enables the researcher to explore the nuances, contradictions, and contextual factors that shape individual teachers' thinking.

The case study design - in the tradition of Yin (2018) - treats the Ouargla EFL educational context as a bounded case within which multiple participants' perspectives are examined. This design facilitates both within-case analysis (how does each individual teacher perceive the issues?) and cross-case analysis (what patterns and divergences emerge across participants?). A descriptive orientation is appropriate because the study does not seek to test hypotheses or establish causation, but rather to document and interpret teachers' perceptions as fully and faithfully as possible.

3.3 Research Approach: Qualitative Inquiry

A qualitative research approach was selected for this study because it affords the depth, flexibility, and interpretive richness necessary to capture the complexity of teacher cognition (Borg, 2006). Teacher beliefs and perceptions are not static, decontextualised facts that can be adequately measured on a Likert scale; they are

situated, relational, and shaped by professional biographies, classroom experiences, institutional cultures, and linguistic identities. Semi-structured interviews provide a discursive space in which these dimensions can be explored with appropriate nuance.

The study aligns with an interpretivist epistemological stance (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which holds that knowledge is socially constructed and that the researcher's task is to interpret, rather than merely record, the meanings that participants attach to their experiences. This epistemological orientation shapes both the data collection approach and the analytical framework.

3.4 Research Setting

The study was conducted in Ouargla, a city in the south of Algeria, which is home to Kasdi Merbah University as well as several middle schools and secondary schools. Ouargla represents a context in which English is encountered primarily in formal educational settings, with limited exposure to the language in the broader social environment. This renders it an instructive case for understanding how teachers navigate the challenges of EFL instruction in a resource-constrained, low-exposure environment.

The educational institutions participating in this study include: Ibn Khaldoun Middle School, Emir Abdelkader Secondary School, and the Department of Foreign Languages at Kasdi Merbah University. These institutions were selected because they represent the three educational levels at which EFL is taught in Algeria, and because they provided access to teachers with varying levels of experience and methodological training.

3.5 Participants

Six EFL teachers were purposively selected to participate in the study. Purposive sampling - also known as criterion-based or judgement sampling - is a non-probability sampling strategy in which participants are chosen on the basis of their capacity to provide relevant, information-rich data in relation to the study's research questions (Patton, 2015). The following selection criteria were applied: (1) current employment as an EFL teacher at a middle school, secondary school, or university in Ouargla; (2) at least three years of teaching experience; (3) experience

teaching the Present Perfect tense; and (4) willingness to participate in an audio-recorded interview.

Table 1 below presents a profile of the participants, using pseudonyms to protect their anonymity.

Table 1: Participants' Profile

Pseudonym	Educational Level	Years of Experience	Highest Qualification	Gender
Teacher 1 (T1)	University	12	PhD (in progress)	Female
Teacher 2 (T2)	Secondary School	9	Master's	Male
Teacher 3 (T3)	Middle School	7	Licence	Female
Teacher 4 (T4)	University	15	Doctorate	Male
Teacher 5 (T5)	Secondary School	5	Master's	Female
Teacher 6 (T6)	Middle School	3	Licence	Male

The sample's composition - spanning three educational levels, a range of professional experience (3–15 years), and both genders - ensures sufficient diversity to generate insights across multiple institutional contexts while remaining within the manageable scope of a qualitative case study.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument: The Semi-Structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the primary data collection instrument for this study. Unlike structured interviews, which follow a rigid, predetermined question format, semi-structured interviews combine a framework of thematic questions with the flexibility to pursue emergent threads of inquiry, invite elaboration, and respond to the particularities of individual participants' responses (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This flexibility is essential for research into teacher perceptions, where the most revelatory insights frequently emerge not from answers

to pre-planned questions but from the associative narratives that participants construct when given sufficient space to reflect.

Unlike questionnaires, which require participants to select from predetermined response categories, interviews allow for the co-construction of meaning between interviewer and participant. They enable the researcher to probe ambiguities, elicit examples, and explore the reasoning behind stated beliefs - dimensions of teacher cognition that questionnaire responses systematically obscure.

3.7 Development of the Interview Guide

The interview guide was developed through a systematic process that drew on three sources: (1) a thorough review of the literature on GTM, CLT, and the teaching of the Present Perfect tense; (2) the study's five research questions; and (3) the theoretical frameworks of Hymes, Krashen, Long, and Ellis. An initial pool of twenty questions was generated and then refined through a process of expert review and pilot testing with a colleague outside the sample. Questions were evaluated for clarity, academic relevance, capacity to generate rich data, and sensitivity to participants' professional identities.

The final interview guide comprised fifteen open-ended questions organised under four thematic headings: (1) general views on grammar teaching; (2) perceptions of GTM; (3) perceptions of CLT; and (4) preferences and recommendations. Two closing questions invited participants to reflect on their overall methodological preferences and to offer recommendations for improving grammar instruction in the Algerian context.

3.8 Interview Protocol

Each interview was conducted individually, in a private setting agreed upon with the participant (either the teacher's office or a quiet meeting room within the educational institution). Interviews were conducted in English, the language of the study, with the researcher's reassurance that participants were welcome to clarify concepts in Arabic or French if necessary. The duration of each interview ranged from approximately 45 to 70 minutes.

With the informed consent of each participant, interviews were audio-recorded using a digital recorder and a backup smartphone recording application.

