

Introduction

Introduction

This study aims at investigating the learners' ability to perceive and analyze the past perfect in discourse so that they can produce it appropriately and meaningfully.

Before delving into a more detailed discussion of the topic, we ought to give operational definitions of the four key words used in this study: grammar, discourse, discourse analysis and awareness-raising to discourse.

The term "grammar" has been defined in different ways. The following statements give us a clear overview of what grammar means for many researchers: Leech et al (1982:51) view grammar as "a set of rules which allow us to put words together in certain ways, but which do not allow others". As for Crystal (1992:88), grammar should be viewed as "the study of sentence structure" whereas Batstone (1994b:4) claims that grammar "consists of two fundamental ingredients – syntax and morphology – and together they help us to identify grammatical forms which serve to enhance and sharpen the expression of meaning."

It is clear that these definitions limit the boundaries of grammar to sentence level. In contrast, other researchers view grammar as also operating at the level of discourse. Larsen-Freeman (2003:3) notes that:

Grammar does operate at the sentence level and govern the syntax or word order that are permissible in the language. It also works at the subsentence level to govern such things as number and person agreement between subject and verb in a sentence. However, grammar rules also apply at the suprasentential level or discourse level.

According to Dickens and Woods (1988:642), grammar should rarely be examined in terms of discrete items but, rather, "should be introduced to learners as

a complex of integrated networks that function as a means to successful communication". As for Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988:8), grammar interacts with meaning, social function, or discourse and does not stand alone as an autonomous system which should be learnt for its own. Seen from this perspective, grammar becomes "a tool or resource to be used in the comprehension and creation of oral and written discourse" (Celce-Murcia, 1991: 466). In other words, grammar should not be viewed as an end in itself but as one skill that promotes the development of learners' speaking and writing.

Discourse is often referred to as "a coherent unit of language consisting of more than one sentence" (Schiffrin, as cited by Celce-Murcia, in Larsen-Freeman, 2002: 122). According to McCarthy and Carter (1994:137), the term discourse refers to connected texts as opposed to isolated sentences. According to Schiffrin (1994:28), discourse is often defined in two ways. The first is that it is "language above the sentence or above the clause" (Stubbs, 1983) cited in (Schiffrin 1994:30). The second definition, which is characterized as a functional one, views discourse as language in use.

In view of combining the formal definition of discourse (language above the sentence) and the functional definition of discourse (language in use), Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000:4) have suggested the following working definition :

...an instance of spoken or written language that has describable internal relationships of form and meaning that relate coherently to an external communicative function or purpose and a given audience/interlocutor. Furthermore, the external function or purpose can only be determined if one takes into account the context and participants (i.e., all the relevant situational, social, and cultural factors) in which the piece of discourse occurs.

Discourse Analysis has been defined in a number of different ways. Brown and Yule (1983:1) state that the "analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use". As for Cook (1989:ix), discourse analysis is an examination of "how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become meaningful and unified for their users."

From the quotes above, we observe that discourse analysis is concerned with the study of language in use. In other words, the analysis of discourse involves the study of naturally occurring language in the context in which it is used. This presupposes that the role of the discourse analyst is to investigate what that language is used for. Hence, an important aspect of discourse analysis is that texts should be regarded as wholes, beyond the level of the grammatical sentence in order for learners to be able to interpret the language in context. This seems in line with Celce-Murcia's (1991:467) when she defines the scope of discourse analysis as follows:

Going well beyond the sentence level, discourse analysis is concerned with how language users produce and interpret language in context. It examines how lexicogrammar and discourse systematically vary across social situations and, at the same time, help to define those situations.

The meaning of awareness-raising to discourse that is implied in this study is to raise learners' consciousness to the different features of the target structures in discourse so that they can see how these structures work and are used in discourse. In other words, presenting learners with the target structures in authentic discourse (or texts) and explaining how they are used can heighten their awareness for understanding and using the target tenses meaningfully and appropriately. This can be achieved through bringing the learners' attention to particular contextualized grammar item uses and discourse frames so that they can effectively use the discourse conventions and regularities in their production (Hinkel, 2002:193). According to Schmidt (1995) in Hinkel (ibid:196), when learners are exposed to models and examples, "they can become aware of regularities in input and thus accurately judge the grammaticality of structures they have never before encountered". He also states that the training of learners to look for clues in discourse and to become aware of discourse markers, promotes effective learning (in Hinkel, 2002: ibid).

1. Rationale:

For many years now, there have been active discussions regarding how communicative language instruction interacts with grammar pedagogy (Doughty and

Williams 1998; McGraw-Hill 1998; Hinkel and Fotos 2002). Indeed, a number of researchers have argued that grammar teaching should be integrated into a communicative methodology which pays attention not only to the grammatical competence but to all the other types of communicative competence (i.e., sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence). Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) and Larsen-Freeman (2002), for example, point out that communicative competence inevitably involves discourse and therefore grammar should be considered in discourse contexts along with pragmatic and sociolinguistic aspects. The importance of discourse competence in the teaching and learning process can be explained by the fact that effective listener's interpretation and understanding of discourse is determined not only by a speaker's correct production of grammatical structures but also by discourse-level patterns of language use (Tyler et al,1992:713). It can therefore be said that a learner's ability to produce a form accurately and fluently is only a part of a much larger process " in which the semantic, pragmatic and discourse appropriateness of the structure itself is judged with respect to the context in which it is used" (Celce-Murcia, 1990: 176).

The rationale of this study can be explained through the following three aspects. First, there have been consistent calls for more attention to the discourse aspects of grammar (Celce-Murcia, 1990; 1991, 2007; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000; Hughes & McCarthy, 1998; Larsen-Freeman, 2003; Rutherford, 1980). These researchers maintain that the grammar-discourse interface plays a significant role in communicative language competence and second language acquisition (SLA). In other words, the two should go together for the simple reason that the grammatical aspects alone are insufficient to make learners be competent users of the language. Second, the grammatical choices can hardly be explained without referring to discourse. Many researchers including Halliday and Hasan 1976; Chafe 1980 Givon 1983, 1990; Celce-Murcia, 1990, 1997; Olshtain and Celce-Murcia, 2003 and Larsen-Freeman 2001;2002) argue that there are various phenomena that cannot be understood if grammar is explained only at the sentence level. Learners need to be aware that these phenomena include pragmatic, discourse- level choices that

speakers and writers make (Olshtain and Celce-Murcia, 2003). In other words, in order to help learners make appropriate choices, grammar should not only include sentence-level ordering rules and options but also discourse considerations.

This means that grammar instruction should not be dealt with through decontextualized and unrelated sentences but through a discourse context which enables learners to understand all the aspects of grammatical structures and learn how these structures are used in contexts for meaningful communication. As Celce-Murcia (1990:175) puts it:

It is clearly important that we move beyond the sentence level in our conception of grammar and understand the relationship between the morphological and syntactic aspects of linguistic competence, and the various sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects of discourse competence.

The third aspect of this rationale is that EFL learners have always had problems with some of the core grammatical constructions, such as tense and aspect. These problems emerge in extended discourse rather than in individual sentences. In other words, learners usually have difficulties in the discourse distribution and function variation rather than in grammatical correctness. This is due to the fact grammar teaching nowadays is primarily organized on the basis of traditional formal paradigm. The discourse principles governing the problematic areas for learners are often overlooked. To put it another way, grammar is regarded as an abstract system of formal, context-free rules of a language. It concerns the structure of well-formed utterances and sentences, while contextual aspects of meaning and use are left to the fields of semantics and pragmatics (Purpura, 2004: 5-6),

The present study aims at investigating the effect of teaching the past perfect tense at the discourse level. We intend to see the extent to which raising learners' awareness to how this tense is used and distributed in discourse enables them to use it in a sequence of events correctly and appropriately. Thus, the objective of this study is to establish whether making students notice and analyze the use of the past perfect in a piece of discourse, will ultimately enhance their ability to produce this tense and other tenses related to it in an accurate and

meaningful way. In other words, we want to see whether raising learners' awareness to the discourse functions of the past perfect has any possible impact on their understanding and using it in an appropriate context.

To carry out this investigation, we have adapted Celce-Murcia's (1990;1991) framework to grammar instruction. Celce-Murcia's model consists of raising learners' awareness to discourse and teaching them the target grammatical structures through discourse analysis which takes into account relevant "contextual information and the entire co-text" (Celce-Murcia, 2002:156). Using this model, we intend to help a group of UFC first year students to develop their awareness to discourse so that they can understand and use the past perfect accurately and fluently.

Celce-Murcia's model advocates using discourse as the basis of teaching grammar. Celce- Murcia (1990:206) explains her model of grammar instruction in this quotation:

I want to emphasize that this discourse approach to grammar will require that students experience and analyze relevant data and subsequently apply generalizations drawn from these data to producing their own texts on topics reflecting their needs or interests.

We can draw from the above quotation that Celce-Murcia's model of teaching grammar consists of three main stages which are: reading comprehension, analysis and production. Learners should, first, explore and notice the use of the target structures in texts. Then they, with the help of the teacher, analyze the different grammatical structures so that they understand how these structures function in discourse. Finally, learners are provided with activities in which they can produce the target structures. The aim is to make them " move toward receptive and productive use of the target grammar points in their own discourse and for their own communicative purposes in context" Hinkle (2002:100).

The model presented in this study is based on the premise that learners should act as observers of written discourse and analyze samples of language use in order to

become "active explorers of language" and also to have the ability "to explore grammatical and discorsal relationships in authentic data" (Nunan, 1996:140). By designing activities that raise students' awareness or consciousness (the two terms are used interchangeably in this study) to discourse, we hope to help learners reflect upon language in order to know what forms mean and how they distribute themselves in relation to other forms in a particular text.

In this study, we are targeting the past perfect when it occurs in a sequence of events, particularly in narratives. Our choice of this tense is due to two main reasons. The first one is that this tense along with other tenses such as the past simple and the past continuous constitute a major part in the first year UFC syllabus. The second reason is that even though students seem to find this tense relatively easy, they fail to address when and why it is used in extended oral and written discourse. In addition, errors such as incorrect use of the past perfect or overuse of the past simple are frequently found in their pieces of writing. These errors seem to be due to the fact that they are taught these tenses in decontextualized and isolated sentences and also to the fact that they ignore the discourse functions of the past perfect.

Through my long experience as a teacher at the Université de Formation Continue (UFC) of Djelfa, I have noticed that these students seem to have an adequate formal knowledge of grammatical structures and can perform fairly well in standardized tests but are unable to engage in a simple conversation in English. Even after extended drills practising the tenses, these students cannot control these tenses over a sequence of related sentences. If these students seem to be good at activities such as "put the correct form of the verbs in brackets" or "supply the correct alternative", it is only because these activities are given through isolated sentences with clear tense markers.

This situation may be due to the fact that teachers at the UFC of Djelfa teach and practise tenses one form at a time and at the sentence level. The target structures are presented devoid of context or when the context is provided, with little attention given to the significant contextual items operating on the text.

Findings of two research tools used in this investigation (a teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation) indicate that these teachers seem to give much importance to the mastery of grammar rules through isolated sentences and neglect the discourse aspects of language. As a result of this, students find it difficult to see how the tenses function and how they are distributed in discourse. To put it another way, the students' underachievement and low performance in understanding and using the English tense system are due to the fact that students have learned this system bit by bit without ever learning how the bits interact in longer pieces of discourse (McCarthy and Carter,1994:2).

The assumption embodied in this research work is that EFL learners might benefit from the discourse-based approach to teaching the past perfect. The present research is, therefore, an attempt to help learners to become aware of the processes that operate when they use the language. In other words, we intend to give these learners the opportunities to be aware of how the past perfect works in discourse and how it is used and contrasted to other tenses (mainly the past simple and the past continuous) so that they can produce accurate and meaningful pieces of writing. It is with this assumption that the present study seeks to shed light on the following research question:

Can intermediate EFL learners improve their ability to understand and produce the past perfect appropriately and meaningfully when exposed to a discourse-based instruction, involving consciousness-raising activities ?

To reach our objective, an experimental study was conducted with First year students enrolled in the *Université de Formation Continue* of Djelfa (This university is the equivalent of the Open University in Britain). It should be mentioned here that I carried out this research study at the UFC because there is no English Department at the University of Djelfa and because the students who took part in the experiment were very motivated and serious and their level of language proficiency was quite acceptable.

The experiment consisted of the setting of two matching groups of 12 students each. Within a period of two months, the experimental subjects were taught

the past perfect through discourse whereas the control group were taught through decontextualized and isolated sentences. Both control and experimental subjects were tested before and after the instruction period. It was expected that the discourse-based approach to teaching the past perfect would bring about improvement in the experimental subjects' understanding and using of the past perfect in their writing. This expectation was to be verified through comparing the means of the control and experimental groups on the post-test.

2. Limitations of the study:

It is important to mention that this research study which advocates teaching grammar through discourse cannot be assumed to be generalized because of a number of limitations.

1. Only 24 students participated in this experiment. In fact, we were aware that to avoid tentative results, a research study should be conducted with a large number of students. However, due to the fact that everyone can be enrolled in the UFC, we decided to work with only 24 students taking into consideration three points: their age, their level and their availability.
2. In this study, the focus is on the past perfect and the past simple and continuous as these three forms normally occur concurrently. Hence, any conclusions derived from the findings of the study cannot be the basis to presume the same results for other grammatical items.
3. Another limitation of the study is the time factor. The whole experiment took about two months to complete, that is, from the pre-test to the post-test. Thus, the findings of the study may not reflect the actual effects of the discourse-based approach on the students' understanding and use of other grammatical structures over a longer period of time.

However, despite the above caveats, the research is still useful as an encouraging indicator of the positive effect that the experimental treatment could have on EFL students' understanding and using of the past perfect.

3. Organization of the thesis:

The present study consists of two main parts: a theoretical part and a practical one. Accordingly, it is divided into four different chapters. Chapter 1 reviews the theories and views that influenced grammar instruction. It also deals with the area of grammar and discourse. The remaining three chapters constitute the practical part. Chapter 2 is concerned with the research methodology used in the present study. It also describes the subjects, data collection instruments and the teaching procedures used. Chapter 3 consists of the data analysis and the interpretation of the results of the teachers' questionnaire, the classroom observation and the tests used for collecting data. Chapter 4 draws conclusions about the study and points out the pedagogical implications of the findings.

Chapter One

Review of the Literature

Introduction

Chapter One gives a brief review of the different theories and views that influenced grammar instruction. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into five sections. The first section deals with the structural and functional approaches to grammar instruction. In the second section, we deal with the communicative approach and the concept of communicative competence. The third section deals with the role of grammar in the communicative approach. The fourth section examines the concept of consciousness-raising and its influence on grammar instruction. In the last section, we explore how grammar and discourse are related to each other and how it is useful to teach grammar through discourse rather than through isolated sentences. We also examine the use of the past perfect at the level of both isolated sentences and discourse.

1.1 The Structural Approach:

Structuralism grew out of the dissatisfaction with the traditional grammar which was based on the belief that grammar could be learned through direct instruction and through grammatical analysis and translation of written form (Hinkel, 2002:16). The structural view to language teaching placed grammar in the center of language learning and teaching. It viewed language mainly as a system of structurally related elements for the coding of meaning. In other words, structural linguists emphasize the idea that language learning should be seen in terms of the mastery of the elements in the grammar system (that is, phonological units, grammar units, and lexical items). The structural approach is, then, based on the idea that each item will be fully mastered before another item is introduced and that each item should be treated as discrete and separate. Indeed structuralists posit that meaningful linguistic structures should be isolated into their smallest components. According to Wilkins (cited in Ellis, 1994:99) the structural approach employs ‘a *synthetic teaching strategy*’ which is defined as “one in which the different parts of the language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole of the language has been built up”. It has been hypothesized by many researchers that the structural approach

emphasized the idea that ‘knowing’ a language is associated with ‘knowing the ‘form’ or ‘structure’ (Ur, 2000:378).

According to the structural view, the mastery of the elements of grammar provides the learner an opportunity to effective preparation for the realization of communication (Widdowson, 1978; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Stern (1993:140) indicates that the main concern of this structure-centered approach is to help students know the language. It draws a special attention to correct sentence formation. Cook (1994:53) states that this approach advocates that learning a language is breaking the language in to smaller pieces so as to examine and know its form because structuralists believe that the knowledge of linguistic forms is the basis for language use. Wilkins (1976:45) comments on this by saying that :

Parts of the language are taught separately and step by step that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of part until the whole structure of the language has been built up. At any one time, the learner is being exposed to deliberately limited sample of language.

It follows that the structural approach is based on the premise that learners should know the language not use it. The are encouraged to memorize the grammatical structures which are most of the time explained and taught at the level of the sentence. As a consequence of this, learners become unable to manage the language at some higher level (i.e., beyond the sentence) and , therefore, cannot use the language communicatively.

1.2 The Functional Approach:

The main objective of this approach is that language cannot be taught in a vacuum and that it must be used for a purpose. This approach claims that communication is the goal of second or foreign language instruction and that the syllabus of a language course should not be organized around grammar but around notions and/or functions.

Unlike the structural approach, the functional approach is a model of performance. It is concerned with meaning, function, and language in use.

According to Halliday (1994:6), the functional approach has the following two features:

1. It is based on systemic theory: Systemic functional theory views language as a resource people use to accomplish their purposes by expressing meaning in context. Halliday (ibid: 7-11) describes the fundamental concepts of this theory, saying that language exists and must be studied in various contexts. Functional-systemic grammar is concerned with making clear interaction between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. It focuses on the functional aspect attempts to account for how language is used.
2. It is a discourse approach. It aims to provide two levels of discourse analysis: the first is the understanding of the text. The second is the evaluation of the text. According to this approach, grammar is not isolated from other areas of language. It is closely related to meaning and discourse. As Halliday (1994: xvii) points out:

A text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one. But meanings are realized through wordings; and without a theory of wordings --- that is, a grammar --- there is no way of making explicit one's interpretation of the meaning of a text".

According to Halliday (ibid: 141), language cannot be explained simply by listing its different uses and learners should be given opportunities to use the language rather than merely study it. In this sense, grammar, then, should be viewed as a tool to use the language. Though this approach advocates explicit grammatical instruction, it enormously differs from the 'traditional' grammar teaching in the sense that it is a top down approach which starts with whole texts and 'works down' rather than beginning with individual grammatical items and working up (Nunan,1996:152).