Contemporaneous hand-written notes were also taken by the researcher to capture non-verbal cues, emphases, and contextual observations that audio recordings do not capture. All audio files were subsequently transcribed verbatim by the researcher, using standard orthographic conventions. Transcripts were then shared with participants for member-checking purposes (see Section 3.11).

3.9 Interview Questions

The following semi-structured interview guide was used for data collection:

Introductory questions:

1. Could you briefly describe your educational background and your experience teaching English as a foreign language?
2. How would you characterise your general approach to teaching English grammar?

Questions on the Present Perfect tense:

3. How do you typically introduce and teach the Present Perfect tense to your students?
4. In your experience, what specific difficulties do your students encounter when learning the Present Perfect tense? Can you give examples?
5. Do you think the fact that Arabic does not have an equivalent structure contributes to learners' difficulties? How do you address this in your teaching?

Questions on the Grammar Translation Method:

6. What is your view of the Grammar Translation Method as an approach to teaching grammar in general?
7. In your opinion, what are the main strengths of using GTM to teach the Present Perfect tense?
8. What limitations or weaknesses have you observed when GTM is used to teach this tense?

Questions on Communicative Language Teaching:

9. What is your general view of Communicative Language Teaching as a pedagogical approach?

10. Do you incorporate communicative activities when teaching the Present Perfect? Could you describe what these look like in practice?
11. What challenges do you face when trying to implement a communicative approach in your specific teaching context?

Questions on comparative effectiveness and blended approaches:

12. In your professional judgement, which approach do you consider more effective for teaching the Present Perfect - GTM, CLT, or a combination of both? Why?
13. Do you think a blended approach combining the explicit grammar instruction of GTM with the communicative activities of CLT would be beneficial? How would you envision implementing such an approach?
14. What do you believe are the most important contextual factors - such as class size, curriculum, learner motivation, or available resources - that influence your methodological choices?
15. What recommendations would you offer to other EFL teachers or to curriculum designers seeking to improve the teaching of the Present Perfect tense in Algerian schools and universities?

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process proceeded through the following stages. First, formal written permission was obtained from the relevant institutional authorities at each participating school and at Kasdi Merbah University. Second, potential participants were identified through professional networks and contacted by the researcher with a written explanation of the study's aims, methods, and ethical safeguards. Third, those who agreed to participate signed an informed consent form before the interview commenced. Fourth, each interview was scheduled at a time and location convenient for the participant, audio-recorded with consent, and accompanied by the researcher's field notes. Fifth, all audio recordings were transcribed verbatim within two weeks of each interview. Finally, completed transcripts were returned to participants for member-checking, giving them the opportunity to clarify, expand, or retract statements before analysis commenced.

3.11 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

The data were analysed using thematic analysis (TA) as conceptualised by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a flexible, theoretically unencumbered qualitative method that allows for the systematic identification and interpretation of patterns of meaning across a data set. Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework guided the analytical process:

Phase 1 - Familiarisation: The researcher read and re-read all six interview transcripts, immersing herself in the data and making preliminary notes on initial impressions, recurrent ideas, and potential patterns.

Phase 2 - Initial Coding: Using a combination of in-vivo codes (drawn directly from participants' language) and analyst-constructed codes, the researcher systematically tagged meaningful units of data across all transcripts. Coding was conducted manually, using a colour-coding system applied to printed transcripts.

Phase 3 - Searching for Themes: Initial codes were sorted and grouped into potential themes, with related codes being combined and broader patterns identified.

Phase 4 - Reviewing Themes: Candidate themes were reviewed against the coded extracts and the full data set to assess their coherence, distinctiveness, and representativeness. Several initial themes were merged, split, or discarded at this stage.

Phase 5 - Defining and Naming Themes: Each finalised theme was defined in terms of its central organising concept, and a concise, analytically precise name was assigned.

Phase 6 - Writing Up: The write-up of findings (Chapter Four) was produced as an interpretive narrative that weaves together participant quotations, analytical commentary, and connections to the theoretical literature.

3.12 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the criteria of validity and reliability that govern quantitative inquiry are replaced by the parallel criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, as formulated by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Credibility - the qualitative analogue of internal validity - was addressed through member-checking (sharing transcripts and preliminary interpretations with

participants for verification), prolonged engagement with the data, and peer debriefing with a fellow researcher in applied linguistics.

Dependability - the qualitative analogue of reliability - was ensured through the maintenance of a detailed audit trail documenting all methodological decisions, from the initial design of the interview guide to the final thematic categories.

Confirmability - the qualitative analogue of objectivity - was addressed through reflexivity: the researcher engaged in explicit, documented reflection on how her own professional background and theoretical commitments might have shaped the analytical process.

Transferability - the qualitative analogue of external validity - is acknowledged to be limited by the study's small, purposive sample and its specific geographic context. However, thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the research setting and participants' contexts is provided throughout to enable readers to make informed judgements about the applicability of the findings to comparable settings.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles governing social research involving human participants. The following safeguards were implemented.

Informed consent: Each participant received a written information sheet explaining the study's purpose, data use, and confidentiality measures before agreeing to participate. Consent was documented via a signed consent form.

Voluntary participation: Participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality: All interview data were stored securely on a password-protected device accessible only to the researcher. No identifying information was shared with third parties.