1.3 The Communicative Approach:

The communicative language teaching (CLT) originates in the work of anthropological linguists in the U.S (e.g., Hymes, 1972) and functional linguists in

Britain (e.g., Halliday,1973) who view language as an instrument of communication. It came as a reaction to the emphasis of the formal aspects of language that prevailed in the earlier approaches which viewed language as being the object of study, where grammatical forms were taught explicitly and in isolation. According to Celce-Murcia et al (1997:144), earlier methods were based on the conscious presentation of grammatical forms and structures or lexical items and did not adequately prepare learners for the effective and appropriate use of language in natural communication. On the contrary to these methods, CLT involves learners in real-life communication where successful achievement in communication is more important than the accuracy of the language (Richards,2006:85). The objective of language teaching is , therefore, to help learners to be able to communicate by using the target language. According to Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2003:731), this can be only be possible through :

Creating suitable contexts for interaction, illustrating speaker/ hearer and reader/ writer exchanges, and providing learners with opportunities to process language within a variety of situations are all necessary for developing learning environments where language acquisition and language development can take place within a communicative perspective.

In this quotation, It is implied that the goal of the CLT is to make learners use the language appropriately. This can be done through interaction and meaning negotiation where learners must be given the opportunity to interact in the target language and “to practice their productive as well as their receptive language skills in meaningful contexts at the level of discourse” (Olshtain and Celce-Murcia (2003:732). According to Celce-Murcia et al (1995:146), the primary goal of language instruction in the communicative perspective should be:

to go beyond the teaching of the discrete elements, rules, and patterns of the target language and to develop the learner’s ability to take part in spontaneous and meaningful communication in different contexts, with different people, on different topics, for different purposes.

This seems in line with Widdowson's (1978: 2) statement that there should be an emphasis on teaching language as communication and that the main objective of teaching language as communication and for communication should be to enable students to use the knowledge that they have been taught for effective communication. This, according to him, can be achieved not at the level of the sentence but at that of text and discourse (1978:4). It is for this reason that many researchers claim that classroom goals should, then, be to build the learner's communicative competence. In what follows, we shall deal with the origin and the different views concerning the concept of the communicative competence.

1.3.1 Communicative Competence

With the emergence of the communicative approach to L2 teaching, the main pedagogical goal has been to develop learners' communicative competence (i.e., the ability to use the linguistic system in an effective and appropriate way). The term 'communicative competence' was first coined by Hymes (1971) who defined it as the knowledge of both rules of grammar and rules of language use appropriate to a given context. Hymes put forward his notion of communicative competence as a reaction to that of Chomsky's (1957,1965) notion of competence. In fact, Chomsky specified the language competence only with reference to grammatical features of language, that is phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics (i.e., neglecting any consideration of social factors). For Chomsky, therefore, the focus of linguistic theory is to characterize the abstract abilities speakers possess that enable them to produce grammatically correct sentences in a language. As Widdowson (1983: 129) notes:

For Chomsky, competence is the knowledge of something much more abstract than language: it is a knowledge of systems of rules, of parameters or principles, configurations in the mind for which language simply serves as evidence".

Thus, the Chomskyan inquiry of language competence does not concern itself with language use in actual discourse. In contrast, Hymes's (1972) theory of communicative competence is a definition of what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. Hymes argues that in

addition to linguistic competence (the rules for describing sound systems and for combining sounds into morphemes and morphemes into sentences), one also needs notions of sociolinguistic competence (the rules for using language appropriately in context) to account for language acquisition and language use.

Hymes' (1972) conceptualisation of communicative competence was further developed by many other researchers. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), posit that the grammatical competence is merely one component of the communicative competence which consists of three more components (sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence) and all of these components are interrelated; they cannot be developed or measured in isolation and "an increase in one component interacts with other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence" (Larsen-Freeman,1991:17). According to Widdowson (1983:135), communicative competence is more than knowing the rules in view of using them to make sentences but :

It is much more a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, and a kit of rules, so to speak, and being able to apply the rules to make whatever adjustments are necessary according to contextual standards.

The above quotation explains why native speakers of a language can have a good command of thousands of preassembled language chunks and use them in their speech. This ability allows the native speaker to attend to other aspects of communication and to plan larger pieces of discourse. It follows that knowing the rules of grammatical structures and being able to use these rules to form sentences is not necessarily a sufficient tool for communicating meaningfully and appropriately within a target situation.

Given that communicative competence is the goal of a language classroom, then instruction needs to point toward all of its components. In other words, the main focus of language teaching should be geared toward developing students' communicative competence, preparing them for real life communication in the target language. For the purpose of our study, we need to define and contrast two

components of communicative competence which are grammatical competence and discourse competence.

1.3.2 Grammatical Competence Vs Discourse competence

In the Canale and Swain (1980) framework, grammatical competence refers to the knowledge of the rules of morphology, syntax, lexical items and phonology “to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances” (Hoekje and Williams, 1989:243). It is, thus, concerned with ‘knowledge of the language itself, its form and meaning’ (Hedge 2000:46). This competence enables the language user to identify the lexical, morphological, syntactic and phonological features of language and is demonstrated by using these features to interpret and form words and sentences (Savignon 2001:17). However, even if the grammatical competence is seen to be very important, it does not give a complete picture of the learners’ communicative competence. To put it another way, even though the grammatical competence is an important dimension of language learning, it is clearly not all that is involved in learning a language. This is demonstrated by the fact that learners may master rules of sentence formation but are not very successful at being able to use the language for meaningful communication. It is, thus, equally important to help these learners use the language for communication through helping them to produce and interpret cohesive and coherent discourse (i.e., enabling them to develop their discourse competence). Discourse competence, thus, is concerned not with isolated words or phrases but “with the interconnectedness of a series of utterances, written words, and/or phrases to form a text, a meaningful whole” (Savignon 2001:ibid). While grammatical competence focuses on sentence-level grammar, discourse competence is concerned with intersentential relationships (Brown, 2000:247). Canale and Swain (1980) refer to discourse competence as the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres. This seems consistent with Celce-Murcia’s (1996: 3) view when she claims that discourse competence refers to the mastery of the way grammatical forms and meanings are combined to develop consistent and meaningful texts (i.e., how texts are developed as a result of the

combination of grammar and meaning). We can draw from this that a learner's grammatical competence is only a part of a larger process where linguistic, sociocultural and pragmatic functions of the language are taken into consideration (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2005:735). To put it another way, there is a need to develop a learner's discourse competence so that he can foster his ability to be not only accurate but also fluent in the target language.

1.4 The role of grammar in the communicative approach:

With the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), two approaches have had direct influence on grammar teaching and paved the way to some controversial issues on the role of grammar in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). One of the most prominent issues is whether grammar teaching benefits the learning of a new language. On the one hand, there are those who favour a 'zero position' and argue it would be best to drop all explicit teaching of grammatical structures. They argue that grammar instruction has only a minimal effect on the acquisition of language proficiency in a second language. On the other hand, there are those who favour explicit grammar teaching. They maintain that formal instruction may be necessary to ensure that learners obtain the data they need to acquire the target grammatical forms.

Even though many researchers (Dulay and Burt, 1973; Krashen, 1981;1982, Krashen and Terrell, 1982; Prahbu, 1987) have all claimed the fact that grammar instruction plays a limited role to help learners acquire grammatical structures, it is Krashen (1981,1983) who represents the most extreme views against grammar instruction. According to Krashen (1981:1), the adult learner possesses two systems for developing ability in second languages. The first is 'acquisition' which is a relatively effortless inductive process and is similar to the way children learn their first language. According to Krashen (1982:26), language acquisition is a subconscious process: learners are not aware that they are acquiring language; they are only aware that they are communicating. It follows that when using the language, learners are not aware that they are internalizing the grammatical rules. They only have a 'feel of correctness' (Krashen, 1982:ibid). The second is learning,

which is a more conscious and controlled effort, such as often found in classrooms. In other words, learning is a conscious process to internalize grammar rules. Krashen (1982:26), states that :

Learning refers to 'explicit' knowledge of rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them. This kind of knowledge is different from language acquisition, which could be termed 'implicit'.

It is worthy mentioning here that Krashen's distinction between L2 acquisition and L2 learning has led to the development of acquired L2 grammar and learned L2 grammar. Krashen points out that L2 acquired grammar and L2 learned grammar are separate and one cannot lead to the other. In other words, learned L2 grammar can by no means turn into acquired L2 grammar. In addition, Krashen suggests that learned L2 grammar is short-lasting and does not ensure spontaneity in communicative L2 production whereas acquired L2 grammar ensures accurate long-term spontaneous communicative production. It follows that acquired L2 grammar develops implicitly (or unconsciously) rather than explicitly. It is for this reason that Krashen argues that explicit L2 grammar cannot lead to the development of acquired grammar. He further suggests that the only requirement for language acquisition (and hence grammar acquisition) is the learner's exposure to a great deal of comprehensible input in the target language.

According to Krashen (1985:26), the learner acquires his L2 grammar by receiving and understanding messages (i.e., by receiving 'comprehensible input'). As Krashen (1985:206) puts it:

....we acquire language by understanding messages, by obtaining comprehensible input. Direct evidence supporting the input hypothesis includes studies showing that when acquirers obtain more comprehensible input, they acquire more of the target language.

On the basis of the claims made by Krashen, there are two points to be considered about grammar instruction :

1. Formal grammar instruction plays a minor role in the development of acquired L2 grammar in adult learners. In other words, a focus on form has

no direct effect on language acquisition, and therefore should not be an important part of language teaching. Though Krashen admits that grammar does have an effect on language acquisition, he thinks that this effect is 'peripheral and fragile' and 'rapidly forgotten'.

2. Language is too complex to be deliberately taught and learned, and there is evidence that people develop high levels of second language competence without formal instruction that the best way of increasing grammatical accuracy is comprehensible input. In Krashen's (1983:55) terms, "language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning".

However, the claims against formal grammar instruction have led to another position which advocates the reconsideration of grammar teaching in the L2 classroom. According to this position, grammar is too important to be ignored, and that without grammar instruction, learners' language development will be severely constrained. As a matter of fact, a large number of classroom-based studies as well as extensive reviews of studies on the effects of instruction over the past 20 years (R. Ellis, 1985, 1990, 1994, 2001, 2002a; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Long, 1983, 1988, 1991) have attempted to highlight the effects of instruction on the development of specific target language forms. Researchers such as White, 1987; Doughty, 1991; Lightbown, 1992; Lightbown & Spada, 1990 as well as Nassaji & Swain, 2000 have all indicated that grammatical instruction has a significant effect on the attainment of accuracy.

Explicit teaching or formal grammar instruction is defined as the teaching of language with the emphasis on focusing the learner's attention on forms in order that they become conscious of the rules of those forms and eventually acquire the language. Sharwood Smith (1993:53) defines explicit grammar teaching as teaching in which "the learners are being made conscious of the language", while Celce-Murcia (1991:406) notes that:

Any activity that focuses the learner's attention on the form of a message (ideally, in the context of meaning and function of the message) constitutes formal grammar instruction.

Celce-Murcia (1991:407), argues that if adult learners do not pay attention to the form of the target language, they will certainly develop an incomplete and imperfect interlanguage that reflects learning problems. She further explains that such learners "may become fluent, but in terms of their grammatical development, they plateau at an intermediate or low-intermediate level and are unable to progress" (Celce-Murcia,1991: *ibid*).

A number of researchers have shown that explicit grammar teaching is likely to develop learners' internal grammar. Indeed, Lightbown and Spada (1990); White (1991); White, Spada, Lightbown, and Ranta (1991) (cited in Fotos, 2002:325) suggest that an explicit focus on a grammatical feature enhances language input because it helps learners develop knowledge about the feature and makes them become more aware of the feature in communicative input afterwards. Similarly, DeKeyser (1995) in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005:736) points out that explicit teaching of grammar rules is more effective as learners induce their own rules based on discourse and contextual information. Ellis (1994:623) concludes in a subsequent research that there is strong evidence that L2 learners do indeed progress most rapidly when they experience form-focused instruction, provided that it is combined with communicative exposure and provided also that the formal instruction is extensive and well planned. According to Ellis (*ibid*:215), explicit teaching serves to

- monitor language use and, thereby, to improve accuracy in output.
- facilitate noticing of new forms and new form-function mappings in the input; and
- make possible "noticing the gap" (i.e., comparing what is noticed in the input with what learners are producing themselves).

The last item is explained by Hedge (2000:150) when she claims that explicit teaching helps learners to appreciate the gap that exists between the language which they produce and native-speaker forms as idealized in grammar text.

It is worth mentioning that many researchers (Ellis,1997; Lightbown,1998; Robinson,1995; White,1987) have advocated that explicit grammar teaching plays a great role in raising learners' consciousness about grammar and in helping them

produce statements describing the way grammar functions. In other words, learners can be made aware of how the different grammatical structures are formed. Rod Ellis (2002: 216) posits that explicit teaching helps learners notice features in the input and understand the meanings they realize. Similarly, Fotos (1994:320) claims that recent empirical evidence has shown that explicit instruction helps students to attain high levels of accuracy in the target language because explicit instruction not only activates their previous knowledge of the target structures but also draws their attention to the forms. According to Ellis (2002:224), the main goal of explicit and focused grammar instruction is to raise learners' awareness of grammatical features and systems, and most importantly, to help learners notice the grammar regularities.

1.5 The Role of Consciousness- Raising in L2 Acquisition:

The term consciousness-raising was first introduced by Sharwood-Smith (1981). The main focus of this concept is to raise the learners' consciousness of the forms of the target structures in order to promote their development in target language. Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1981:160) define consciousness-raising as follows:

“Conscious-raising is a continuum ranging from intensive promotion of conscious awareness through pedagogical role articulation on one end, to the mere exposure of the learner to specific grammatical phenomenon on the other.”

There are, in fact, two principles that underlie the concept of consciousness-raising (Schmidt,1990:138). The first one is that formal instruction is deemed important and even desirable as it can help facilitate the acquisition of grammatical knowledge. Proponent of C-R argue that the exposure to comprehensible input is necessary, but not sufficient to bring about successful acquisition. The second principle is that it is more effective to develop awareness of specific grammatical structures at the level of understanding than to spontaneously require the learner to produce them in communication. As Ellis (2002:169) puts it:

the aim of this kind of grammar teaching (C R) is not to enable the learner to perform a structure correctly but simply to help him/her to ‘know’ about it.

Grammatical consciousness-raising, according to Nunan (1991:149) contrasts with the traditional grammar instruction in a number of ways. First, it gives much attention to form-function relationships. Second, it tries “to situate the grammatical structures and elements in question with a broader discursal context” (Nunan,1991: ibid). Nunan (1991: ibid) states that CR rejects the notion “that once something has been taught it will of necessity have been learnt”. Grammar, therefore, should be regarded as “the raising to consciousness in the learners of the ways grammatical and discourse processes operate and interact in the target language ” (Nunan 1988:35). Similarly, Rutherford rejects the traditional view of grammar instruction that language is made up of discrete entities and that learning a language consists of the accumulation of these entities. He also argues that learners cannot acquire the grammatical rules directly due to their complexity and also to the interrelationships between them (Rutherford, 1987:25). Following Schmidt (1993: 3), in order for learners to focus on forms and consciously notice the features of the target language, learners should go through three steps. They should first perceive both form and functions of the language in a given context. Next, they should be aware of the relationship between the target form and their context of use. Finally, they should understand the rule with which they have become familiar.

Rutherford (1994:18) emphasizes the significant role of learners’ internal processes that enable them to test their hypotheses about language. Thus, according to Rutherford and Sharwood-Smith (1985:284), the main goals of consciousness-raising are:

- to give the learner the necessary grammar exposure in order to realign the circles of understanding, and to facilitate the awareness of L1 grammar.
- to point out features of L2 so learners can capture and process understandable meaning by connecting the “new” with what they already know.

Ellis (1997: 215) states that consciousness-raising is directed at the formation of explicit knowledge which is "conscious , learnable , and verbalisable", but , according to him (2006:160), CR can contribute to implicit knowledge. Ellis argues

that implicit knowledge needs to be made explicit for language use, and he proposes three processes that are involved in the acquisition of implicit knowledge. First, the learner notices or discovers a structure in the text. Second the learner compares this structure with the grammar he or she has already learnt. Third, the learner integrates the new structure into her/his mental grammar. Ellis (2006:160) explains the above three processes as follows:

- noticing (the learner becomes conscious of the presence of a linguistic feature in the input, whereas she had ignored it)
- comparing (the learner compares the linguistic feature noticed in the input with her own mental grammar, registering to what extent there is a " gap " between the input and her grammar)
- integrating (the learner integrates a representation of the new linguistic feature into her mental grammar).

The next section is concerned with another approach to grammar instruction which combines the positive aspects of natural learning and explicit grammar instruction.

1.6 The Discourse-based Approach to Teaching Grammar:

Recent Research (Celce-Murcia,1990,1991,2002; Larsen-Freeman,1993;McCarthy and Hughes,1998) has shown that to enable learners to become competent and efficient users of language, grammar should not presented to them in a piecemeal way but rather in a way to help them to be able to :

- use language for a range of different purposes and functions.
- vary their use of language according to the setting and the participants.
- communicate meaningfully and appropriately.

This has led researchers to state that in order to maximize learners' communication abilities, grammar should be given a broader aspect rather than a narrow one. For them, grammar should necessarily operate not at the level of the sentence but at the level of discourse. As Celce-Murcia (1997:175) puts it:

It is clearly important that we move beyond the sentence level in our conceptions of grammar and understand the relationship between the morphological and syntactic aspects of linguistic competence , and the various sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects of discourse competence.

The call for teaching grammar in discourse has sprung from the belief that the traditional paradigms based on sentence-level activities do not sufficiently enable learners to make all the kinds of grammatical choices they need when using the target language. This is due to the fact that “grammatical phenomena require discursal explanations” (Hughes and McCarthy, 1998:265). In other words, the grammatical structures are often best explained when we refer to context, taking into account the necessary interpersonal aspects of communication. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983 :174), grammatical structures can be fully mastered only when learners “ consider their discourse –pragmatic and interactional features as well as their formal semantic features”. For Nunan (1996:102), when the grammatical structures are presented in isolated sentences, learners are not given the opportunity to realize the relationship between these structures and the discursal contexts in which they occur.

The integration of discourse in grammar pedagogy was influenced by the work of many functional linguists who claim that an appropriate use of certain grammatical structures depends on how well the discourse features that go beyond sentences are mastered (Celce-Murcia, 1991:469). Halliday and Hasan (1976) (cited in Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000:53) refer to these features as cohesion which is defined as “the set of resources for constructing relations in discourse which transcend grammatical structure” (Halliday, 1994: 309). Halliday and Hasan (1976) proposed five kinds of cohesive ties in language that cross sentence boundaries and help create text. These ties are : reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Later, these five cohesive devices were reorganized and extended to include other discourse phenomena such as adjacency pairs, parallelism, theme-rheme development, and given-new information (Halliday and Hasan, 1989). In addition to this, the work of discourse analysts such as Chafe (1980); Schiffrin (1987); Tannen (1989) also contributed to the understanding of grammar and discourse. They all emphasized the fact that the individual sentences in the text hang together and relate to each other to make a well-formed text and that linguistic patterns exist across patterns of stretches of text. They also claim that grammar should place importance on both the texts within which grammatical points are

presented and on the connecting roles fulfilled by the various grammatical forms. This seems consonant with McCarthy (1991: 62) when he notes that:

Knowing grammar can no longer mean knowing only how a form functions within a given sentence, but must also include discourse features of grammatical forms. Thus knowing the tense-aspect system in English cannot mean only knowing which forms constitute each tense-aspect combination, but must also mean knowing how each tense-aspect combination can be used to create temporal continuity as well as signaling other relationships within the larger text.

Most researchers (including Levinson, 1983; Celce-Murcia, 1990; Hughes and Carter, 1991; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000) suggest that all languages have context-dependent options in grammar that help learners to produce pragmatic and discourse functions and that few grammar rules are context-free (Celce-Murcia, and Olshtain, 2000:52). Similarly, Hughes and Carter (1991:54) posit that only few rules of English grammar can be applied and used without reference to context. Levinson (1983, cited in Nunan, 1996:70) for his part, argues that there are very few context-free rules, and that most of the rule-governed choices that a language user makes are context dependent. It follows that the grammatical choices that one makes do not only depend on the grammar rules but “on certain conditions being met in terms of meaning, situational context and discourse contexts” (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000:52).

The fact that most grammar rules are context-dependent has led many researchers to assert that grammar rules may explain the grammatical choice but do not give adequate and precise guidelines to generate this choice. To put it another way, grammar rules derived from isolated sentences can explain only partially what discourse can fully do. Hughes and McCarthy (1998:272) point out that “sentence-based rules simply do not say enough to help the learner make appropriate choices to stage their messages in the way native speakers do”. According to Nunan (1996:12), grammatical rules derived from sentence level analysis are almost certain to overgeneralise, and to lead learners into error when they attempt to deploy such rules in communication. This is due to the fact that “ grammatical rules are not

airtight formulations as they always have exceptions and often appear to be arbitrary formulations” (Celce-Murcia and Larsen Freeman,1999:3). As Larsen-Freeman (2000:10) puts it:

The generalizations that rules capture are rarely broad enough. There are always exceptions. These are not necessarily due to the fact that rules are poorly formulated, but rather that grammar is exquisitely flexible, allowing for the expression of new meanings.

Another problem with the grammar rules is that they are often simplistic and do not account for the large number of cases and examples that learners come across in real life. This is due to the fact that rules usually deal with form without taking into consideration the meanings a grammar point may express (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 10). Furthermore, rules are often difficult for EFL students to apply them when it comes to output (Hinkel, 2004:18).

However, there is now a general agreement among researchers that to overcome the problems of rules having a limited role in the acquisition of grammatical structures, teachers should examine grammar from above the sentential level. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983:4) support this view by claiming that:

“Teachers (and consequently their students) are helped by understanding English when generalisations can be made at the highest possible level of language...Subsentential and sentential rules can sometimes appear arbitrary and make learning more difficult. Giving students reasons for why things are the way they are can aid students in learning English grammar.”

The benefit of a discourse-based approach to teaching grammar is also exemplified by the fact when learners are presented with grammar through discourse, they can develop an understanding of how language works (Olshtain 1988, cited in Celce-Murcia, 1990:206). While sentence-based grammar focuses on formal paradigms, morpho-syntactic rules, and accuracy, discourse-based grammar adopts a "form and use-based" perspective (Purpura, 2004:13), focusing on functional paradigms, discourse principles, and appropriateness. In the same vein, Hughes and McCarthy (1998:281) argue that a discourse-based choice to teaching

grammar “is a fruitful way of teaching appropriate and accurate language use”. They (ibid:282) go on by stating that a discourse-based approach to teaching grammar is beneficial in the sense that it:

- acknowledges the indissoluble link between structure and function in context and aims to incorporate issues of appropriateness and use at the heart of the explanation
- it highlights the interpersonal aspects of language use
- can be of particular help to the non-analytical learner or more generally to the language professional keen to promote an awareness-raising approach to language learning
- can provide insights into areas of grammar previously lacking satisfactory explanation

Moreover, recent research has shown that the discourse-based approach may help improve grammar instruction due to the advantages it demonstrates. Indeed, using discourse as the basis of teaching grammar helps students enhance a deeper understanding of the grammatical functions and increases their awareness of the different grammatical options that exist within the text (McCarthy and Carter, 1994: 12). Furthermore, learners are thought to benefit greatly from learning how various grammatical features and grammatical systems are used in authentic discourse. It is, in fact, believed that when students analyze discourse by themselves (or with the help of the teachers), they become not only able to interpret the different grammar rules they have already learnt but also more aware of how language is used. This awareness supports their language development and makes their learning meaningful, useful and practical (Burton, 2000:24). Moreover, when grammar is examined beyond the level of the sentence, learners can "understand what forms mean and how they distribute themselves in relation to similar forms within a particular genre or register modality" (Celce-Murcia, 1990:212). Furthermore, Hughes and McCarthy (1998:264) point out that a discourse-based approach can also raise learners' motivation due to the fact that it provides them with different choices. They go on to conclude that:

Learners are more motivated to learn grammar by seeing how language structures function in discourse than simply to memorize the grammatical rules in isolation from discourse.

Researchers including (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2005; Grabe,1991; Widdowson, 1979, 1993) also support the view that when grammar is examined from beyond the level of isolated sentences, learners can monitor both top-down and bottom-up knowledge. According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005:733), the top down and bottom-up processes should not be applicable to reading only but also to grammar when viewed from a discourse perspective. They (2005: *ibid*) explain the two processes as follows:

Top-down processing involves contextual factors such as sociocultural knowledge and task assessment for producing or interpreting discourse, while bottom-up processing are the choices one makes regarding the words, phrases, and sentence structures comprising the discourse of the task.

According to (Grabe, 1991) cited in (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2005:734), a discourse-processing is simultaneously top-down and bottom-up. It follows that in a discourse-based treatment of grammar, students work out meanings of words and structures to construct the sentence meanings and proceed upward to process and comprehend discourse meanings (bottom-up processing). The students can also go about forming hypotheses in putting the text in its appropriate setting instead of decoding every element such as words and sentences (top-down processing). This means that in a top-down processing, the students are set to a contextual enquiry, bringing the non-linguistic clues that help situate the communicative event and elaborate meanings so that they become explicit (Widdowson, 1979,1983).

McCarthy and Carter (1994:xii) posit that teaching different items of grammar through the analysis of discourse has the advantage of enabling learners to become efficient users of the language. As they put it (*ibid*) :

In the case of grammar, in particular, the focus on text and discourse can help us to notice and analyze aspects of usage which have previously gone unnoticed and untaught. One connected argument here is that the better a text analyst the teacher can be , the better equipped – all other things being equal- his or her students are likely to be in using the language appropriately.

In this quote, McCarthy and Carter highlight the importance of using discourse analysis in grammar instruction. It implies that when used as the basis of teaching grammar, discourse analysis helps learners get a deeper understanding of the grammatical functions and increase their awareness of the different grammatical options that exist within the text. As Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005:774) put it:

Students learning a new language need to become aware of the repertoire of grammatical choices in that language, but more importantly they need to become aware of the conditioning role of discourse and context, which guides the language user in making appropriate choices.

1.6.1 Teaching Tenses through Discourse:

Most EFL researchers recognize the fact that tense-aspect in English is difficult for learners to master. They claim that learners particularly encounter difficulties in mastering the meaning and usages of tense and aspect. According to McCarthy(1991:62), tenses in general are a “traditional stumbling-block for learners” despite the fact that many grammatical rules capture the structural facts concerning the tense system. According to Bardovi-Harlig (1992:252), learners have more difficulty with the meaning and use of the tense –aspect inflections than with the form. Furthermore, learners usually encounter difficulties to understand what sets one tense-aspect form apart from the others, and why certain forms cluster together. Many researchers believe that these learners’ difficulties are mainly due to the fact that tense-aspect in English is not only a grammatical construct but also a discourse phenomenon. It performs textual and interpersonal functions in addition to expressing temporal-ideational meanings (McCarthy, 1998:93-94). According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000:152), the tense-aspect choice requires both grammatical and discourse explanations. Other researchers believe that these learners’ difficulties are also due to the fact learners are taught tenses through isolated sentences which highlight rules that work for most situations. Larsen-Freeman et al (2002:13) note that English verb tenses are often taught at the level of individual sentences, with no emphasis of contrasting them within an overall system. As a result of this, learners cannot understand how these tenses interact

with one another in longer pieces of discourse. As Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983:161) put it:

A limitation of sentence-based account of English tense, aspect and modality –even if well contextualized- is that such accounts fail to capture the fact that certain tenses, aspect and modality combinations tend to occur together in discourse whereas others do not.

It follows that individual sentences when presented in isolation do not provide learners with sufficient context to learn when and why tenses are used and how they are contrasted to one another. This is due to the fact that the sentence-level approach obscures the fact that the tense-aspect combinations work together to contribute to the cohesion of discourse (Larsen-Freeman et al, 2002: 14) and also to the fact the functions of many tense-aspect markers at the discourse level are quite different from what students have been taught about these markers at the sentence-level (Celce-Murcia, 1997:179). This has led researchers to claim that it is necessary to relate the teaching of tense-aspect form with discourse functions. In what follows, we will discuss how the past perfect tense is treated in both of the two paradigms (the sentence- level and the discourse-level).

1.6.2 The Past Perfect at the Sentence Level:

When we examine how the past perfect is dealt with in grammar reference books, we find that most of them treat this tense from a sentence-level perspective. For example, Quirk et al (1972:92) provide the following description: “ the past perfect has the meaning of the past-in-the past.” Frank (1972:82) gives another variant: “ The past perfect tense expresses one past time before another past time”. Azar (1989: 42) provides a similar answer when she states that “ the past perfect expresses an activity that occurred before another time in the past”. It is clear from these definitions that the above grammar reference books view grammar as a sentence-level phenomenon. In other words, they draw the learners’ attention to the

fact that when two past actions are used in a sentence, the one that occurred first should be used in the past perfect and the one that occurred second should be used in the past simple. As it is shown in the following example:

- *Before he graduated, he had published a book.*

However, it should be noted that the already stated sentence-level descriptions of the past perfect, though not certainly false, are not insightful in the sense that they state that there are occasions under which that past perfect need not to be used. According to Quirk et al (1972:92), the past simple and the past perfect are interchangeable. They provide the following example:

- *I ate my lunch after my wife came / had come home from her shopping.*

Similarly, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983:65) posit that with the existence of words like 'before' or 'after' which already tell us the order of events, the past simple may be used instead of the past perfect without any loss of meaning.

It is, thus, clear that when explained from a sentence-level perspective, the past perfect tense uses might be ambiguous and limited. This is due to the fact that sentence-level analyses focus on the form of the past perfect and neglect its discourse functions.

1.6.3 The Use of the Past Perfect in Discourse:

Taking into account authentic discourse and communicative contexts, researchers are now focusing on the discourse functions of tenses. They claim that a move from sentence level analysis to discourse level analysis is particularly necessary to understand the discourse functions of tenses. On the basis of the discourse level analysis, many researchers recognize that at least in narratives, the past perfect cannot be fully analyzed, learned and taught except in longer stretches of sentences. Celce-Murcia (2002:121), argues that we can explain only part of English grammar at the sentence level (as with the prior-event meanings of the past perfect). She also claims that to have a full understanding of the past perfect, we must also understand how it functions at the discourse level.

As can be inferred from recent literature about the discourse-based approach to grammar instruction, the difference between a discourse level and sentence level treatments of the past perfect is that in the latter learners expect rules that “explain the grammatical choice but do not offer precise guidelines to generate the choice when appropriate (Hughes and Carter, 1998: 269) whereas in the former, learners are given the opportunity to understand how and why the target forms are related to one another. Hughes and McCarthy (1998:67) expound on this by stating that:

Examining the discourse conditions under which the past perfect occurs suggests a broad macrofunction for the tense form at a level beyond the sentence in terms of how clauses narrating events relate to one another, with some being backgrounded and others foregrounded as main events.

Research on tense-aspect and narrative structure has shown the narrative discourse is structured into the foreground and the background (Hopper, 1979). The foreground consists of clauses about the main events that make up the story line. They contribute to the temporal development of the narrative. They tend to be usually marked by the past simple or the past continuous. The background provides supportive material for the narrated events and are usually marked by the past perfect.

According to Bardovi-Harlig (1990:193), the past perfect in a narrative discourse is used to give background information about past events. She further explains that the background (usually used in the past perfect) provides information which elaborates or evaluates events in the foreground. She (1992: 112) also claims that the foreground events usually used in the past simple occur in chronological order (what happened first is reported first, what happened second is reported second...etc). This seems consonant with Celce-Mucia and Olshtain (2005: 736) when they note that the main story line (or foreground) in a piece of discourse is usually presented in the simple past tense, whereas the background information is usually signalled by the use of the past perfect. Similarly, Hatch

(1992:110) states that the backbone event verbs in a narrative are marked with the simple past tense whereas the pluperfect (past perfect) is used to show events that occurred earlier. When interacted with the past perfect, the past simple reflects the sequence of events (i.e., the chronological order of events) whereas the past continuous is used to imply simultaneity (Quirk et al, 1972:1455) or repeated activities during a limited period (Bardovi-Harlig, 1990:193). The background in a piece of narrative discourse (expressed by the past perfect), thus, does not reflect chronological order and is usually used to set the scene or give comments about events in the foreground. In their grammar reference book, *‘Exploring Grammar in Context’*, Carter et al (2000:11) note that “ because the past perfect describes events which happened before other events , it is used as a background to a past situation to give clear explanations why past events happened.” They (ibid:14) , further, explain that due to the fact that the past perfect is used to give explanations, it is often used :

- In a clause after a reporting speech or thought, e.g. ‘She said that she hadn’t seen him.’
- In a relative clause to give more background information about a noun, e.g. ‘ ...the house, which had been sold three times in five years, was now worth £200,000.
- In a clause giving details of background information to a past event. These clauses often begin with a conjunction or adverbials phrase of time, e.g. ‘ By Friday, the bomb disposal team had made the shop safe. The staff returned to work.’

Moreover, the past perfect can express another function which can be understood only with reference to discourse. As Celce-Murcia (1990:179) notes “ the past perfect is used rarely but strategically in written narratives to signal the writers’ purpose for relating the narrative”. To explain her statement, she provides us with the following piece of discourse:

The students sat on the bleachers of Pauley Pavilion watching the faculty enter in their caps and gowns. Dignitaries continued to arrive while the band played a festive melody for the

onlookers. To the cheers of the crowd, President Clinton came in and took his assigned seat on the podium.. UCLA's 75th anniversary **had begun**.

(Celce-Murcia,1990:180)

According to Celce-Murcia (1990:181), the past perfect in the above short discourse is not used as a prior event but “to signal an important climax, breakthrough, discovery or a culmination of every thing else that has been stated”. She(*ibid*) adds that such use of the past perfect is usually preceded by the past simple tense. To paraphrase her, writers use the past perfect in written narratives in order to express an important point in mind once the setting has been prepared with the simple past.

It is clear that the above uses of the past perfect are not sentence- level but discourse-level uses which can by no means be conveyed to learners through isolated sentences but “ through exposure to and engagement with appropriate authentic texts” (Celce- Murcia, 2002:121). Learners are believed to benefit greatly from learning the past perfect through discourse in the sense that it not only helps them to understand the concept of a narrative discourse by identifying the main story-line events (foreground) and the background events, making the form-function links and being aware of how the tense/ aspect forms are distributed (Bardovi-Harlig, 1990: 197).

In this chapter, there has been an attempt to discuss the different approaches and views that influenced grammar teaching. We have also considered the role of grammar in the communicative approach. We also examined the role of consciousness-raising in grammar instruction. The last sections were devoted to the discourse-based approach to teaching grammar in general and to the teaching of the past perfect in particular.

Chapter Two

The Experimental Methodology

Introduction:

This chapter deals with the research methodology used in the present study. It also describes the subjects, data collection instruments and the teaching procedures used.

2.1 Procedures of data collection and data analysis:

We have carried out a research study in order to gather evidence about the effect of raising learners' consciousness to how the past perfect is used in discourse on their understanding and use of this tense in a sequence of events. It should be noted here that the past perfect is presented in contrast to the past simple and past continuous as it is always difficult for learners to understand and use them in discourse.

The experiment was designed with two matching groups of 12 students each. The first group (the experimental group) was taught the past perfect through discourse while the second group (the control group) was taught the same tense using the traditional way of teaching grammar which has the following characteristics :

- The tenses are presented in decontextualized, and isolated sentences.
- There is much focus on the accuracy of the form and on grammar rules
- The teaching is teacher-led rather than student-led.

To carry out this investigation, we used four different tools:

1. A questionnaire to teachers
2. Classroom observation
3. A pre-test
4. A post-test

2.2 The Research Question:

This study examines whether the past perfect is more effectively learnt when learning materials are presented through discourse-based activities rather than through sentence-based activities. It also investigates whether raising learners' awareness to the use of the target tense in discourse helps them not only to discover how it functions in discourse but also to master and use it appropriately and accurately. It is also hoped that this study can demonstrate the extent to which a discourse-based framework is feasible in our context and whether it is beneficial enough to deserve serious attention from teachers. In order to address these issues, this study research was carried out to answer the following research question:

Can intermediate EFL learners improve their ability to understand and produce the past perfect appropriately and meaningfully when exposed to a discourse-based instruction, involving consciousness-raising activities ?

2.3 Subjects and sampling procedures

Both teachers and students took part in this investigation.

a- Teachers:

Six teachers participated in this research study. They teach grammar at the UFC of Djelfa. Three of them hold a Magister Degree but teach English only as a module at the University of Djelfa as there is no English Department. The other three teachers hold a Licence degree but have a long experience in teaching English in secondary schools. In order to have a clear idea of how grammar is taught at the UFC, the six teachers were invited to fill in the questionnaire and two of them were observed during their grammar lessons.

b- Students

Twenty-four students participated in the research study. The 24 subjects were randomly assigned into two matching groups, the experimental group and the control group. These two groups represent approximately 20% of the first year students studying English at the UFC of Djelfa. Moreover, to ensure randomizing,

the two groups were divided into equal sized age groups and equal tuition in English.