Anonymity: Participants are referred to throughout the study using numerical pseudonyms (Teacher 1 through Teacher 6). No information that could identify

individual participants - including their specific institutional affiliation or any demographic details beyond those provided in Table 1 - appears in the dissertation.

Respect for participants: The researcher maintained a respectful, non-judgmental stance throughout all interactions, recognising that participants' professional beliefs and practices deserve to be treated with scholarly respect regardless of whether they align with current theoretical orthodoxies.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a comprehensive account of the methodological choices underpinning the present study. The selection of a qualitative descriptive case study design, semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection instrument, and Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework reflects a coherent and principled approach to answering the research questions. The following chapter presents the findings that emerged from the thematic analysis of the six interview transcripts.

Chapter Four:

Data Analysis and

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis of six semi-structured interviews conducted with EFL teachers in Ouargla, Algeria. The analysis yielded six major themes, each accompanied by sub-themes that reflect the complexity and internal variation of participants' perceptions. The themes are presented in a sequence that broadly follows the logic of the research questions: the chapter begins with teachers' reflections on learner difficulties, moves through their perceptions of GTM and CLT respectively, and concludes with their views on the debate between accuracy and communicative competence, their preferences regarding a blended approach, and the broader contextual challenges they navigate in their teaching environments. For each theme, representative participant quotations are presented and interpreted, with connections drawn to the theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

Participants are referred to using the pseudonyms T1 through T6 throughout this chapter. All quotations are presented verbatim, with minor edits to false starts and hesitation markers for readability.

4.2 Theme 1: The Persistent Difficulty of the Present Perfect Tense

All six participants identified the Present Perfect tense as one of the most problematic grammatical structures they teach. The difficulties they described fell into two sub-themes: structural confusion (particularly with the Simple Past) and pragmatic opacity (difficulty understanding when and why to use the Present Perfect rather than alternative tense forms).

4.2.1 Sub-theme: *Confusion with the Simple Past*

The most frequently cited difficulty was learners' tendency to conflate the Present Perfect with the Simple Past, a pattern that participants linked explicitly to the absence of a structurally equivalent tense in Arabic.

T4 (University Teacher): 'The most fundamental problem I see, year after year, is that students simply cannot internalise the logic of the Present Perfect. They want to use past tense forms for everything that happened in the past, because that is what Arabic essentially does. The distinction between 'I saw him yesterday' and 'I have seen him' - the fact that one

anchors the event to a specific past moment and the other connects it to the present - is genuinely alien to their linguistic intuition. I explain it, I diagram it, I practise it with them, and still, in spontaneous writing or speaking, they default to the Simple Past.'

T4's observation reflects a well-documented L1 transfer phenomenon (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2016; Harouni, 2019) and highlights the particular vulnerability of spontaneous production - where the demands of real-time processing override consciously acquired rules - to L1 interference. T1 and T2 reported similar observations.

T2 (Secondary School Teacher): 'When I test them on grammar exercises in isolation, many students get the Present Perfect right. They know the rule. But when I ask them to write a paragraph or talk about their experiences, they revert immediately to Simple Past. It is as if the communicative pressure makes them forget everything they have learned structurally.'

T2's observation introduces an important distinction between declarative knowledge (knowing the rule) and procedural knowledge (being able to apply it automatically in communicative performance), a distinction central to Ellis' (2006) framework for grammar instruction. The challenge, as T2 frames it, is not the absence of structural knowledge but the failure to automatise that knowledge sufficiently for deployment under real communicative pressure.

4.2.2 Sub-theme: Pragmatic Opacity

Several teachers also noted that learners struggle with the pragmatic dimensions of the Present Perfect - specifically, understanding why English uses a distinct form to express 'current relevance' rather than simply using the past tense in all contexts.

T1 (University Teacher): 'Explaining the 'current relevance' of the Present Perfect is genuinely difficult, because it requires students to think about language not as a system of forms but as a system of meanings. When I say 'The minister has resigned,' I am not just reporting a past event; I am signalling that this event matters now. But that communicative intention - that function of connecting the past to the present - is not grammaticalised in Arabic. So students do not have a cognitive framework for it. I often use real

newspaper headlines as examples, because context makes the current relevance visible in a way that isolated sentences do not.'

T1's pedagogical response - using authentic newspaper headlines to contextualise the Present Perfect's current relevance function - represents an implicit convergence between GTM-style structural explanation and CLT-style authentic text use, anticipating the blended approach discussed later in the interviews.

4.3 Theme 2: Teachers' Perceptions of the Grammar Translation Method

Teachers' perceptions of GTM were notably ambivalent. While all six participants acknowledged significant limitations of the method, five of the six expressed qualified support for GTM's role in the teaching of complex grammatical structures such as the Present Perfect, particularly at lower proficiency levels and in the specific institutional conditions of Algerian schools.

4.3.1 Sub-theme: GTM as Structural Clarity

The most consistently cited advantage of GTM was its capacity to provide clear, organised, and accessible explanations of grammatical structure.

T3 (Middle School Teacher): 'With middle school students who are just beginning to learn English, they need a framework. They need to know what the Present Perfect is before they can do anything with it. If I just put them in groups and ask them to talk about their experiences in English, they will either be silent or they will make random sentences with no understanding of the grammatical system. GTM gives them that foundation. I explain the rule, I write the formula on the board, I give examples, and I translate. They understand. And then we can build from there.'