First year students were sampled as the subjects to be investigated because they form a homogenous group as they were particularly motivated and because at this level, grammar is given much importance in the UFC. Another reason is that the students had already been taught tenses at the secondary school. It follows that they somehow had an adequate time to build the grammatical structures under investigation.

It is worth mentioning that to be admitted to the UFC does not require from the students to hold the Baccalaureate though many of them do have the Baccalaureate and got enrolled in this university for the sake of improving their English. The 24 students who were chosen for this experiment, were those who fulfill the following conditions:

1. Only those who have got their baccalaureate (all streams) were admitted to be part of the experiment.
2. The students selected had had good scores in English (between 10 and 12) in the Baccalaureate exam, which meant that their level of proficiency is intermediate.
3. In spite of the fact that there is no age limit in the UFC, we decided to choose students who are approximately of the same age.

The following table gives more details about the two groups:

Description of the participants	Groups	
	Experimental	Control
Number	12	12
Gender	7 Females +5 males	6 Females +6 males
Previous tuition in English	6 years	6 years
Age range	17-22	17-22
Length of study at the UFC	1 year	1 year
Number of hours per week	2	2
Teaching materials	Discourse-based	Sentence-based

Table 1: Sampling in the Experimental and Control Group

2.4 Setting and the study period:

This investigation which was undertaken at the UFC of Djelfa took place in the second semester. It was carried out in a period of two months (including the administration of the tests) and since the number of hours per week in the UFC is limited to 2 hours, this investigation lasted 16 hours. Two extra hours were devoted to each of the two tests, the pre-test and the post test.

2.5 Data Collection Instruments:

2.5.1 Description and Rationale of the Teachers' Questionnaire:

The aim of the questionnaire (Appendix A) is to provide us with information about the way grammar is taught at the UFC of Djelfa. It investigates the different teaching procedures and the various techniques and activities they use.

2.5.2 Questionnaire administering :

This questionnaire was administered to six English teachers who teach English grammar in the UFC of Djelfa. The aim of the questionnaire is to provide us with much insight about the method used in grammar teaching in this university. We carefully selected the questions so that we could elicit from teachers valuable

information about items such as the aim of grammar teaching, the techniques used, the teaching procedures and the way the feedback is carried out.

The data gathered are meant to help us to determine:

- whether grammar is considered to be just a set of rules to be memorized by learners (i.e, as an end in itself) or as a tool or resource to be used for communicative purposes.
- whether grammar is presented through sentence-level or through discourse level.
- whether the way grammar is taught fits with the current methodology that advocates learner-centeredness and emphasizes language use.

2.5.3 Questionnaire design :

The questionnaire was designed with particular attention aiming at guaranteeing as high as possible appropriateness, preciseness, and relevance. It is worth mentioning here that the teachers' questionnaire was piloted at various stages of its development on a sample of two teachers (other than those with whom we carried out the research). According to Seliger and Shohamy the main purpose of pilot study is "to try out the instruments" (1989: 195). The pilot study allowed us to collect feedback about how the instrument worked and whether it performed the job it had been designed for. Piloting was done on the purpose to highlight certain points such as:

- Which words, phrases or sentences may be ambiguous?
- Which questions are too difficult for the respondent to answer?
- Does any aspect of the questionnaire suggest bias on the part of the researcher?

Through this questionnaire, we intended to ask questions that are clear and well-structured and serve the purpose of the research study. The respondents were asked to answer 18 questions all of which are close-ended questions (which require teachers either to select one or more answers from a list or provide yes/no answers)

The questionnaire is divided into two parts.

1. Part one aims at gathering information about the teachers' qualifications and experience: (items 1 and 2).
2. Part two of the questionnaire (the remaining questions) is intended to find out the teachers' theoretical orientations and understanding of grammar teaching. It investigates areas like the teachers' methods, objectives, feedback...etc. Other areas such as the teachers' and students' roles are not clearly stated but could be easily inferred.

2.6 Description and Rationale of the Classroom Observation :

The other data gathering tool used in the study was observing grammar lessons as they were being taught in classrooms (Appendix B). The purpose of classroom observation in this study was to crosscheck the answers which were given by the teachers in the questionnaire. We also aimed at observing the students' attitudes and reactions towards the way grammar was taught at the UFC of Djelfa.

Observing the teachers in class was believed to enrich the data gathered in the teachers' questionnaire. According to Best and Kahan (1989:54), observation gives the first hand account of situations under study; and when combined with other data collecting tools, it allows for a holistic interpretation of the situations which are being studied. They (1989:75) further state that "Data from direct observation contrast with and can often usefully complement information obtained by virtually any other techniques".

As mentioned before, six teachers took part in the research study and agreed to fill in the questionnaire as precisely as possible. Two of them accepted to be observed in class, and each of them was observed twice. Thus, I carried out 4 observation sessions which were made without disturbing the teaching/learning process in any way. To this end, I prepared classroom observation checklists (see Appendix B for a sample) in order to collect additional data and substantiate the results obtained through the teachers' questionnaire. The checklist was used to

collect data about grammar teaching related to teachers' teaching methodology and students' performance.

The checklist has three parts:

- The techniques used by the teachers
- The teachers' and students roles
- The learners attitudes and reactions in class and whether they were fully motivated in learning grammar.

2.7 Description and Rationale of the Experimental Tests:

In addition to the research tools already described, the study was made tangible by collecting data at two different stages (a pre-test and a post-test) to find out whether the students benefited significantly from the instruction phase. As we have mentioned before, we divided the students into two matching groups: a control group and an experimental group. Our objective was to assess the learners' ability to perceive and analyze the past perfect in longer stretches of sentences and their ability to use it appropriately and meaningfully.

We were particularly interested in designing tests that are valid and reliable. Moreover, we wanted to design a post-test that does not favour the experimental group over the control group as this would put into harm our research study. It should be highlighted here that before the two tests were administered, we conducted a pilot test to six students (other than those who took part in the study) in order to check:

- whether the instructions were clear,
- whether the test contained difficult vocabulary that would hinder the test takers' understanding.
- whether the time allotted for these tests was sufficient.

We, then, took into account all the items that worried the students. Two of the instructions were slightly modified so that they would appear clearer. Some test items were dropped out in order to make the tests suit the students' levels and also to make them suitable for the allotted time.

2.7.1 Pre-test: Rationale and Description

The purpose of the pre-test (Appendix C) was to see whether there was a statistically significant difference between the language performance (specifically, the knowledge of the English tenses) of the experimental group and that of the control group before they went into the experiment.

To make the scoring free from subjectivity, the pre-test items were well-devised and clear. The students were asked to do six activities. In the first section (scored out of 7.5), they had to supply the correct alternative of the verb forms and then identify some tenses and their uses. The second activity (also scored out of 7.5) consists of two activities. The students had first to correct the errors of the verbs in isolated sentences and then put the correct form of the verbs in a gapped-text. In the third section (scored out of 5), the students were required to do two writing activities. The first one is a limited writing activity in which they had to complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs. The second one is an extended writing activity in which they had to rewrite sentences so that they have the same meaning as the first ones. The purpose of the writing activities was to elicit the students' ability to use the past perfect (and also the past simple and past continuous) in separate sentences.

The scoring procedure is best illustrated in the following table:

Sections	Activities	Test items	Points	Total
I	1. Multiple choice questions	10	0.5	5
	2. Tense identification activity	5	0.5	2.5
II	3. Error correction activity	5	0.5	2.5
	3. Cued gap-filling activity	10	0.5	5
III	4. Limited writing activity	5	0.5	2.5
	5- Extended writing activity	5	0.5	2.5
			Total score	20

Table 2: The Scoring Procedure Followed in the Pre-test

2.7.2 Post-test: Rationale and Description

The post-test (Appendix D) served to gather data in the form of scores of both the experimental and control groups. These scores were compared, analyzed and discussed to shed light on the potential effect of a discourse-based approach to teaching the past perfect.

Most of the activities in the post-experimental test matched grammar with discourse. Therefore, the different activities were presented through texts. In their book, *Techniques and Resources in Teaching Grammar*, Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988: 67) suggest that:

Discourse-level testing formats need to be used systematically to test learners' ability to use grammar in context. To accomplish this, tests will very often look like text-based practice activities.

The aim of the post-test was to provide a measurement of the students' grammatical ability in the experimental and control groups who were submitted to two ways of teaching the past perfect : sentence-level and discourse-level treatment of the past perfect.

The post-test was fairly designed as the subjects were accustomed to do most of the test items such as cloze passages, error identification, sentence completion...etc. We did this on the purpose of showing that any possible difference in the students' scores is due to the method adopted, and not to an unfair design of the test

The first section of the post test (scored out of 8) comprises two activities. In the first activity (section one, activity 1), the students had to read a text and notice the use of tenses and then answer five questions, two to check their reading comprehension and three to assess their ability to know how and why the target tenses are used in the text. In the second activity, the students were asked to read a gapped-text and fill in the blanks with the appropriate tenses.

The second section (scored out of 5) consists of 2 activities, the first of which is an activity in which students were required to make grammatical judgments about the underlined tenses. In other words, they had to identify the errors and then correct them. In the second activity, learners were asked to give reasons why a particular tense is used in a given discourse.

The third section (scored out of 7), was totally devoted to production. In the first activity part (a), which was scored out of 1.5 point, learners were required to complete the last sentence after reading the sentences before it. The purpose of this activity was to assess the students' ability to use the past perfect as expressing a purpose or a climax. As for part (b), they, with the help of prompts, had to write a sentence that provides explanations or comments to past events. This activity was also scored out of 1.5 point, and was meant to assess the students' ability to use the past perfect as the background information to past events in long stretches of sentences. In the second activity (scored out of 4 points), the test takers were required to write a free composition about a given topic. The purpose of this activity was to elicit narrative rhetorical organization with adequate distribution of tense/aspect forms (Hatch,1992). We wanted in particular to see whether the students were able to distribute the target tenses adequately so that they could write cohesive pieces of writing. Besides taking account of their ability to use the target tenses appropriately and meaningfully, we also paid attention to items such as cohesion, spelling and punctuation which are very important elements in producing effective pieces of discourse. The scoring procedure concerning the last activity was as follows:

- relevance of the topic, organization of ideas (0.5 point)
- adequate use of the tenses (3 points)
- spelling, punctuation (0.5 point)

The scoring procedure for the post-test is best illustrated in the following table:

Sections	Activities	Test items	Points	Total
I (8 pts)	1. Reading comprehension and analysis activity	5	1	5
	2. Cued gap-filling activity	6	0.5	3
II (5 pts)	1. Grammatical judgment activity	9	0.33	3
	2. Noticing activity	4	0.5	2
III (7 pts)	1. Limited writing activities	6	0.5	3
	2- Free writing activity	/	/	4
			Total score	20

Table 3: The Scoring Procedure Followed in the Post-test

2.8 Description and Rationale of the Experimental Teaching Materials

2.8.1 Teaching materials for the study group:

In this section, we intend to discuss the teaching materials that have been used in this study. These teaching materials are meant to promote UFC first-year students' understanding and use of the past perfect simple .

The experimental teaching materials that we have developed fulfill the following conditions:

- They present the target grammatical structures (i.e., the past perfect) through discourse.
- They aim at raising learners' awareness to how tenses (i.e., the past perfect, the past simple and the past continuous) function at the level of discourse.
- They help learners' perceive and analyze the target tenses and use them appropriately and effectively.
- They help learners to discover form-meaning-use associations that are not always apparent in traditional presentations.

In order to keep track with the above conditions, we have adapted Celce-Murcia's framework (1990;1991;) for the implementation of discourse analysis in grammar teaching. We have also taken into account the suggestions provided by a number of researchers such as Nunan (1991;1998) Basturkmen (2002) and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) who all advocate teaching grammar through context and discourse.

Celce-Murcia's model of teaching grammar advocates that learners should be exposed to varied and rich texts which they have to explore through reading comprehension and through contextual analysis (Celce-Murcia, 1990) in order to prepare learners to produce their own texts using the target structures. A number of researchers among whom Celce-Murcia (1985) argue that reading comprehension helps learners to notice and understand the form and meaning of the grammatical structures. It also helps them to "see grammar in action, grammar as it is used in real life and real language" (Raimes, 1998: x). According to Hammond (1989) in Nunan (1991:152) teaching grammar through reading (i.e., at the level of text) has the following benefits:

- It can contribute to learners' literacy awareness.
- It provides learners and teachers with a shared vocabulary for talking about the language and the way it works.

It follows that learners acquire grammatical structures through exposure to and comprehension of the meaning of written texts in that language. As Celce-Murcia (1985:6) puts it:

The best times for them (learners) to attend to forms is after comprehension with their production of meaningful discourse (perhaps spoken but more particularly written discourse).

Contextual analysis, according to Celce-Murcia (1980:41), "begins with a (linguistic) form or forms and seeks to describe the meaning function and restrictions on the form(s) as used in context". It is meant to give a complete account of how grammar functions at the discourse level. It enables learners to explore ways in which language is used in real life and also raises their awareness of its

conventions and complexities. Moreover, contextual analysis helps learners understand not only the language use devices like tense/ aspect in discourse, but also why such mechanisms have been created in the first place (Hatch, 1992:109).

According to Celce-Murcia, when students are engaged in analysis, they "begin making generalizations about where the target structure occurs (or does not occur), what it means, and why it is used (or not used) by a given speaker/writer in a given piece of discourse" (Celce-Murcia, 2002:122). These analyses enable learners to act as discourse analysts in order to be efficient users of language (Basturkmen, 2002:21) and also to develop their ability to investigate and make discoveries about the target grammatical structures occurring in discourse (Riggenbach,1990) in Basturkmen (2002:27).

The analysis activities can also help increase learners' motivation. According to Riggenbach (1999) in Celce-Murcia (2002:124), the activities where students analyze discourse motivate them to discover and know more about the language. As she puts it:

A primary goal of these discourse analysis activities is to stimulate student interest in language, to develop learners' confidence in their own abilities to "discover" truths about the structure of language, and to help raise learners' consciousness not only about the structure of language but also about their own linguistic strengths and weaknesses.

According to Celce-Murcia's model, the reading comprehension and analysis activities help learners to come up with their own explanations of the grammatical structures which may be subject to revision if necessary to reach the grammatical rule. Moreover, these activities should prepare learners to produce –orally and/or in writing – the target grammatical structures. In other words, once learners have engaged in the comprehension and analysis of the discourse, they should produce the target grammar points in their own discourse which will help them show to what extent they have understood the target grammatical structures. When students produce their own discourse, they become more confident of using the target grammatical structures and this will "take them well beyond the level of the sentence

into the realm of discourse and communication" (Celce-Murcia,1990:209). According to Celce-Murcia, the production activities are necessary for learners in the sense that they enable learners to apply what they have learnt to create their own discourse. She (1991:67) further explains that:

Learners who do such activities can remember and apply reasonably well the grammar they learn this way since they have discovered how grammar is a resource for telling a story or creating a text rather than grammar simply existing as a set of abstract sentence-level rules.

Given the fact that the present study advocates teaching the past perfect through longer stretches of discourse, we have chosen to use text-based activities. In fact, the use of texts as the basis of grammar instruction has been proved by many researchers to be very effective. Carter (2003), for example, claims that when grammar is investigated through discourse (i.e., through texts), it is examined not just as isolated, decontextualized bits but as a whole purposeful context. As he (2003:33-34) puts it:

An examination of grammar in texts means that grammatical form is not an exclusive focus, for grammar is necessarily seen only as part of a more complex social and textual environment and as realizing specific functions in a purposeful context. A study of grammar in texts is a study of grammar *in use*.

In the same vein, Bardovi-Harlig posits that the use of texts in presenting grammar in general and tenses in particular "is not only methodologically desirable, but acquisitionally necessary" (1990:186). By texts she means "reasonably authentic connected discourse of any type (narrative, expository, conversational) and any source (radio, television, film, newspapers, novels, stories, reports of various types, and texts for children as well as adults)" (Bardovi-Harlig, *ibid*:186). In what follows, we shall discuss the advantages of using texts in teaching tenses.

One of the advantages of using texts in presenting target grammatical items is that texts are, in fact, examples of actual language use. They are in particular very

useful in the teaching and learning of the tense system. This is very well demonstrated by Bardovi-Harlig (1990:187) when she claims that:

- texts present a realistic portrait of the distribution of tense/aspect forms.
- texts present tenses used in meaningful communication.
- the use of texts shows how tenses contribute to the building of discourse, including where certain tenses are located, and how they function in different genres of text.
- texts demonstrate the relation of tense/aspect forms to each other and the contrast between them.
- the use of texts makes any lesson more accessible to all the students in a classroom by offering something for everyone.

The last item can be explained by the fact that when using texts all students can benefit to some degree from the experience. Good students can go beyond the target grammatical structures whereas low achievers can understand the text at their own level. They can at least benefit from vocabulary or any other linguistic or cultural features of language. It is a truism, then, to say that teaching grammatical items through texts can be of great help to students. The question that should be raised here is: should these texts be authentic or non-authentic?

Many researchers such as Widdowson (1993); Celce-Murcia (1991,1997); Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005); Larsen-Freeman (1991) and Nunan (2004) maintain that learning materials (texts, dialogues...etc.) in a discourse-based approach should be authentic and natural. Authentic texts are defined as "...real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes" (Wallace 1992:145). They are very beneficial in the sense that they not only show how grammatical forms operate in the 'real world', but also allow learners to encounter target language items in interaction with other closely related grammatical and discursal elements. The benefit of using authentic materials in grammar instruction is highlighted in the following quotation:

To be optimally effective, grammar instruction should be based on what actually occurs in authentic discourse. Activities for understanding how grammar works and for practicing grammar should be pragmatic and draw on naturalistic data. Exercises should not be artificially created simply to force learners to practice a given

structure; learners benefit greatly from having a context that realistically motivates the use of the target structure.

Celce-Murcia and Yoshida (2003:5)

When based on authentic discourse, grammar instruction can provide fruitful opportunities for teaching tenses in context. This is explained by Bardovi-Harlig (1990:120) when she states that the use of authentic texts in teaching tenses is not only a means of contextualizing grammar, but also essential in helping learners relate form to meaning and use. According to Riddle (1986:84), authentic texts can be of great help in raising students' awareness of tenses as they are actually used in discourse and may contribute to greater consistency in their use of these tenses.

A number of researchers claim that authentic texts may, however, be difficult for learners. Authentic texts are particularly seen to be a possible obstacle to the understanding of the target grammatical structures. Moreover, due to their complexity, authentic texts may "prevent the learners from responding in a meaningful way and may also lead them to feel frustrated, confused, and, most importantly demotivated" (Guariento and Morley, 2001:34).

In view of overcoming the obstacles that may result from the students' inability to understand complex authentic texts, we will adapt, if necessary, the authentic texts without changing their overall meaning or organization. This will make the texts more accessible to the students so that they can use them as the basis for interpreting and producing discourse in the target language. This, of course, does not mean that we are going to adapt all the texts. In other words, the texts that are not overloaded with difficult vocabulary or that suit the learners' level are going to be used without any changes. However, it is worth mentioning that the texts that will be the starting point for various activities presenting the past perfect through discourse should be well selected. The criteria for the selection of texts are described below.

Many texts have been used for the present research study. Most of them are taken from novels, short stories and newspaper articles. It should be mentioned that the data from newspapers are to be used in my research study as they are

particularly very useful in teaching tenses through discourse because they are “lexically, syntactically, and conceptually less complex than that of academic prose” (Hinkel, 2002: 19). We have chosen these texts not for the purpose of exemplifying the target structures but to raise the first-year students’ awareness to how these structures work in real-life English in order to make them understand and use the past perfect effectively. To achieve this goal, we have been particularly interested in choosing texts that

1. are authentic whether they be those used as a starting point (i.e., for reading comprehension) or those used to analyze and practise the tenses in discourse
2. are motivating (they stimulate the students’ interest by the topics they present).
3. are of appropriate length and give enough illustration of " the workings of grammar in written discourse" (Celce-Murcia,1997:174).

2.8.2 The teaching procedure:

The present study involves exploring the effect of teaching the past perfect at the discourse- level in comparison to teaching it at the sentence-level. In this section, we, thus, give a detailed description of both the discourse-based experimental teaching and the traditional, sentence-based teaching.

2.8.2.1 The Experimental Teaching Procedure:

As noted before, our description of the experimental teaching procedure was based on Celce-Murcia's (1990;1991) model of teaching grammar through discourse. A synthesis of this model is to raise learners' awareness to how grammar works in extended discourse through reading comprehension and analysis activities so that they can produce their own discourse using the target grammatical structures appropriately and effectively. To achieve this purpose, I relied on the following textbooks which show how grammar works beyond the boundaries of the sentence and which bring in insights from discourse analysis:

1. Celce-Murcia, M., and Sokolik, M. 2008. Grammar Connections. Boston: Heinle.
2. Carter, R., Hughes, R., and McCarthy, M. 2000. Exploring Grammar in Context. London: Cambridge University Press.
3. Bland, S. K. 2005. Grammar Sense. London: Cambridge University Press.
4. Werner, P.,K. 1985. A content-Based Grammar. New York: Random House, Inc.

Our intervention phase (see sample lesson, Appendix E) consisted of a two-month programme which began just after the pre-test was administered. It included the following steps:

a- Context Reading:

Before the students were asked to read the text, they were urged to make predictions about the text. The objective of this step, which is no more than 5 minutes long, is to prepare learners for the topic of the text. In fact, we believe that the understanding of the text can be made easier by preparing the learners to the topic and by introducing the key words of the text. By this step of the lesson, we were particularly interested in ensuring optimum preparation of the learners to form a global idea about the text and also to perform the next step successfully.

Once the learners were introduced to the topic of the text, we invited them to read the text silently and to ask questions about any words or structures that are unclear in the text in order to familiarize them with the text and to avoid the possible elements that might hinder their understanding of the text. Then, learners were invited to do reading comprehension activities such as : True or false, answer the questions or complete the sentencesetc. The aim of the reading comprehension activity is to provide learners with the opportunity to use the target tenses in their speaking or writing. To this aim, we asked learners to work in pairs or in groups in order to engage them in communicative events that involve practising the target tenses. These activities were devised with the purpose of directing learners to focus

on how the past perfect is used and how it is contrasted to the past simple and the past continuous. For example in the case of true or false activity, we asked them to justify their answers (orally). If they failed to do so, we would ask them to look back at the text and compare their answers with the text. After that, we invited learners to check their answers and correct the mistakes.

Then the learners were invited to summarize the text orally using their own words. We asked them to read their summaries to the class. Because of time constraints, we asked one of the students to read his summary and his peers were to comment on the events used and whether the tenses were used adequately. Our role was to provide necessary comments in case of inadequate tense shifts, or overextension of a particular tense. The aim of this activity was to make learners reconstruct the text or story using their own words and , thus, reflect on the use of the target tenses.

b- Examining Form:

We began this step by asking the learners to refer back to the text and notice the underlined target tenses in the text. Then we invited them to find all the other related tenses used. We made them first work individually then we encouraged them to work in pairs or groups so that we ensured the learners' involvement. This noticing activity was followed by a tense identification exercise where the learners had to read a gapped- text and use the appropriate form of the verbs provided. They were, then, invited to provide the different forms of the verbs (either affirmative, negative or interrogative). Once they finished, we asked them to read the text again and notice the uses of the target tenses in the text.

c- Analysis:

Our aim throughout this step was to raise learners' awareness as to how the past perfect functions in discourse. Our role in this phase was to trigger discussions about the use of the target tense in a given text. To do this, we asked the learners to answer a set of questions about the text. Through these questions were intended to make the learners:

- Notice the use of the tenses in discourse and decide about the tense uses.
- Use discourse analysis to understand the use of the past perfect and to discover how the target tense contribute to the coherent building of the text.
- Examine the discourse functions of the past perfect.
- Discuss the occurrence of the other tenses contrasted with the target tense, and highlight their function and meaning in discourse.

The learners were, thus, invited to answer some of the following questions :

- Which tenses are used?
- Where do the tenses shift in the text? Why ?
- Where does the past simple / the past perfect tense.....etc occur in the text? Why ?
- What is the function and meaning of the past tense /past perfect in the texts?
- Which tenses are used to convey a chronological order of events?
- Which tense is used to express the purpose or climax of an event or situation in the past?
- Can you explain why the past perfect tense is used instead of the past tense?
- Which tense expresses a time contrast? Why?
- Classify the tenses used in the text according to the following table:

Story-line events	Background events

The learners were then requested to work in groups and discuss the questions. Once the groups came up with their explanations, we discussed them and used the best of the suggested explanations. Then they were invited to present their findings to the class in order to exchange their ideas with their peers. This was meant to make them interact with one another so that they could understand the function and the use of the target tenses. After that, we provided them with the formal rule and got them to work in groups and then compare it with the rule they had generated.

d-The Past Perfect in Discourse:

The aim of this section was to get students practise the use of tenses in discourse-based activities. To achieve this, we first requested learners to refer back to the text and to fill in a gapped text with the appropriate tenses. This text was slightly modified so that learners would compare it with the original text and reflect on the use of the target tenses. The students were required to work first individually and then compare their responses with a partner or with others in a small group. This was followed by a limited writing activity. In this activity, the learners were invited to work in pairs and write sentences with the given words or phrases. Our objective here was to involve learners and make them highly active through asking them to build up correct sentences. The sentences were linked together to provide the learners with the appropriate context that justifies the use of the target tenses.

Learners were also provided with texts with errors which they had to judge their grammaticality or ungrammaticality. This means that they had to say whether the underlined tenses were right or wrong. If wrong, they had to correct them. To do this, learners had to read the text and decide about the uses of the tenses. We, then, asked them to work in groups and discuss why and how the different target tenses are used. In order to facilitate the students' ability to recognize and locate errors, we got them to identify the errors through working together and analyze how the tenses are used in discourse. We also invited them to justify why a particular tense was incorrect.

To highlight the use of the past perfect in discourse, we, then, provided the learners with a continuation of the first text used or with a new text, and asked them to insert a given sentence in its appropriate place to obtain a coherent text. Learners were invited to notice the use of the tenses in the text so that they could put the missed sentences in their right places.

e- Using the Past Perfect in Writing :

In the previous step "Grammar in discourse", there was much focus on developing learners' ability to focus on the target grammatical structures in discourse. We, in fact, designed activities that were meant not only to raise the learners' awareness of how tenses function in discourse but also bring their attention to particular tense uses and discourse frames. This was in view of preparing them to master the discourse conventions and regularities of tenses in writing so that they could produce coherent discourse. In this step, however, the learners were directly involved in using the tenses in actual language production. The aim therefore was to develop the learners' awareness and understanding of the target tenses through using these tenses in pieces of writing of their own. To this aim, we invited the learners to write their own discourse basing themselves on the topic they had already seen in the first text. We were in particular interested in making the learners establish an effective connection between what they had achieved in the previous step (grammar in discourse) and their own production. We wanted, in fact, to help the learners to develop familiarity with the use of tenses in discourse and to master their conventions in writing. We therefore asked them to write about a similar experience or event and use the appropriate tenses. To ensure that the students write an acceptable piece of writing where the tenses are used conveniently, they were invited to answer questions that would help them organise their writing and also focus on the different uses of the target tenses that they had already seen.

The learners were invited to work individually in this step. They were asked to present their own drafts in the classroom orally first (one or two students) or in written. When the learners gave back their written productions, we invited them to work in groups and proceed with the analysis of their peers' writing. One way of doing this was to write a student's production (or a part of it) on the blackboard and ask the learners to identify and discuss the errors in tenses. We asked the learners to give much importance to the global errors such as faulty word order, wrong logical connectors , wrong tense uses ...etc. In other words, we made the learners perceive the importance of cohesion and coherence in writing. We asked them to examine

their writing for tense cohesion. To achieve this, we provided them with comments about the use of tenses as source of cohesion. The local errors such as spelling mistakes, an omitted article, a superfluous preposition...etc. were also highlighted but very briefly. We drew the learners' attention to the fact that global errors might obstruct the intended meaning of a given sentence or paragraph.

2.8.2.2 The Traditional Teaching:

The method underlying the traditional teaching of the past perfect intended for the control group is that implemented in the grammar module for the UFC first year students. The presentation of the target tenses is exclusively sentence-level and teacher-led.

The traditional grammar lesson intended for the study group displayed the following characteristics:

1. The learners were provided with an explicit presentation on the tenses under study. This presentation was carried out in a decontextualized manner. The past perfect was taught independently. There was accordingly no emphasis on its use in context.
2. No Link was established between the different tenses (past perfect, past simple and past continuous).
3. The learners were invited to read a set of separate decontextualized sentences written on the blackboard and had to pay attention to the use of the past perfect.
4. The explanations as well as the exercises given for learners were highly form-focused. The emphasis was, in fact, on the past perfect used to express prior events.
5. Learners were provided with the rules which they had to apply later.
6. The students were provided with production-based activities (i.e., learners had to produce the target tenses in isolated sentences).
7. Students' talking time was very much limited. Most of the classroom talking was dominated by the teacher.

8. Learners were invited to do activities (give the correct form of the verbs) in order to apply the rule they had already been provided with.
9. One student, was asked to write the sentences on the board and his peers had to correct the mistakes. If they failed, we intervened immediately.
10. As a final step, we invited the learners to write their own sentences using the target sentences. For example, we asked them to write 3 sentences using the past perfect.

In this chapter, we have dealt with a description of the research design underlying the present experimental study. It has, in fact, provided a detailed description of the subjects, the data collection tools and the teaching materials used in the study. The results will be displayed and analyzed in the following chapter.

Chapter Three

Presentation and Analysis of the Results

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and analyze the data obtained from the different tools used in this research. These tools are the teachers' questionnaire, the classroom observation and the tests (the pre-test and the post-test). We first deal with the presentation and analysis of the teachers' responses and the classroom observation together, then we proceed with the presentation and analysis of the different tests (i.e., the pre- test and the post-test). The results of the questionnaire and the students' scores are presented in tables and charts followed by explanations.

3.1 Presentation of the Teachers' Questionnaire Responses:

Question 1: How long have you been teaching grammar at the Université de Formation Continue (UFC) ?

Years	Number
1-2	1
3-6	3
7-10	2

Table 4: Teachers' Experience

This table presents the experience of the teachers of English at the UFC of Djelfa. It is worth noting that this university has been operational in Djelfa for over 10 years now. This explains why the years of experience are limited to 10 in the table above. The results obtained from the teachers' responses reveal that the majority of them have good experience in teaching grammar (from three to ten years). This advantage normally allows them to be qualified and performing teachers if they are open to new methods and pedagogies for teaching grammar.

Question 2: Have you done any post-graduation studies?

Yes	No
3	3

Table 5: Teachers' Postgraduate Training

This table shows that half of the teachers are postgraduate which means they possess the necessary requirements of university teachers. The other half are teachers who are graduate from the university but have a long experience in teaching in secondary schools. It should be noted here that one condition of being a teacher at the UFC is to be qualified and have at least 10 years of experience as a teacher of English in the secondary school.

Question 3: The main objective of grammar teaching is to get learners to

Objectives	Frequency
a- Understand and use the grammar rules	1
b- Learn to write grammatically accurate sentences	4
c- Communicate accurately and fluently.	1

Table 6: Teachers' Responses Concerning the Goals of Grammar Teaching

This question is asked on the purpose of eliciting from the teachers their objectives concerning grammar teaching. As can be noticed from the above table, the majority of the participants said that the main objective of grammar teaching is to get learners to write grammatically acceptable sentences. This implies that these teachers' main objective when teaching grammar is to enable learners to avoid mistakes in their writing. Only one teacher believes that grammar should be a tool with which students communicate accurately and fluently. We can draw from this that the teachers view grammar as a sentence-level system which focuses on writing accurate grammatical forms.

Question 4: In which way do you think students learn the language better?

Responses	Frequency
a-When they constantly use the grammatical structures in their writing	4
b-When they use grammar for communicative purposes	1
c-When they are exposed to language in natural contexts	1

Table 7: Teachers' Opinion about the Best Way to Learn the Language.

The responses obtained from the teachers reveal that most of them give importance to the use of the grammar points in written activities. This seems in line with the teachers' objective of teaching grammar (question 3). In other words, they require their students to produce sentences using the target structures in order to master its use. The teachers do not seem to prefer communicative activities in which learners interact with one another. Nor do they provide learners with the opportunity to be exposed to language in natural contexts. The teachers' responses reveal that they do not perceive grammar as a tool of communication.

5. How do you present the grammatical structures?

Responses	Frequency
a- Deductively	4
b- Inductively	2

Table 8: The Presentation of the Grammatical Structures

The results obtained from the above table show that more than half of the teachers believe that the grammatical structures should be presented deductively (i.e., the rules are given first and the students practise them) , while the other teachers think that a good presentation of grammatical structures should best be done inductively (i.e., the students discover the rules by themselves).

Question 6: When you teach grammar, the target structure should be introduced

Responses	Frequency
a- at the sentence level (the target structure is presented in isolated sentences)	5
b- beyond the sentence level (the target structure is presented in texts and dialogues)	1

Table 9: Illustrating the grammatical items

The results in the above table show that the majority of the teachers use isolated sentences to illustrate the target grammatical structures. Only one teacher indicates that he teaches the grammatical structures at the discourse-level (i.e., beyond the sentence level). It goes without saying that most teachers prefer to illustrate the different grammar point in decontextualized and isolated sentences because they think that stand-alone sentences make them be brief and clear. This may also be due to the fact that most of the teachers think that a sentence can explain and present the rules of the target structure quite adequately and can be quickly written and assimilated. The teachers' preference to teach at the level of the sentences presupposes that they neglect the discourse functions of the grammatical structures.

Question 7: When presenting a grammatical structure do you (you can choose more than one)

Responses	Freq
a- give detailed explanations?	5
b- raise learners' awareness to the grammatical features and how they work?	1
c- make them internalize the structures through repetition and transformations	4
d- use the grammar drills so that the students memorize the rules	2
e- require the students to analyze data to arrive at an explicit presentation of the target structure.	2

Table 10: Teachers' Techniques to present Grammar Points

As shown in the above table, nearly all teachers (five out of six) think that grammar is more frequently presented by providing detailed explanation and description. They prefer to focus on the forms of the grammatical structures. Many of them (four out of six) believe that repetition and transformation drills can help students internalize the grammatical structures. Two of the teachers admit using grammar drills in order to help the students to retain the grammar rules. It seems that the teachers give much importance to the explanation and description of the grammar items through mechanical drills rather than through the exploration and negotiation of the different meanings of the grammatical items. Two teachers (out of six) state that they set their students to proceed with the analysis of the given data (texts, dialogues...etc) in order to make their students able to have an explicit presentation of the target structures.

Question 8: How do you ask your students to work on the activity ?

Alternatives	Frequency
a- Individually	5
b- In pairs	1
c- In groups	0

Table 11: Teachers' Responses about Students' Interaction.

The results obtained from the above table show that nearly all teachers prefer to ask their students to work individually. Only one teacher asks his students to work in pairs. This means that most teachers do not encourage their students to engage in communicative activities. In other words, teachers do not provide the students with the opportunities to interact with one another when studying a particular grammar structure.

Question 9: When teaching grammar, do you present the grammar items in

Alternatives	Frequency
a-Authentic materials	2
b-Non-authentic materials.	4

Table 12: Teachers' Use of Materials

The table above reveals that most teachers use non-authentic materials. Only two teachers indicate that they use authentic materials. This may be due to the fact that most teachers think that authentic materials are difficult for learners to understand and also to the fact that to gather authentic materials requires from the teachers much time and money (the UFC of Djelfa does not have the necessary means to make hand-outs). The teachers' use of contrived materials reveals that they give much importance to making their students focus on the accurate form of the structure and are not concerned with how the target structures function in real-life English.

Question 10: The grammar reference books that you usually use illustrate the target grammatical structures through (you can choose more than one answer)

Alternatives	Freq.
a- explicit description and grammatical explanations in isolated sentences ?	4
b- written and oral texts including dialogues, newspaper articles....?	2
c- problem- solving activities?	2
d- activities that help learners discover how a grammar point works?	2

Table 13: Methods of the Grammar Books Used by the Teachers

In the above table, most of the teachers' responses indicate that teachers use reference books that describe and explain the grammatical structures in isolated sentences. Only two teachers say that they prepare their grammar lessons using books that present the different grammatical structures beyond the sentence-level (i.e., through written and oral texts). It is clear from the table above that most teachers use grammar textbooks that have the following characteristics:

1. they illustrate the grammar points at the level of the sentence (i.e., in decontextualized sentences)
2. they describe and explain the grammatical structures by providing the appropriate rules. In other words, they provide no opportunity for students to discover how a particular grammatical structure functions in discourse.