T3's account reveals a developmental logic in the deployment of GTM: explicit instruction is positioned not as the end point of grammar teaching, but as a necessary first stage - a scaffolding operation that prepares the ground for more communicative activities. This is consistent with a skill-building model of acquisition (DeKeyser, 2007) and with Long's (1991) argument that proactive attention to form facilitates subsequent communicative development.

T6 (Middle School Teacher): 'I know that many academics criticise GTM as old-fashioned, but in my classroom, with thirty-five students and one hour a week of English, explicit explanation followed by translation is the only approach that lets me actually get something done. If I try to do communicative activities, I lose half the class immediately because their level is too low. At least with GTM, I can control the learning and I can see who has understood and who has not.'

T6's pragmatic defence of GTM foregrounds institutional constraints - class size, limited contact hours, low entry-level proficiency - that are frequently cited in the literature as barriers to CLT implementation in developing-world contexts (Li, 1998; Benali-Mohamed, 2010). His framing positions GTM not as an ideologically preferred approach but as a contextual necessity.

4.3.2 Sub-theme: The Limitations of GTM for Communicative Development

All participants acknowledged that GTM, if used exclusively, produces learners who can analyse the Present Perfect in grammar exercises but cannot deploy it in genuine communication.

T5 (Secondary School Teacher): 'I teach students who have been doing grammar exercises about the Present Perfect since middle school. They can fill in the blank and they can circle the correct answer. But ask them to have a conversation or write a spontaneous email, and the Present Perfect has essentially disappeared. They have learned the structure, but not what it is for. That is the fundamental failure of a purely translation-based approach.'

T5's observation echoes Hymes' (1972) critique of formal linguistic competence as an insufficient account of what it means to know a language. The students she describes possess grammatical competence in the narrow sense but lack the communicative competence to deploy it purposefully. Her analysis implicitly calls for a pedagogy that bridges the two.

4.4 Theme 3: Teachers' Perceptions of Communicative Language Teaching

Participants' views of CLT were similarly nuanced. While all recognised the theoretical appeal of CLT and expressed a degree of aspirational identification with its learner-centred principles, the majority articulated serious reservations about its practical applicability in the Algerian EFL context.

4.4.1 Sub-theme: CLT's Appeal and Theoretical Strengths

T4 (University Teacher): 'Theoretically, CLT is exactly what we should be doing. Language is communication, and if we want our students to communicate, we should be asking them to communicate from the first lesson. I completely accept the Hymesian argument that knowing grammar rules and knowing how to use a language are not the same thing. At university level, where my students have some basic proficiency, I do incorporate significant communicative elements - role-plays, discussion tasks, written exchanges. And when those activities work, the depth of learning is unmistakable.'

T4's endorsement of CLT at the theoretical and aspirational level is characteristic of several participants' responses. The qualification - 'when those activities work' - points, however, to the contingent and context-dependent nature of CLT's effectiveness, a qualification that structured much of the subsequent discussion.

4.4.2 Sub-theme: The Gap Between CLT Theory and Algerian Classroom Reality

T2 (Secondary School Teacher): 'I have attended workshops on CLT and I believe in the principles. The problem is that the textbooks are still largely grammar-focused, the exams test grammar and reading comprehension, the classes are overcrowded, and the students are not used to being asked to speak freely. If I suddenly go fully communicative, the students panic. They have been conditioned throughout their education to expect explicit grammar instruction. To shift to CLT overnight would require changes to the entire system - the curriculum, the exams, the teacher training, the classroom culture. One teacher cannot do that alone.'

T2's analysis identifies a systemic misalignment between CLT's requirements and the structural conditions of Algerian EFL education. This observation resonates with broader critiques of CLT's export to non-Western contexts (Holliday, 1994; Karavas-Doukas, 1995), which argue that CLT was developed within and for the specific sociolinguistic conditions of English-speaking countries and carries embedded cultural assumptions about learner autonomy, teacher authority, and the relationship between language and identity that may not transfer unproblematically to all contexts.

T1 (University Teacher): 'The issue with CLT for the Present Perfect specifically is that it is hard to design communicative activities that naturally and reliably elicit this particular form. You can do a "Have you ever..." activity, and it works well. But getting students to naturally use the continuative Present Perfect, or the hot news use, in genuine communication - that requires very careful task design that most textbooks do not provide. Without that, CLT activities for the Present Perfect often end up eliciting Simple Past instead.'

T1's observation introduces a task-design challenge specific to the Present Perfect: unlike some grammatical structures that arise organically in communicative activity, certain uses of the Present Perfect are pragmatically specialised and may require deliberately engineered communicative conditions to appear in learner production. This highlights a dimension of the GTM/CLT debate that is specific to the present grammatical focus of the study.

4.5 Theme 4: Accuracy Versus Communicative Competence

A recurrent tension in participants' accounts concerned the competing demands of grammatical accuracy and communicative competence - a tension that several teachers articulated in terms of their students' examination performance versus their real-world communicative readiness.

T5 (Secondary School Teacher): 'Honestly, in the current system, I have to prioritise accuracy. My students will be judged in their Baccalauréat examinations on whether they can produce grammatically correct sentences. If I sacrifice accuracy for fluency, I am doing them a disservice in the short term, even if the long-term picture would favour a more communicative

approach. So I teach grammar explicitly, I correct errors, and I make sure they can handle the structures that will appear in exams. But I am aware that this is not the whole story of language competence.'