Question 11: Do you engage students into a practice stage immediately after a grammatical structure has been presented ?

Yes	No
6	0

Table 14: Teachers' Opinion about the Necessity of the Practice Stage.

In this table it is clearly shown that all the teachers find it necessary to practise a grammatical structure after it has been presented. The next question was asked to elicit from the teachers how they carry out practice..

Question 12: How do you practise the target grammatical structures?

Alternatives	Frequency
a- Use the language as much as possible to memorize the grammar rules	4
b- Focus on the learners' attention on grammar points and help them understand the meaning these structures realize.	1
c- Induce them to undertake form/ function analyses of the structure	1

Table 15: Teachers' Responses about How they Practise a Grammar Point

The results obtained from the teachers' responses show most of the teachers give importance to practice. However, most of them get learners to practise in order to retain the rules of grammar. Thus, for these teachers, the point from practising the target grammar points is memorization and consolidation. We can draw from the teachers' responses that they do not provide their students with the opportunity to analyze the form-meaning aspects of the grammatical structures so that these structures are understood and used meaningfully and appropriately.

Question 13: Which of the following activities and techniques do you usually use to practise the grammar points ? (you can tick more than one)

Responses	Frequency.
a- Substitution drills	1
b- Sentence completion	5
c- Gap-filling activities	2
d- Jumbled sentences	0
e- Spotting and correcting mistakes	3
f- problem-solving activities	1

Table 16: Teachers' Responses About Activities Used to Practise the Grammar Points.

In this table, the teachers' responses reveal only two of the teachers use cloze passages when practising a grammatical structure. Half of them prefer using “spot the mistake and correct it” activities when teaching grammar. Most teachers (five out of six) admit using sentence completion activities. However, no one favours the use of jumbled sentences. We can deduce from this table that teachers prefer using activities that limit the students’ production in the grammar classroom and practise grammar at the level of the sentences.

14- Do you get students to perform production activities using the target structure?

Yes	No
6	0

Table 17: Teachers' Responses about whether they Use Production Activities

The results obtained from the teachers’ responses reveal that all of them require their students to do production activities in order to practise the target structure. The next question was asked to elicit from the teachers the nature of these activities.

Question 15: In order to make your students use and internalize the target grammatical structure, you usually require them

Responses	Frequency
a-to produce sentences of their own containing the target structure	2
b-to produce a number of sentences based on a given pattern	3
c-to use the target structure in pieces of writing of their own	1

Table 18: Teachers' Responses about How they Use Production Activities

As shown in the table above, most teachers (five out of six) state that they prefer to get their students to produce sentences using the target structure. They either make their students produce isolated sentences of their own or make them produce a number of sentences based on a pattern given to them by the teacher. Only one teacher admits requiring the students to use the target structure in an extended piece of writing of their own.

Question 16: When your students make a grammatical mistake, do you

Responses	Frequency
a- Give your students a chance to correct themselves	1
b- Invite other students to correct it	1
c- Correct it immediately	5
d- Tolerate it.	0

Table 19: Types of Feedback Used by Teachers in a Grammar Lesson

The above table shows that the majority of teachers (five out of six) correct their students' mistakes immediately after they have been made. Most of these teachers do not seem to give the students the opportunity to correct their own mistakes or their friends' mistakes. None of the teachers indicate that they tolerate their students' mistakes.

Question 17: In which of these errors, do you mostly intervene

Responses	Frequency
a-Local errors (omitted article , superfluous preposition, omitted or wrong pronouns, incorrect verb...)	4
b-Global errors (faulty word order , the use of the wrong logical connectors, the use of wrong cohesive devices)	2

Table 20: Teachers' Responses on which Errors they Mostly Intervene

The aim of the above question is to see the teachers' opinion about the error gravity (i.e., to see whether they give importance to the local errors or global errors) when learners produce a piece of writing. We mean by local errors those that are made at the sentence level. Examples of local errors are omission of the definite or indefinite articles, omission or wrong use of prepositions, pronouns or verbs. Examples of global errors are errors that are related to cohesion or coherence. Burt and Kiparsky (cited in Celce-Murcia and Hilles, S.,1988:20) argue that "global mistakes are those that violate the overall structure of a sentence, the relations among constituent clauses or, in a simple sentence, the relations among major constituents. Local mistakes cause trouble in a particular constituent or in a clause of a complex sentence". In fact, the teachers' responses show that many of them (four out of six) mostly intervene when their students make local errors while two of them say they intervene when their students make global errors. The next question was asked to see how teachers deal with error correction in the classroom.

Question 18: How do you proceed with error correction ?

Responses	Frequency
a- By directing the students to identify the error and correct it quickly and spontaneously	4
b- By getting them to focus on the problem to become aware of both the error and the correct form.	2

Table 21: Teachers' Error Correction Techniques

In the light of the teachers' responses, we can notice that most of them help their students to identify the errors and correct them while two of them indicate that they raise their students' awareness to the error and the correct form.

3.2 Presentation of the Classroom Observation:

The other data gathering tool used in the study was observing grammar lessons as they were being taught. The purpose of classroom observation in this study was to check the answers given by the teachers in the questionnaire and also to shed light on some points such as learners' motivation and attitudes in a grammar lesson. To obtain the required information, each of the two classes whose grammar teachers agreed to take part in the study was observed twice. A checklist was used to collect data about the teaching methodology and students' performance in the grammar lesson. The checklist was used to answer the following questions:

- How did the teacher present the grammar points?
- How did the teacher draw the students' attention?
- Were the grammatical items presented and practised in a meaningful context to develop creative and independent use of the language?
- Were the students encouraged to discover the grammar rules by themselves?
- Were the students asked to practise the structure of the language at the discourse level or at the sentence level?
- How did the teacher motivate the learners to practise the grammar points?
- How did the learners react to the activities?

3.3 Analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire Responses and the Classroom Observation :

It is worth noting that the classroom observation was used to complete the data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire. This means that some points that could not practically be tapped by the teachers' questionnaire like the learners' attitudes, motivation and interaction in a grammar lesson were highlighted by the classroom observation. As the two research tools (i.e., the teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation) served to provide us with some useful insight about how grammar is taught at the UFC, we decided to analyze them together.

The teachers' responses to the first two questions reveal that the teachers have a reasonable good experience which helps them undertake their grammar teaching in an adequate way. They also reveal that the teachers are in a position to strengthen their students' language proficiency due to the fact that they had, themselves, been trained at university. However, since only half of them (i.e., three out of six teachers) were post-graduated from university, this may be a sign that not all the teachers are familiar with the key issues relating to the recent development of grammar teaching. It should be noted, however, that through our classroom observation we noticed that there was no significant difference between all the teachers when grammar is concerned (question 3). Indeed, all the teachers believe that the main objective of grammar teaching is to get learners to constantly use the grammatical structures in their writing (question 4). In other words, all the teachers believe that written language production should be given much emphasis. This presupposes that they neglect the role of the other skills (listening , speaking and reading) when teaching grammar. It seems that teachers prioritize writing accuracy because they believe that their students are most of the time required to be proficient in written exams. However, the idea that the main objective of grammar is to get learners write accurately may prove ineffective because it does not take into account how learners acquire grammatical structures (Ellis,1995:87).

The analysis of the two research tools (i.e., the teachers' responses and the classroom observation) enabled us to make the following points:

1. Both the responses provided by the teachers and the findings of the classroom observation helped us notice that most of the teachers favour giving full explanation and description of the forms of the grammar points. It seems that the majority of the teachers tend to associate the term grammar with rules about linguistic forms because they require their students to know the grammar rules and memorize them (question 7). In order to make their students retain and internalize the grammar rules, most teachers indicate that they ask their students to repeat and transform the target grammatical structures. We can draw from this that these teachers give much importance to grammatical competence which is only one aspect of communicative competence. Though it is true that grammatical competence is an important dimension of language learning, it is clearly not all that is involved in learning a language since one can master the rules of sentence formation in a language and still not be very successful at using the language for meaningful communication. It follows that grammar instruction should not be focused solely on forms and on stating the rules but on how grammatical structures can be used accurately, appropriately and meaningfully to accomplish communication goals. To enable learners to become efficient users of the language, Larsen-Freeman (1991:65) suggests that grammar instruction should involve:
 - a. drawing attention to how grammatical forms are formed,
 - b. developing an understanding of how particular grammatical forms signal particular grammatical meanings, and
 - c. helping learners realize what constitutes appropriate use of the forms in context.
2. The majority of the teachers indicate that the target grammatical structures should be presented at the sentence-level (question 6). Our observation of the teachers in the classroom enabled us to see that they use separate sentences to introduce the grammatical structures. This is proved by the fact that many of them rely on grammar reference books that present the grammar points in decontextualized sentences (question 10). Moreover, the two teachers that we observed in the classroom use sentences that they themselves create for the purpose of presenting the target grammatical sentences. Besides, nearly all of

the teachers (five out of six) state that they prefer to present the grammatical features through non-authentic materials (question 9). It follows that grammar (in general and tenses in particular) is often presented and practised through de-contextualized isolated sentences which make the learners' use of language for communication more difficult than it needs to be. As Nunan puts it (1996: 102):

If learners are not given opportunities to explore grammar in context, it will be difficult for them to see how and why alternative forms exist to express different communicative meanings.

The decontextualization of grammar is also inconsistent with the fact that language, itself, is not spoken at the sentence level but at the discourse level where meanings are taken from "referents in both previous sentences and following sentences" (Brown, 1994: 235) and not from individual sentences in isolation. The reason why the teachers seem grounded on teaching grammar out of context and through stand-alone sentences may be due to the fact that most of them think that the best way to introduce a grammar point is through isolated sentences which are ideal for explaining the rules and easy to assimilate for students.

3. Nearly all the teachers favour practising the grammatical structures directly after they have been presented (question 10). It is worth pointing out that during the classroom observation, we noticed that there is an over-emphasis on the practice stage so that their learners would retain the grammar rules. These teachers seem to give little importance to raising their learners' consciousness to how grammar points are used in order for them to understand their meaning (question 12). To this end, the teachers provide their learners with the opportunity to practise the structures through using techniques such as: sentence completion, gap-filling and spotting and correcting mistakes (questions 13). This means that most teachers practise the grammatical structures in a way that does not favour interaction in the classroom. The lack of interaction in the classroom is also enhanced by the fact that most teachers neglect pair work and group work and prefer that their students work individually (question 8). It should be worth pointing out that recent research has shown that "practice does not result in the autonomous ability

to use the structure" and that it only involves the learners "in repeated production" (Ellis, 2002:168). In other words, practising the target structural grammar may not be sufficient. We, in fact, think that students greatly benefit when teachers help them attend to language items and when they use techniques and activities that direct the students' attention to form and that promote awareness of grammar. The findings of the teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation show that most teachers require their students to practise the target grammatical structure by either producing sentences of their own or by writing a set of sentences based on a pattern provided by the teacher. This explains that teachers get their students to apply the grammar rules in isolated sentences or according to a pattern given to them beforehand, which means that the teachers focus on strengthening metalanguage and encouraging the learners' writing skill.

4. Concerning feedback and error correction, we noticed that all the teachers believe that mistakes should be corrected on the spot (question 16). In other words, teachers do not seem to give importance to self or peer-correction. By ignoring self and peer-correction, teachers do not facilitate their students' ability to recognize and locate their mistakes nor do they promote learners' ability to read critically their own pieces of discourse. Self and peer-correction are thought to help develop learner autonomy and increase students' motivation and interaction in a grammar lesson. The data gathered from the teachers' questionnaire and from the classroom observation reveal that most teachers give priority to local errors. In other words, they correct the errors that are made at the sentence level and give little or no importance to global errors which are usually described as discourse-level errors (question 17). However, it is now widely accepted that teachers should give more importance to discourse-level errors because "they are more likely to be a source of miscommunication or confusion than sentence-level errors" Celce-Murcia (1991:470). In addition, the teachers proceed with error correction in a way that is not compatible with the new trend in grammar instruction. This new trend views grammar as "a tool or resource to be used in the comprehension and creation of oral and written discourse" Celce-

Murcia (1991:466). Thus, teachers get their learners "work with their own texts" and analyze the different errors, individually or with their peers so that they develop awareness of these errors and correct them.

5. Our observation of teachers in classrooms and findings of the teachers' questionnaire enabled us to notice that teachers seem to prefer the classic lesson structure of Presentation–Practice–Production, or 'PPP', in which presentation of a specific form or structure by the teacher is followed initially by controlled then by free practice before learners engage in open language use in which the focus is on meaning. However, it should be worth noting that PPP, came under attack in the 1990s on the grounds that SLA has shown language cannot be ordered into a syllabus of graded difficulty, and linguistic items cannot be learnt and subsequently employed in spontaneous, unmonitored language use within the space of a single lesson or unit. Many critics argued that the PPP is clearly teacher-centred. Harmer (2001:82), for example, claims that PPP is inadequate because it "seems to assume that students learn 'in straight lines' – that is starting from no knowledge, through highly restricted sentence-based utterances and on to immediate production". In the same vein, Michael Lewis (1993) in Harmer (2001: *ibid*), posits that PPP reflects neither the nature of language nor the nature of learning.
6. Findings from the classroom observation also allowed us to notice that the grammar lessons were presented in a deductive way and no meaningful context was provided to practise the grammar points. The teachers offered detailed explanations using sentence-level activities. They focused on form rather than on meaning and use of the language. The learners did not have the opportunity to express their idea using the target structures. Most of the students were passive and were even somehow bored with the detailed analysis and explanation of the grammar points.

3.4 Analysis of the Experimental Tests Results:

As previously stated, both the experimental groups and the control group were given a pre- test and a post- test. The pre- test was administered before the experiment and the post-test was administered after a two-month- long experiment.

In this section, the data collected from the two tests designed in this study are analyzed through the use of some statistical procedures such as tables and graphs. This analysis is intended to help us compare the scores of the two groups on both of the two tests and also compare the scores of individuals within each group.

The control and experimental subjects were pre-tested a week before initiating the experimental study. The results are shown in the following table:

Experimental group (12 students)		Control group (12 students)	
Students	Scores obtained	Students	Scores obtained
S1	12	S1	8
S2	11	S2	12
S3	10	S3	9
S4	11	S4	9
S5	12	S5	10
S6	9	S6	8
S7	6	S7	10
S8	10	S8	11
S9	7	S9	8
S10	7	S10	6
S11	9	S11	10
S12	10	S12	12
Sum of the scores	114	Sum of the scores	113
Mean	9.5	Mean	9.41
Standard Deviation	1.97	Standard Deviation	1.78

Table 22: Scores on the Pre-test by the Experimental and Control Groups

As it is noticed in the table above, when each of the two groups were tested, their means were very small (experimental group= 9.5 and control group =9.41) and the standard deviation was very close too (experimental= 1.97 and control group = 1.78). The standard deviation (S.D) allows us to see how much variability there is in scores. The S.D was small which means that the students in both groups were distributed quite equitably, and the experiment was not to suffer from the threat of disparity of levels between the groups. The internal validity was not therefore affected. Any differences between the two groups would be due to the experimental treatment and would not be caused by any initial inequality or imbalance between the groups.

The following graph clearly shows the similarity between the scores of the experimental group and those of the control group on the pre-test.

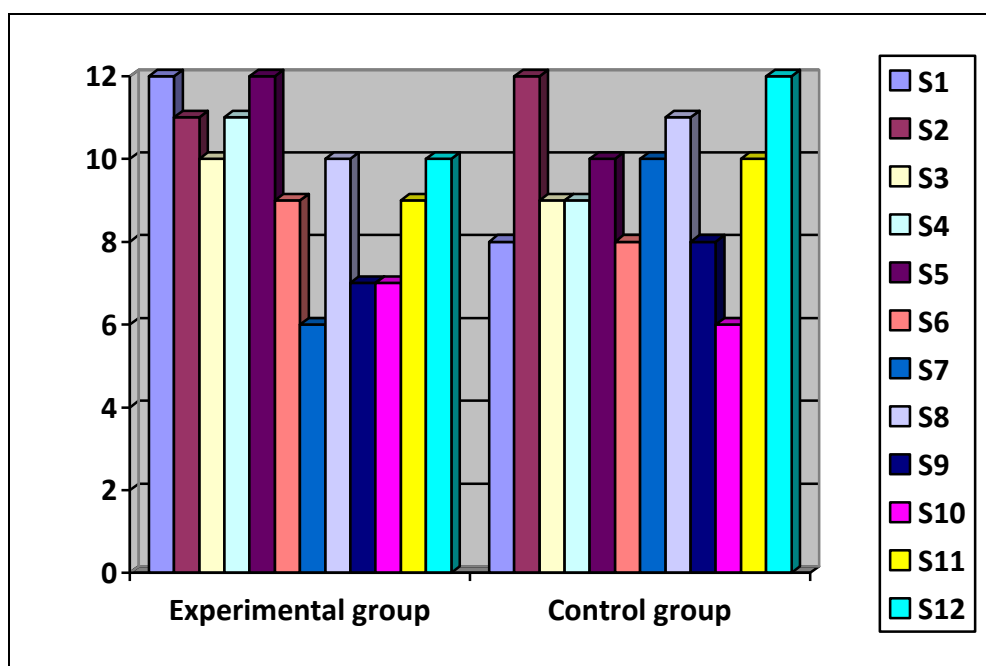


Figure 1: Experimental and Control Subjects' Pre-Test Scores

Before starting the interpretation of these statistics, it should be mentioned that the pre-test was administered to ascertain the students' levels of familiarity with the past tenses (the past simple, the past continuous, the past perfect and the past perfect continuous) prior to the experiment. We, thus, included activities to determine their ability to identify and choose the correct form of these tenses at the level of the sentence (section one, activities 1 and 2). We also included activities to elicit information about their ability to recognize, correct and use the target tenses (past perfect and past simple) in texts (section two, activities 1 and 2) and also to elicit their ability to produce them accurately and appropriately (Section three, activities 1 and 2).

Our analysis of the students' responses in the pre-test indicates that most of the students showed a relatively good performance on the first section of the test (choosing the correct alternative). We have noticed, however, a weak performance on the activities of the second section of the test in which they were required to recognize and produce the past tenses in texts. This weak performance might have

been due to the fact that the subjects of the two groups were accustomed to deal with tenses only when they are presented through isolated sentences or through longer stretches of sentences with clear tense markers . In other words, the students were not given opportunities to recognize and use the target tenses in discourse. They were only made to focus on the accuracy of the tenses rather than on their discourse aspects. A relatively low performance was noticed in the last section where the students had to use the past perfect in writing. In activity 2 where no tense markers were given, many of the subjects overextended the use of the past simple. The students did better in activity one. This might have been due to the fact that they were asked to use either the past simple or the past perfect using time adverbials such as 'after', 'before' or 'as soon as'.