T5's pragmatic accommodation to examination requirements illustrates what Ur (2012) calls the 'teacher's dilemma': the tension between theoretically informed pedagogical ideals and the institutional constraints within which teachers operate. Her reflection also reveals a degree of metacognitive awareness - she knows that exam-focused grammar instruction is incomplete - that is consistent with Borg's (2006) characterisation of experienced teachers as reflective practitioners who balance competing professional values.

T3 (Middle School Teacher): 'Children at this age need to feel that they are succeeding. If I ask them to communicate freely in English, they become frustrated and embarrassed because their level is not high enough. But if I teach them a structure, explain it clearly, and let them practise it in controlled exercises, they feel a sense of achievement. Accuracy is not just an examination requirement - it is part of how learners build confidence and motivation to continue.'

T3's argument - that accuracy has motivational, not merely evaluative, value - introduces an affective dimension to the accuracy/fluency debate that is not always prominent in the applied linguistics literature. Her observation resonates with Dörnyei's (2009) work on motivational self-regulation, which suggests that a sense of competence and incremental mastery is a key driver of L2 learning motivation.

4.6 Theme 5: Preference for a Blended Pedagogical Approach

Perhaps the most significant and consistent finding to emerge from the analysis is that all six participants expressed a preference for a blended pedagogical approach that integrates elements of both GTM and CLT. This preference was not a vague or uncommitted 'both are good' position, but a reasoned, pedagogically articulated vision of how the two approaches might be complementarily deployed.

T4 (University Teacher): 'What I have come to believe, after fifteen years of teaching, is that the GTM/CLT binary is a false choice. It is not a question of either explicit grammar instruction or communicative practice. The question is: how do you sequence them? In my view, the most effective sequence for

the Present Perfect is: begin with explicit presentation of the structure and its key uses - use the whiteboard, use a timeline, use L1 if necessary to clarify; then move to controlled practice in context (not just fill-in-the-blank, but contextualised reading and writing); and then, as proficiency develops, create communicative tasks that genuinely require students to use the tense. That is not GTM and it is not CLT - it is good language teaching.'

T4's account of a PPP-oriented but communicatively enriched sequence converges with Ellis' (2006) synthesis position that explicit instruction and communicative practice are mutually supportive rather than mutually exclusive. His critique of the GTM/CLT binary as a 'false choice' represents a professionally sophisticated position that draws on both the strengths of formal grammar instruction and the motivational and acquisitional advantages of communicative engagement.

T1 (University Teacher): 'I think the key insight is that different uses of the Present Perfect call for different teaching approaches. The structural formula - have plus past participle - benefits from explicit instruction because it is a rule that can simply be stated and memorised. But the pragmatic use of the tense - why we say 'has just resigned' rather than 'resigned' - that has to be discovered through authentic use. So I might begin with GTM-style explanation and then move to texts, authentic spoken examples, and tasks that illuminate the pragmatic dimension. The two approaches address different dimensions of competence.'

T1's differentiated account - attributing structural and pragmatic competence to different instructional approaches - maps elegantly onto Canale and Swain's (1980) multi-component model of communicative competence and offers a theoretically grounded resolution to the apparent contradiction between GTM and CLT.

T5 (Secondary School Teacher): 'I never thought of what I do in the classroom as having a name. I explain the rule, I do exercises, and then I try to create some kind of activity where students actually use the language - a dialogue, a short text about their life experiences. Looking at the literature, it seems that what I am doing is already a kind of blended approach. I am glad that research is beginning to support what experienced teachers have been doing intuitively for years.'

T5's reflection - recognising her own existing practice as a form of methodological integration - suggests that the blended approach may already be more prevalent in Algerian EFL classrooms than official methodological rhetoric acknowledges, an observation with implications for teacher education and professional development.

4.7 Theme 6: Contextual Challenges in the Algerian EFL Classroom

The final theme addresses the range of contextual challenges that participants identified as constraining their methodological choices and limiting the effectiveness of their grammar instruction regardless of approach.

4.7.1 Sub-theme: Class Size and Infrastructure

T6 (Middle School Teacher): 'I have forty students in my class. Forty. In a room designed for thirty, with desks that cannot be moved. Pair work, group work, communicative tasks - I want to do these things, but logistically it is almost impossible. My classes are not hostile to CLT - they are physically incompatible with it. So I teach in the way that works within my constraints, which means frontal instruction, board work, and written exercises. If I had smaller classes and a better room, my teaching would look very different.'

4.7.2 Sub-theme: Curriculum and Examination Pressure

T2 (Secondary School Teacher): 'The curriculum tells me what to teach and when. The examinations tell me what students need to be able to do. Both of these prioritise grammatical accuracy over communicative fluency. So even when I want to be more communicative, I am pulled back by the institutional frame. This is not a teacher problem - it is a system problem. The solution requires changes at the policy level, not just in individual classrooms.'

4.7.3 Sub-theme: Learner Motivation and Proficiency

T3 (Middle School Teacher): 'Many of my students do not see the relevance of English to their daily lives in Ouargla. They learn it because it is on the timetable, not because they feel they need it. That motivational challenge affects everything. Low motivation means low attention, low homework completion, low participation in activities. A communicative approach requires engaged, motivated students. Without that foundation, the best-designed CLT activity will fall flat.'

T3's observation connects the methodological debate to questions of learner motivation and the sociolinguistic positioning of English in the Algerian south, where it is a distant foreign language with limited instrumental value for most learners' immediate lives. This contextual reality shapes the pedagogical possibilities in fundamental ways that any effective methodological recommendation must take into account.

4.8 Summary of Themes

Table 3 below provides a condensed overview of the six themes and their associated sub-themes.

Table 2: Summary of Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-themes
Theme 1: Difficulty of the Present Perfect	Confusion with Simple Past; Pragmatic opacity
Theme 2: Perceptions of GTM	GTM as structural clarity; Limitations for communication
Theme 3: Perceptions of CLT	Theoretical appeal; Gap between theory and reality
Theme 4: Accuracy vs Communicative Competence	Exam focus; Motivational value of accuracy
Theme 5: Preference for Blended Approach	Sequential integration; Differentiated instruction by use-type
Theme 6: Contextual Challenges	Class size/infrastructure; Curriculum pressure; Learner motivation

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a rich and multi-layered account of the perceptions of six Algerian EFL teachers regarding the teaching of the Present Perfect tense through GTM and CLT. The findings reveal a teaching community that is methodologically reflective, contextually aware, and pragmatically sophisticated - one that recognises the theoretical appeal of communicative approaches while

navigating the institutional realities that constrain their implementation. The dominant theme - a preference for a blended, sequenced approach that draws on the structural clarity of GTM and the communicative richness of CLT - serves as the primary foundation for the discussion and recommendations that follow in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five:

Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study's findings in relation to the existing theoretical and empirical literature, provides direct answers to each of the five research questions, and elaborates the study's pedagogical implications. It then offers evidence-based recommendations for EFL teachers, curriculum designers, and future researchers before acknowledging the study's limitations and presenting a general conclusion.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 The Challenge of the Present Perfect for Arabic-Speaking Learners

The finding that all six participants identified the Present Perfect as a particularly challenging grammatical structure confirms an established pattern in the applied linguistics literature on Arabic L1 learners of English (Harouni, 2019; Benmostafa, 2015; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2016). The teachers' accounts add important nuance to this literature by distinguishing between structural and pragmatic difficulties - a distinction that maps onto the theoretical divide between grammatical competence and communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980) and that has direct implications for how the tense should be taught.

T2's observation that students who can perform correctly in decontextualised grammar exercises revert to the Simple Past under communicative pressure resonates with DeKeyser's (2007) skill acquisition model, which argues that declarative grammatical knowledge requires procedural practice - specifically, communicative practice that generates sufficient processing pressure to trigger automatic deployment of learned rules. This finding implies that correct performance on grammar tests is an insufficient index of genuine acquisition and that communicative consolidation activities are a necessary complement to explicit instruction.

5.2.2 GTM: Contextually Necessary but Communicatively Insufficient

The study's findings regarding teachers' perceptions of GTM contribute a locally grounded perspective to the existing literature on the method's role in non-Western EFL contexts. Consistent with Sheen (2003), Benali-Mohamed (2010), and

Nassaji and Fotos (2011), participants valued GTM for its capacity to provide structural clarity and its practicability in resource-constrained institutional environments. The institutional arguments offered by T3, T6, and T2 - concerning class size, contact hours, and examination orientation - are not merely excuses for methodological conservatism; they are accurate descriptions of the material conditions within which teaching takes place.

At the same time, participants' critiques of GTM's communicative limitations resonate with the broader consensus in applied linguistics that form-focused instruction, however effective for developing metalinguistic awareness, is insufficient for developing the procedural automaticity and pragmatic competence that genuine communicative proficiency requires (Ellis, 2006; Thornbury, 2010). T5's observation that students' Present Perfect knowledge 'disappears' in spontaneous production is a vivid illustration of this limitation.

5.2.3 CLT: Theoretically Compelling but Contextually Constrained

The finding that all participants expressed qualified support for CLT's principles while simultaneously articulating significant reservations about its practical applicability in Algerian classrooms replicates a pattern documented extensively in the literature on CLT in non-Western contexts (Karavas-Doukas, 1995; Li, 1998; Holliday, 1994). This convergence between the present study and the existing literature suggests that the constraints identified by teachers - large classes, exam-driven curricula, low learner proficiency, limited training - are systemic rather than localised, and that calls for CLT implementation without simultaneous systemic reform are unlikely to produce sustained change.

T1's observation about the difficulty of designing communicative tasks that reliably elicit specific uses of the Present Perfect adds a valuable task-design dimension to this discussion. Her insight implies that the challenge of CLT for complex, pragmatically specialised grammatical structures is not only one of institutional constraints but also one of pedagogical craft - a challenge that teacher education programmes need to address directly.

5.2.4 The Blended Approach: From Intuition to Evidence

The dominant finding of the study - that all six participants prefer a blended approach integrating GTM's structural clarity with CLT's communicative richness - is perhaps its most significant theoretical contribution. This finding demonstrates that the experienced teachers in this study have, through years of professional practice and reflection, arrived at a position that closely resembles the theoretically informed synthesis advocated by Ellis (2006), Long (1991), and Doughty and Williams (1998): namely, that explicit form-focused instruction and meaningful communicative practice are complementary rather than contradictory, and that the optimal pedagogical approach involves a principled sequencing of both.