Generally speaking, we can say that the students in both the experimental group and those in the control group students had a weak performance in the pre-test. Indeed, the test results indicate that 5 students out of 12 in the experimental group and also six students out of 12 in the control group had scores below average. This means that 41.66 % of the total number of the students in the experimental group and 50 % in the control group had a weak performance in recognizing and producing the target structures.

However, when we analyzed the results of the post-test scores a different picture emerged. In other words, the subjects' weak performance in the pre-test was not maintained in the post-test. As can be noticed in the following table which displays the scores of the post-test:

Experimental group (12 students)		Control group (12 students)	
Students	Scores obtained	Students	Scores obtained
S1	16	S1	10
S2	15	S2	11
S3	14	S3	9
S4	13	S4	10
S5	8	S5	10
S6	9	S6	8
S7	12	S7	11
S8	10	S8	10
S9	11	S9	8
S10	10	S10	9
S11	10	S11	11
S12	12	S12	10
Sum of the scores	140	Sum of the scores	117
Mean	11.66	Mean	9.75
Standard Deviation	2.46	Standard Deviation	1.05

Table 23: Scores on the Post-test by the Experimental and Control Groups

We can draw from the table above that the test score means for the experimental group improved from 9.5 in the pre-test to 11.66 in the post-test. Similarly, the score means for the control group improved from 9.41 to 9.75. Equally, the standard deviation for the experimental group is 1.97 and 1.78 for the control group in the pre-test. Concerning the post test, it is 2.46 for the experimental group and 1.05 for the control group. This improvement in scores of the subjects in both groups is presented by the following graph:

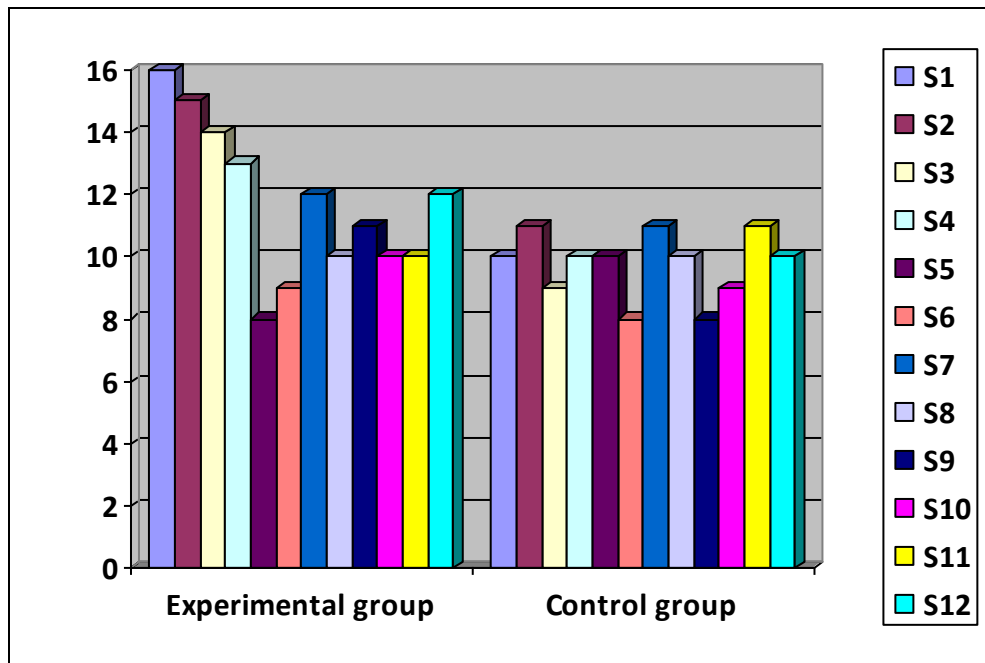


Figure 2: Experimental and Control Subjects' Post-Test Scores

The graph above clearly shows that even though there is a significant amelioration of scores in both groups, there is, in fact, a clear difference between the scores obtained by the experimental subjects and those obtained by the control subjects. For example, 4 students in the control group obtained a score below 10 whereas only two in the experimental group got below average. We can notice also that none of the control group got above 11 while 6 of the experimental group obtained a score above 11. Even though both groups (the experimental group and the control group) showed some improvement in the post-test, it is clearly observed that the scores seem to be in favour of those taught the past perfect at the discourse level (i.e., the experimental group). The subjects in the control group who were taught the same tense through exclusively sentence-level grammar activities improved but were not able to attain the experimental subjects' performance. The following table gives much insight about the results of both groups:

Ranges of scores	Experimental group		Control group	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Below 10	5	2	6	4
Between 10-12	7	6	6	8
Between 12-14	0	2	0	0
Above 14	0	2	0	0

Table 24: Comparison Between Scores in the Pre- and Post-Tests for both Groups

This table shows that in the pre-test 5 students (41.66 %) of the experimental group obtained scores below average while 6 students (50 %) of the control group got scores below average. Furthermore, 7 of the 12 students (58.33 %) in the experimental group obtained scores ranging between 10 and 12 against 8 students (66.66 %) in the control group. In the post-test, however, only two students (16.66%) of the experimental group obtained a score below 10 against 4 (33.33 %) in the control group. While no one got a score more than 11 in the control group, 6 of the experimental subjects (50 %) got scores more than 11 (4 got scores ranging between 11 and 14 and 2 got scores above 14). This clearly shows that the experimental subjects did better in the post-test than the control subjects. As displayed by the following graph:

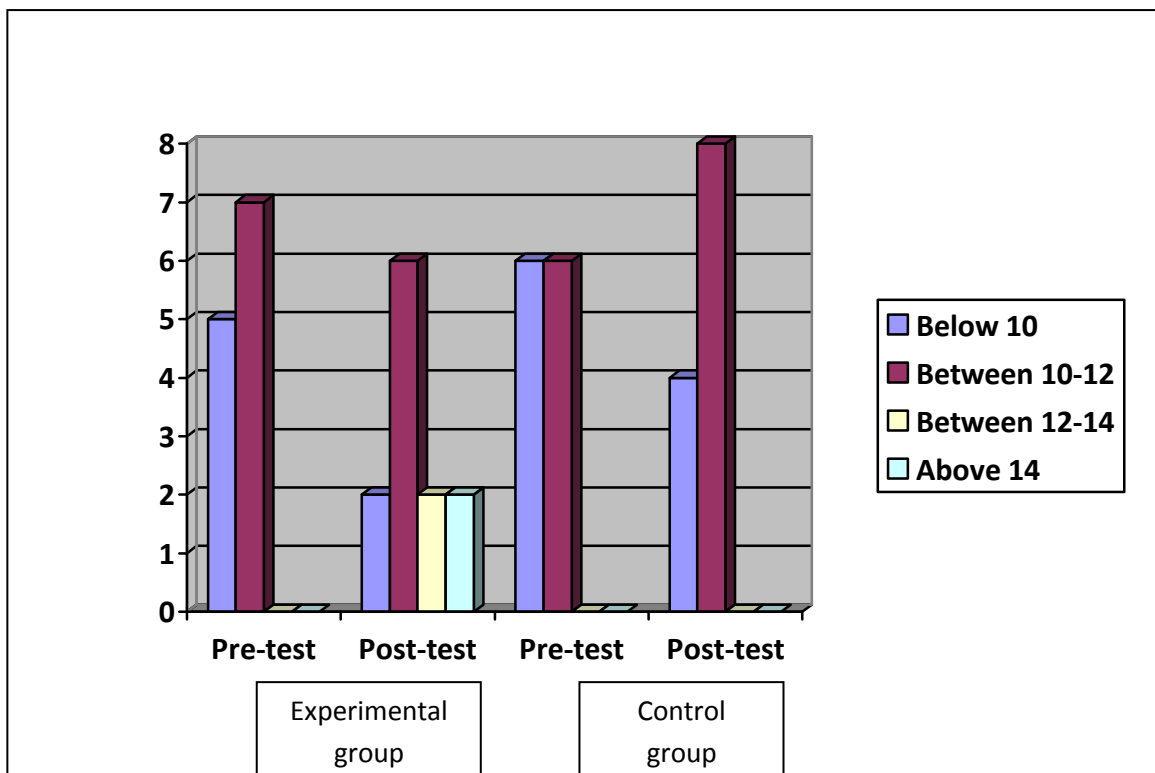


Figure 3: Histogram of Students' Scores in the Pre-Test and the Post-Test

On the basis of statistics above, the following facts are worth pointing out:

1. Only the subjects in the experimental group got more than twelve.
2. The control subjects were not able to obtain scores that exceeded 11
3. The control subjects made a slight improvement (6 subjects were able to better their scores but remained just average (10-11)
4. Some students in the control group got the same score in both the pre-test and post test.
5. The rate of regression was higher among students in the control group. This is shown as follows:
 - S1 (-2 points)
 - S9 (-1 point)
 - S11 (-1 point)
6. Six students (50 %) in the experimental group have improved considerably, increasing their scores by 3 or more points. This is shown as follows:
 - S9, S10 (+3 points)
 - S1, S2, S3 (+4 points)
 - S7 (+5 points)

7. Not all students in the experimental group were able to improve their scores as two subjects in the experimental obtained the same score (S6 and S8). In addition, one student (S5) got a downgraded score (from 12 in the pre-test to 8 in the post-test).

We can conclude from the above statistical data of the post-test results that there is statistically significant difference between the post-treatment performances of the two groups. Accordingly, the experimental group, which was taught the past perfect using a discourse-based approach, performed significantly higher than the control group. This clearly is shown by the fact that the top scores in the experimental group are higher than those obtained by the control group. In addition, the subjects in the experimental group improved their scores considerably whereas the control subjects made no such improvement. This confirms the fact that the experimental group outperformed the control group.

3.4.1 Results Obtained from Activities in Section One (post-test):

We noticed that the two groups got relatively the same scores in the first section. In the experimental group, 11 out of 12 students got a score above the average (4 points) against 10 students in the control group. Only one student in the experimental group got a score below average against 2 students in the control group. The highest score obtained was in the experimental group (7 out of 8 points). No one of the control group was able to obtain such a high score. The following table gives more details about the scores obtained in Section one.

Ranges of scores	Section One			
	Experimental group		Control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Below 4	1	8.33 %	2	16.66 %
Between 4-6	10	83.33 %	10	83.33 %
Above 6	1	8.33 %	0	0 %

Table 25: Performance of the Two Groups in Section One (Post-test)

The scores of the two groups are, therefore, identical. This might have been due to the fact that learners who obtained better results in the reading comprehension activity (first activity) relied on their internal processes such as attention , reading strategies and forming and testing hypotheses about a given point (Ellis, 1994:89). However, it should be mentioned that compared to the first activity, the control subjects received low scores in the second activity (the gapped-text). This might have been due to the fact that they were used to practise the use of tenses through unauthentic gapped-texts with a lot of contextual markers and adverbs (e.g., yesterday, five years ago, last summer). In other words, the control group were not trained to know that "the uses of tenses in a written text are not so much determined by the objective time in which the events take place, but more so by the discourse framework shared by the reader and the writer within the given context" (Hinkel,2002:190).

3.4.2 Results Obtained from Activities in Section Two:

When we compared the scores of the two groups in section two, we realized that there was a significant difference. Section two comprises 2 activities, both of which are concerned with the use of the past perfect in discourse. The objective of these two activities was to elicit the students' ability to make grammatical judgments and to decide upon the different uses of the past perfect in discourse (i.e., why the past perfect is used in each case).

Section two was scored out of 5 points. The experimental subjects outscored those in the control group. 11 students (out of 12) in the experimental group got above the average (2.5 points) against only 1 in the control group. Furthermore, two experimental subjects were able to get the score of 4 (out of 5), whereas no one in the control group was able to obtain such a high score. We, in fact, noticed that the students in the control group were not able to mention the different uses of the past perfect in discourse. Most of them indicated that the past perfect is used "to express an action that happened before another action". Besides stating that the past perfect is used for prior events, most of the experimental subjects indicated that the past

perfect is used to " give useful background information to events in the past", and that it is used "in a relative clause to give more background information about a noun". They also stated that the past perfect is used "to give explanations about why past events happened". It follows that the experimental group were able to identify the discourse functions of the past perfect better than the control group. The following table highlights the differences in scores of both groups in the second section:

Ranges of scores	Section Two			
	Experimental group		Control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Below 2.5	4	33.33 %	11	61.66 %
Between 2.5-4	8	66.66%	1	8.33 %
Above 4	0	0 %	0	0 %

Table 26: Performance of the Two Groups in Section Two (Post-test)

3.4.3 Results Obtained from Production Activities in Section Three:

The aim of the third section was to elicit the students' ability to use the target structures in written language production. The first activity (parts a and b) includes prompts, and requires the test-taker to demonstrate his/ her ability to add a logical completion to a piece of writing using the past perfect and past simple appropriately and accurately. The scores obtained by the two groups revealed that the experimental subjects were able to produce better pieces of writing.

Section three was scored out of 7 points. We noticed some sensitive improvement in favour of the experimental group (as displayed in table 27 below). 8 students (out of 12) in the experimental group got above the average (3.5 points) against only 3 in the control group. This means that 4 experimental subjects were not able to get average against 9 in the control group. Besides, no one of the subjects (in both groups) was able to obtain a score higher than 5. This may be due to the fact that we assessed not only the inappropriate use of tenses in the written

production but also areas such as coherence, order of the sentences, punctuation and spelling (activity 2).

Ranges of scores	Section Three			
	Experimental group		Control group	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Below 3.5	4	33.33 %	9	75 %
Between 4-5	8	66.66%	3	25 %
Above 5	0	0%	0	0 %

Table 27: Performance of the Two Groups in Section Three (Post-test)

The third section was totally devoted to the use of the past perfect in a piece of free writing. The aim of this section was to see the extent to which the students can produce a coherent piece of writing. Comparing the production of the students, we were able to observe that the students in the control group overextended the use of the past simple, or use the past perfect but in an inadequate way. Contrary to the experimental subjects, most of the subjects in the control group were not able to use the past perfect to express an important climax or culmination of an event or situation in the past (section three, activity 1- a). Neither were they able to use the past perfect as a background commentary on previous past events (section three, activity 1- b). In addition, the control subjects' compositions (section three, activity 2) were stigmatized with mistakes in tenses. In order to illustrate how the two groups differ in mastering the use of the past perfect in their production, we selected the following four samples from the students' test papers (two from the control group and two from the experimental group):

- a- An example from a student's writing in the control group (activity one , section three):

Some researchers were trying to teach sign language to a gorilla. They continually exposed her to signs for the food items in her environment. One day she was hungry but couldn't find any bananas. She went to the researcher and made a good approximation of the sign for

"banana". Later, the research team **had known** that the gorilla **made** the connection between the sign and the object it **had represented**.

- b- An example from a student's writing in the experimental group (activity one , section three):

Some researchers were trying to teach sign language to a gorilla. They continually exposed her to signs for the food items in her environment. One day she was hungry but couldn't find any bananas. She went to the researcher and made a good approximation of the sign for "banana". Later, the research team **knew** that the gorilla **had made** the connection between the sign and the object it **represented**.

- c- An example from a student's writing in the control group (section three, activity two)

It is always hard to make a decision. I experienced this after my baccalaureate exam. I thought that all my troubles are over, for it has been a real nightmare. I read all the choices I was allowed to make but I could not decide. I wanted to choose English but my mark does not permit me to choose it. I had eleven. I then asked many people, my parents, my relatives and my friends who all agreed on choosing physics because I had an excellent mark in it. Now that I am a first-year student in physics , I had some regrets. I am still thinking of passing the Baccalaureate exam again in order to have the chance to study English, the subject that I loved best.

- d- An example from a student's writing in the experimental group (section three, activity two):

It was very difficult for me to choose what to do at University. When I passed the Bac, I had so many choices. at the end, I decided to study French and I didn't regret it. I had sought some advices from almost everyone, both friends and relatives. Foreign languages are the field they had recommended. I wasn't convinced at the beginning because I had always dreamed to become an engineer and even thought of sitting for the Bac exam next year since I had no chance to study engineering. My brother had influenced my decision most. He told me that I could try French for that year, and I would not have nothing to lose. Later, I realized that French had been the right choice.

It is clear from the four samples made by two subjects in each of the two groups that the pieces of writing produced by the experimental subjects were better in terms of coherence and tense uses. The experimental subjects were able to use the past perfect as a useful tool to link the sentences together and, thus, produce quite acceptable pieces of writing that take into account the discourse aspects of the past perfect "to mark a climax or to state a purpose for relating prior actions and events narrated in the simple past (sample b) The control group showed little ability to use the tenses (past simple and past perfect) appropriately. Their choice of the tenses seemed to be made arbitrarily (sample a). In addition, these students made tense shifting without any discernible reason, and overextended the past simple (c). Even though the experimental subjects made mistakes of spelling and punctuation, they were able to use the tenses appropriately (sample d).

The samples above do reflect to some extent the type of teaching each of the groups had received. The control group were taught the past perfect at the sentence level, and were given no opportunities to use the past perfect in context and through discourse. Great emphasis was, instead, put on the accurate use of the grammatical structures (i.e., the past perfect). The experimental group, on the contrary, were taught the same tense at the level beyond the boundaries of the sentences. They were also given activities in which they had to read authentic texts and notice how the past perfect is used and distributed. In other words, the experimental subjects were given activities to practise the meaning and use of the past perfect as it functions naturally in extended discourse. They were also given activities in which they had to engage in the process of analyzing the use of the past perfect and how it is related to the past simple. Furthermore, the experimental subjects were encouraged to write beyond the sentence level. They were first asked to give summaries of the authentic texts used for reading comprehension. They were also required to compare their "new texts" with the ones they had summarized, and then make the necessary changes to improve their own writing. After the analysis activities, they were asked to produce their own discourse in which they had to be careful about the appropriate use of the target tenses and also about the organization of the ideas and the sequence of events to achieve coherence in their writing. These students performed their

writing activities collaboratively and were constantly guided through feedback and error correction.