T4's articulation of a presentation-to-communicative sequence and T1's differentiation between the structural and pragmatic dimensions of the Present Perfect - each calling for different instructional approaches - represent instances of teacher knowledge that the field of applied linguistics would do well to document and build upon. These accounts suggest that the gap between theoretical prescription and classroom practice in EFL contexts may be smaller than critics of 'teacher resistance to CLT' typically assume; the resistance, where it exists, is often a contextually rational response to systemic constraints rather than a rejection of communicative principles per se.

5.3 Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1: Teachers' Perceptions of GTM's Effectiveness

Teachers hold a nuanced and qualified view of GTM's effectiveness. They consistently value it for its capacity to provide structural clarity, manage large and mixed-proficiency classes, align with examination requirements, and scaffold beginners' initial encounter with complex grammatical forms such as the Present Perfect. However, they unanimously recognise that GTM, if used exclusively, produces learners who can perform in grammar tests but cannot deploy the Present Perfect in genuine communicative contexts.

Research Question 2: Teachers' Perceptions of CLT's Effectiveness

Teachers regard CLT as theoretically appealing and communicatively productive at higher proficiency levels and in well-resourced instructional environments. However, they identify multiple systemic barriers to its full implementation in Algerian schools and universities, including overcrowded

classrooms, exam-focused curricula, low learner proficiency, insufficient teacher training, and the absence of authentic English-language environments outside school. They emphasise that CLT is most effective when tasks are carefully designed to elicit the specific grammatical forms under study.

Research Question 3: Comparative Methodological Preference

No participant identified either GTM or CLT as unambiguously superior. All six expressed a preference for a blended approach that sequences explicit grammar instruction (associated with GTM) with contextualised communicative practice (associated with CLT). The preferred sequence involves initial explicit presentation of the Present Perfect's structure and uses, followed by controlled contextualised practice, and ultimately by communicative tasks that require genuine deployment of the tense. Teachers perceive the GTM/CLT binary as a pedagogically unhelpful dichotomy.

Research Question 4: Pedagogical Challenges

Teachers identified the following categories of challenge: (1) learner-level challenges, including L1 interference, confusion between the Present Perfect and Simple Past, and the pragmatic opacity of 'current relevance'; (2) institutional challenges, including class size, limited contact hours, and examination pressure; and (3) motivational challenges, including low learner engagement and limited instrumental value of English in the local context.

Research Question 5: Support for a Blended Approach

All six participants expressed unequivocal support for a blended pedagogical approach. Their support is not merely aspirational but is grounded in concrete pedagogical experience: several teachers described themselves as already practising a form of methodological integration, even if they had not previously conceptualised it in those terms. The blended approach is seen as the most realistic and effective response to the competing demands of grammatical accuracy and communicative competence in the Algerian EFL context.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study carry several significant pedagogical implications. First, they suggest that teacher professional development programmes should not

present GTM and CLT as competing orthodoxies but should instead equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to move fluidly between explicit grammar instruction and communicative task design in a principled and reflective way.

Second, the consistent identification of the Present Perfect / Simple Past distinction as a central difficulty for Arabic-speaking learners implies that this particular contrast should receive dedicated, repeated, and multi-modal treatment in EFL syllabuses - drawing on explicit contrastive explanation, timeline visualisations, authentic text exposure, and communicative practice.

Third, T1's observation about the difficulty of designing communicative tasks that reliably elicit the Present Perfect points to a need for greater attention to task design in EFL teacher training, specifically regarding how to engineer communicative conditions that target complex, pragmatically specific grammatical structures.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the study's findings in relation to the literature and theoretical framework. It showed that both GTM and CLT have valuable contributions to teaching the Present Perfect, despite their respective limitations. The findings highlighted teachers' preference for a blended approach that combines explicit grammar instruction with communicative practice. Overall, the chapter addressed the research questions and provided a comprehensive interpretation of the findings, forming the basis for the General Conclusion.

Chapter six:

General Conclusion

6.1 Recommendations for EFL Teachers

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are offered to EFL teachers working in the Algerian context and comparable environments:

1. Adopt a sequenced, blended approach that begins with explicit structural presentation of the Present Perfect, moves through controlled contextualised practice, and culminates in communicative tasks that require genuine use of the tense.
2. Address the Present Perfect / Simple Past distinction directly and repeatedly, using contrastive analysis, timeline diagrams, and authentic texts to make the distinction visible and meaningful for Arabic-speaking learners.
3. Design communicative tasks with careful attention to whether they naturally elicit the specific uses of the Present Perfect under study, rather than assuming that all communicative activity will generate target form exposure.
4. Prioritise the development of both declarative and procedural grammatical knowledge, using communicative practice not process merely as a post-instruction 'reward' but as an integral stage in the acquisition
5. Engage in reflective practice by documenting and evaluating the methodological approaches they employ, contributing to a professional knowledge base that supports evidence-informed teaching in Algerian EFL contexts.

6.2 Recommendations for Curriculum Designers

1. Develop syllabuses that explicitly integrate form-focused and meaning-focused instructional activities, offering teachers concrete guidance on how to sequence and combine these approaches for specific grammatical targets.
2. Revise assessment practices to include measures of communicative competence alongside traditional accuracy-focused tests, reducing the institutional pressure that currently favours GTM-based grammar drilling.

3. Provide dedicated and contextually specific guidance for the teaching of the Present Perfect to Arabic-speaking learners, including explicit contrastive analysis materials and task design templates.
4. Invest in the reduction of class sizes and the improvement of classroom infrastructure as necessary preconditions for the effective implementation of communicative methodologies.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future research should conduct classroom observation studies to examine how the blended approach preferred by teachers in this study is actually enacted in practice, identifying the specific moves, sequences, and decision-making processes involved.
2. Longitudinal quasi-experimental studies comparing the effectiveness of GTM, CLT, and blended approaches for teaching the Present Perfect to Algerian EFL learners would provide valuable empirical data to complement the perceptual evidence of the present study.
3. Research incorporating learner perspectives - investigating how students in Algerian EFL classrooms experience and respond to GTM-based and CLT-based instruction in the teaching of the Present Perfect - would provide a complementary dimension to the teacher-focused inquiry of the present study.
4. Studies extending this investigation to other grammatical structures and other regions of Algeria would allow for a richer and more generalisable understanding of the methodological landscape of EFL grammar instruction across the country.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

The present study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

- First, the small purposive sample of six participants limits the statistical and analytical scope of the study's claims; the findings are not intended to be representative of all Algerian EFL teachers but rather to provide an in-depth, contextually grounded account of a specific professional community.

- Second, the reliance on self-reported interview data means that the study captures teachers' stated perceptions and beliefs rather than their actual classroom behaviour, which may diverge from reported ideals and practices in ways that cannot be detected through interview alone. Future research incorporating classroom observation would address this limitation.
- Third, the study is geographically limited to Ouargla; EFL contexts in other Algerian cities and regions may differ in significant respects - particularly with regard to learner proficiency levels, institutional resources, and teacher training backgrounds - and the findings may not transfer unproblematically to these settings.
- Fourth, the researcher's positionality as a student of applied linguistics at Kasdi Merbah University may have influenced both the data collection process (participants may have performed a degree of professional self-presentation) and the analytical process (the researcher's own theoretical orientation may have shaped the interpretation of the data, despite the reflexivity measures described in Chapter Three)

This dissertation has investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of two enduring methodological traditions - the Grammar Translation Method and Communicative Language Teaching - in the specific context of teaching the Present Perfect tense to Arabic-speaking learners in Ouargla, Algeria. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews with six practising teachers, the study has generated insights that are both locally grounded and theoretically resonant.

The findings reveal a professional community that is neither methodologically dogmatic nor pedagogically naive. Teachers in this study have navigated the real tensions between structural accuracy and communicative competence, between institutional constraints and pedagogical ideals, and between established practice and emerging theory. Their dominant preference for a blended approach - one that leverages the structural transparency of GTM and the communicative richness of CLT in a principled sequential relationship - represents a

form of practical wisdom that the field of applied linguistics would do well to acknowledge, document, and build upon.

This study argues that the persistent methodological debate between GTM and CLT in EFL education can most productively be reframed not as a choice between two competing orthodoxies but as a design challenge: how to sequence, combine, and contextualise the distinctive affordances of each approach in response to the specific demands of particular grammatical targets, learner populations, and institutional conditions. In the case of the Present Perfect tense in Algerian EFL classrooms, the answer that experienced teachers offer - begin with explicit structural explanation, consolidate through contextualised practice, and extend through carefully designed communicative tasks - deserves to be taken seriously as a context-sensitive and evidence-responsive resolution to one of language pedagogy's most enduring debates.

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I.1.1. Appendix: Interview Questions

The following semi-structured interview guide was used for data collection:

Introductory questions:

1. Could you briefly describe your educational background and your experience teaching English as a foreign language?
2. How would you characterise your general approach to teaching English grammar?

Questions on the Present Perfect tense:

3. How do you typically introduce and teach the Present Perfect tense to your students?
4. In your experience, what specific difficulties do your students encounter when learning the Present Perfect tense? Can you give examples?
5. Do you think the fact that Arabic does not have an equivalent structure contributes to learners' difficulties? How do you address this in your teaching?

Questions on the Grammar Translation Method:

6. What is your view of the Grammar Translation Method as an approach to teaching grammar in general?
7. In your opinion, what are the main strengths of using GTM to teach the Present Perfect tense?
8. What limitations or weaknesses have you observed when GTM is used to teach this tense?

Questions on Communicative Language Teaching:

9. What is your general view of Communicative Language Teaching as a pedagogical approach?
10. Do you incorporate communicative activities when teaching the Present Perfect? Could you describe what these look like in practice?
11. What challenges do you face when trying to implement a communicative approach in your specific teaching context?

Questions on comparative effectiveness and blended approaches:

12. In your professional judgement, which approach do you consider more effective for teaching the Present Perfect — GTM, CLT, or a combination of both? Why?
13. Do you think a blended approach combining the explicit grammar instruction of GTM with the communicative activities of CLT would be beneficial? How would you envision implementing such an approach?
14. What do you believe are the most important contextual factors — such as class size, curriculum, learner motivation, or available resources — that influence your methodological choices?
15. What recommendations would you offer to other EFL teachers or to curriculum designers seeking to improve the teaching of the Present Perfect tense in Algerian schools and universities?