Pair or group work, feedback and error correction techniques used during the writing activities were seen to have a positive effect on the experimental subjects' written productions. Indeed, the experimental subjects were requested to work in pairs or groups to analyze the use of the target tenses in a piece of discourse written by them or by their peers. After that, they had to present their findings and then collaboratively bring the necessary changes to a final draft. They were required to discuss not only the form of the tense (whether it is accurate or not) but also its discourse functions. We also noticed that the discourse analysis activities carried out in pairs or groups not only increased the students' communicative abilities but also made them able to produce pieces of writing that were relatively void of mistakes such as the arbitrary use of tenses or tense switching. In addition, the type of feedback that we encouraged in the classroom enabled the experimental students to improve their writing. Errors (especially those made at the discourse level) were not corrected immediately. Instead, they were underlined or circled, or, at times, written on the blackboard and students corrected them. When the students reflected on their own texts or on those of their peers, their attention was particularly drawn to the misuse of tenses in discourse and were constantly made aware of the fact that the inappropriate uses of a particular tense in a piece of writing may obscure its meaning. They were also provided with comments about whether their texts were coherent or not and whether the ideas in the texts are well planned and organized.

We have so far discussed the results of the subjects of both groups in the three sections of the post test. The findings enabled us to notice that the experimental subjects' performance in the last two sections was far better than that of the control subjects. The experimental subjects were particularly better in using the past perfect appropriately and meaningfully. The next chapter points out the pedagogical implications and suggests some proposals for teaching grammar through discourse

Chapter Four

Implications for Teaching

Introduction:

The results obtained from the post-test revealed the existence of a positive effect of a discourse-based approach on the understanding and use of the past perfect by first year EFL students at the UFC of Djelfa. In this chapter, we shall suggest some of the key pedagogical proposals which aim at promoting grammar teaching in order to help first year EFL learners become efficient users of the target language.

4.1 Implications for Teaching:

As mentioned before, this research study aims at investigating whether teaching the past perfect on the basis of discourse can be more effective than teaching it at the sentence-level. It also investigates whether raising learners' awareness to discourse encourages them to use the past perfect in a sequence of events correctly and appropriately. Through this study, we wanted to show that if we train learners to notice and analyze the use of the target grammatical structures in discourse, they will ultimately produce their own discourse accurately and appropriately. Celce-Murcia (2002:132) explains this in the following quotation:

Once we change our perspective from sentence level to discourse level, we are in a position to teach grammar both as a resource for creating discourse in context and as a resource for using language to communicate—both receptively and productively.

The findings of this research study have shown that the use of discourse as the basis of grammar instruction is very beneficial for first year students at the UFC of Djelfa. The text-based activities used for the comprehension and analysis of the target grammatical structures in discourse enabled the students not only to know how to use these structures and for what purposes but also served them to produce acceptable pieces of writing that are relatively void of mistakes such as tense shifting, arbitrary use of tenses or the overextending of a single tense. Celce-Murcia (1991:185) has observed that the analysis of the grammatical structures at the discourse level enables learners "to read and write English for academic and communicative purposes". She also notes that when learners are given opportunities to see how grammar operates in discourse they will truly come to

understand what the "rules" of grammar are with reference to communication (Celce-Murcia,1990:208).

In the light of the findings of the present study, some pedagogical proposals may be put forward. These proposals address the following issues:

- techniques and procedures to be incorporated in discourse-based approach.
- teachers' roles and the students' roles
- feedback and error correction in a discourse-based approach
- the issue of applying this present investigation to first year students in the EFL teaching degree curriculum.

4.1.1 Techniques and procedures to be incorporated in discourse-based approach.

This present research study focuses mainly on using written discourse as the basis of teaching the past perfect. However, we also recommend that teachers should raise their students' awareness to the use of this tense in spoken language. They should design activities that enable learners to notice how this tense is used and distributed in spoken discourse. An example of this, is to "put students in the position of discourse analysts, observing language use in recordings and transcripts and reflecting on their own use of language" (Basturkmen,2002:26). Teachers should also encourage them to reflect upon their own speaking (Why did you use that tense and not this? What is the purpose of using this tense?...etc).

Given the fact that listening is the most frequently used language skill in everyday life, and also the fact that "when people listen –whether they are listening to a lecture, a news broadcast , a joke, or are engaging in a conversation- they are listening to discourse " (Celce-Murcia, 1995:363), teachers should also incorporate listening comprehension activities to raise their learners' awareness to the use of tenses in discourse. For example, learners listen to a piece of discourse and answer questions like: what is the dominant tense in the dialogue? Why? What other tenses are used?...etc. It follows that when using discourse as the basis of teaching grammar in general and tenses in particular, teachers should focus not only on

reading and writing but on all the other language skills (i.e., speaking and listening) as well. As McCarthy and Carter (1994:28) put it:

Learners are more motivated to learn grammar by seeing how language structures function in discourse than simply to memorize the grammatical rules in isolation from discourse. Furthermore, integrating the element of grammar learning into the practice of the other skills makes the whole language learning more effective.

It follows that if all language skills are integrated in a grammar lesson, this will serve them to internalize the different target grammar points and, thus, become efficient users of the target language.

As mentioned before, this discourse-based approach involves using authentic texts (i.e., texts that were not originally devised for the purposes of language teaching) which constitute appropriate input to acquire the tense system of the target language. However, when dealing with classes (especially large classes) where the proficiency level of the students varies substantially, we suggest that teachers should expose learners to more than one text in the first stage (reading comprehension) to provide all the students with the opportunity to notice and fully understand how tenses are used in discourse without much difficulty. These texts should be well selected to suit all the levels within one class.

To maximize interaction among learners, pair or group work should be encouraged throughout the learning process whether it be in the comprehension activities or in the analysis and production activities. Celce-Murcia argues for the use of group and pair work as a useful technique to enable learners to discover the target structure in discourse. As she (1990:212) puts it:

There is, of course, no reason why the comprehension and analysis of example texts as well as the production and subsequent reworking of similar texts by the learners cannot be the source of numerous pair and group activities that make such discovery and learning enjoyable cooperative experiences.

4.1.2 Teachers' roles and the students' roles :

It is obvious that the type of activities proposed in a discourse-based approach implies new roles in the classroom for teachers and learners. Learners should participate in classroom activities that are based on a cooperative rather than

individualistic approach to learning. Learners should , under the supervision of their teachers, work out rules for themselves. Teachers should also get students to be involved and actively engaged especially when students are not in the habit of learning grammar through discourse. Teachers should also be helpful and available when the students encounter difficulties. They should also establish a bridge or a direct relationship with individual students to exchange viewpoints about a particular difficulty.

The discourse approach to grammar teaching also requires that teachers be aware of how grammar is used to structure discourse and cope with conditions of the communicative context (Brown & Yule, 1983:50). Indeed, they have to be sensitive to teaching opportunities provided in texts and be able to use the texts appropriately. In view of getting their students involved in a learning process where they can foster their communicative competence, teachers should first be knowledgeable about the discourse-based approach to the teaching of grammar. To achieve this, teachers should be acquainted with the recent research about the implementation of discourse analysis in the teaching and learning of grammar. In addition, teachers should master the grammar rules because the more they know about grammar, the more they will be able to raise learners' consciousness about how the language works.

In the perspective of using discourse in grammar instruction , the teachers' roles will change from "being the source of everything" and a model to correct speech and writing , showing their students what is right and what is not, to collaborators and negotiators. Instead of just presenting and explaining the target grammar rules at the sentence level, they should extend and enrich learners' awareness of how grammar functions in discourse (Celce-Murcia,1990:212). They should take part in the process of learning by guiding the learners to analyze the different structures under focus and interact with each other so that learners could establish the link between discourse and grammar in authentic texts and, also, become able to explore the language in an effective way. Teachers should, therefore, alert their students to the importance of discourse considerations for effective

communication and stress that a focus solely on grammatical structures is not enough (Celce-Murcia, 1996:54).

4.1.3 Feedback and error correction in a discourse-based approach

The main principle of a discourse-based approach to teaching grammar is that grammar should be taught not as an end in itself, but as a source of creating oral or written discourse. Given this fact, the teachers should use feedback and error correction activities in a way that enables learners to write pieces of discourse that are void of mistakes such as inappropriate tense use, tense shifting ...etc. Teachers, therefore, are called upon to correct their learners' errors not through using de-contextualized sentences from learners' writing, focusing only on surface or local errors but should also focus on discourse-level errors or global errors (errors that are related to features such as lack of organization due to tense misuse or tense shifting ...etc.). Teachers should also train learners to work with texts and analyze the different error types in order to raise their awareness using discourse-based remedial activities. To achieve this, teachers should, for example, choose a student's text or create short texts that include common error types made by the students in their writing. Students can, then, work in groups to analyze the different errors and propose the correct forms to get a coherent piece of writing. This can be very useful for the students not only to improve their pieces of writing but also to learn to correct their own work more successfully (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Teachers can also "reformulate" a student's piece of writing (i.e., rewrite it with their own words, using different vocabulary and organization). Students then compare the reformulated version with the original one to see if the intended message is preserved and to understand why the changes were made (Celce-Murcia, 1991:472). When their students write a piece of discourse of their own, teachers should highlight the properties of the grammar points in discourse by providing negative evidence, helping their students to see what is not possible in English. By doing so, they will encourage the learners to "notice the gap" between what they are writing and what the target language requires.

4.1.4 The issue of applying this present investigation to first year students in the EFL teaching degree curriculum.

This study investigated a class of first year students in the UFC of Djelfa. The question that could be raised here is whether the insights gained in this research study can be extended to first year students in the departments of English (i.e., students enrolled in the EFL teaching degree curriculum).

As a matter of fact, we believe that this discourse-level approach to teaching the past perfect along with the past simple and past continuous can also have fruitful results with first year students in the department of English of Algerian universities. This is due to the fact that the subjects we investigated have many things in common with the students who are enrolled in the first year of the EFL teaching degree curriculum. Indeed, both the first year students who participated in the experiment and those in Algerian English departments pertain to the same group age (17-22). They also share the same language background with Arabic as first language and have the same school background (Algerian public educational system). Furthermore, they received similar instruction in English in general and tenses in particular during the secondary schools. This instruction was mainly based on sentence-level grammar drills.

Due to these similarities, the present investigation can also be applied to first year students in the English department. However, teachers in the department of English should acknowledge some of the difficulties that they may encounter when they adopt a discourse-based approach to teaching grammar. The first difficulty is that learners are not acquainted with the use of discourse in grammar. The second one is that learners have very little exposure of authentic materials in grammar instruction. The third one is related to large classes which may be a problem in implementing an effective discourse-based approach. To find a solution to these difficulties , teachers should proceed with a gradual introduction of the discourse-based approach, or start with a sentence-level presentation of the target grammatical structure and then gradually reanalyze it and subsequently teach it in relation to its role in discourse.

Conclusion

Conclusion:

The major drive of the present study was to address ways to prepare students to understand and use the past perfect meaningfully and appropriately. Accordingly, we made instructional efforts to raise the learners' awareness to the importance of discourse to have a full understanding of how the target structure (namely, the past perfect) functions and how it is related to other tenses, bearing in mind the fact that the learner's ability to produce a grammatically correct structure is only a part of a whole process which involves the situational and linguistic context in which this structure occurs.

This study suggests that teaching grammar from an exclusively sentence level perspective is insufficient in two aspects. The first one is that sentence level grammar instruction is inconsistent with the notion of communicative competence which includes at least four interacting competences: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2005:51). The second one is that this teaching does not help learners to become competent users of the language in the sense that it fails to assist them in producing longer stretches of discourse (Hughes and McCarthy, 1998:275). Using two research tools (a teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation), this study also claims that the teaching of grammar at the UFC of Djelfa has produced students who have acceptable command of grammar rules but are unable to communicate meaningfully and appropriately. The findings of these two tools enabled us to notice that learners' poor language proficiency might be due to the fact that teachers use a teacher-fronted grammar teaching presented deductively and through decontextualized sentence-level exercises.

By taking Celce-Murcia's (1990; 1991) model of discourse-based teaching as our lead, we encouraged learners to read well-selected, authentic texts that are contextually and discursively representative of the grammar point in focus. Then, we made them explore the texts to be aware of how the grammar point functions in discourse and how it is related to other structures. After the students were actively

engaged in reading comprehension and analysis, they were able to produce the grammar points in their own discourse .

The main objective of this investigation was, therefore, to explore a way of teaching that is discourse-based and that aims at raising learners' awareness of how the past perfect functions in discourse so that they can understand and use this tense effectively and appropriately. To this end, 24 subjects were submitted to an instruction period that lasted two months. The 24 subjects, who were first year students at the UFC of Djelfa, were randomly assigned into two matching groups (the experimental group and the control group). The first group was taught the past perfect using a discourse-based approach while the second group was taught the same tense using a traditional, sentence-level grammar teaching. These experimental subjects were pre-tested and post-tested. The pre-test was designed before the teaching experiment started and the post-test after the end of the teaching experiment. The scores of the subject in the experimental group were analyzed and compared with those of the control group.

The results of the investigation seemed to provide further supportive empirical evidence that teaching the past perfect at the discourse-level was more effective than teaching it at the sentence-level because the experimental groups made considerable progress in their scores while the control one made only a slight improvement. Furthermore, the findings of the experiment allowed us to notice that the experimental students were able to produce pieces of discourse that were better than those produced by the experimental groups. Errors like choosing the tenses arbitrarily, jumping from one tense to another without any justification and / or overextending a particular tense all throughout a single paragraph were more apparent in the control groups' productions than in those of the experimental group.

The observations we collected during the experiment showed that the experimental group made considerable progress in producing accurate pieces of writing. This has been particularly obvious by the fact the experimental students were able to understand better the grammatical functions and use the target grammatical structures under focus appropriately. Such findings are to be taken as a

positive indication that teaching the tenses in general and the past perfect in particular, can indeed be beneficially implemented with first year English students.

Drawing on the above findings, the present study makes some recommendations that might enable teachers and students to do better in their teaching and learning of English. These recommendations concern the implementation of discourse analysis in grammar instruction so that learners can be efficient users of the target language. They also concern the use of feedback and error correction to enable learners produce pieces of writing that are void of mistakes such as tense shifting and inappropriate tense uses..

This study does, in no way, call for excluding the sentence-level approach to teaching grammar for the simple reason that sentence-level treatments of grammar rules can help to a certain extent the learners to understand some particular aspects of grammar as there are many context-free rules that learners need to practise at the sentence-level. Isolated sentences can also be beneficial in the sense that they are easy to read and can be better assimilated by learners. This research study, however, is an attempt to show that teaching grammatical structures through stand-alone sentences is counterproductive and insufficient and does not help learners to develop their language proficiency. It claims that if there is a move from sentence level to discourse level treatments of grammatical structures, teachers and learners will teach and learn grammar both as a resource of creating discourse in context and as a resource for using language to communicate effectively and appropriately. To paraphrase Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005:68), if learners learn and practise grammar rules at the level of the sentence, and then extend them to automatic use at the level of discourse, they will be able to use the target language accurately and fluently.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Teachers' Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear teacher,

This is an autonomous questionnaire which is designed to gather data about the way grammar is taught at the *Université de Formation Continue* (UFC). You are kindly requested to read the questions carefully and give your responses to each question. Your genuine responses will greatly contribute to the success of this study. They will be strictly confidential and will be used only for this study.

I am extremely grateful for your cooperation.

Thank you in advance.

PLEASE WRITE YOUR REPOSSES BY PUTTING A CHECK () IN THE GIVEN BOX, OR BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE LETTER.

1. How long have you been teaching grammar at the UFC University?

1-2	3-6	7-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Have you done any post-graduation studies ?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. The main objective of grammar teaching is to get learners to

- a- Understand and use the grammar rules
- b- Learn to produce grammatically accurate sentences
- c- Communicate accurately and fluently

4. In which way do you think students learn the language better?

- a- When they constantly use the grammatical structures in their writing
- b- When they use grammar for communicative purposes
- c- When they are exposed to language in natural contexts

5. How do you present the grammatical structures ?

- a- Deductively (give grammar rules and students practice using them)
- b- Inductively (give examples and students discover the rules by themselves)

6. When you teach grammar, the target structure is introduced

- a- at the sentence level(the target structure is presented in isolated sentences)
- b- beyond the sentence level (the target structure is presented in written texts and dialogues)

7. When presenting a grammatical structure do you

(you can choose more than one)

- a- Give detailed explanations ?
- b- Raise learners' awareness to the grammatical features and how they work?
- c- Make students internalize the structures through repetition and transformations?
- d- Use grammar drills so that the students memorize the rules?
- e- Require students to analyze data to arrive at an explicit presentation of the target structure?

8-How do you ask your to work on the activity ?

- a. Individually
- b. In pairs
- c. In groups

9- When teaching grammar, do you present the grammar items in

- a- authentic materials ?
- b- non-authentic materials ?

10- Do you usually rely on grammar reference books that illustrate the target grammatical structures through (you can choose more than one answer)

- a- explicit description and grammatical explanations in isolated sentences
- b- written and oral texts including dialogues, newspaper articles
- c- problem-solving activities?
- d- activities that help learners discover how a grammar point works?

11- Do you engage students into a practice stage immediately after a grammatical structure is presented?

Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>

No
<input type="checkbox"/>

12- How do you practise the target grammatical structures?

- a- Use the language as much as possible to memorize the grammar rules
- b- Focus on the learners' attention on grammar points and help them to understand the meaning these structures realize
- c- Induce them to undertake form/ function analyses of the structure

13- Which of the following activities and techniques do you usually use to practise the grammar points? (you can tick more than one)

- a- Substitution drills
- b- Sentence completion
- c- Fill in the gap activities
- d. Jumbled sentences
- e. Spotting and correcting mistakes
- f. Problem-solving activities

14- Do you get students to perform production activities using the target structure?

Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>

No
<input type="checkbox"/>

15- In order to make your students use and internalize the target grammatical structures, do you usually require them

- a- to produce sentences of their own containing the target structure?
- b- to produce a number of sentences based on a given pattern?
- c- to use the target structure in pieces of writing of their own?

16- When your students make a grammatical mistake, do you

1. Give your students a chance to correct themselves?
2. Invite other students to correct it ?
3. Correct it immediately?
4. Tolerate it ?

17-In which of these errors do you mostly intervene?

1. Local errors (omitted article , superfluous preposition, omitted or wrong pronouns, incorrect verb...)
2. Global errors (faulty word order , the use of the wrong logical connectors, the use of wrong cohesive devices)

18- How do you proceed with error correction ?

- a- By directing the students to identify the error and correct it quickly and spontaneously
- b- By getting them focus on the problem to become aware of both the error and the correct form.

Appendix B : Classroom Observation Checklist

Date of Observation :.....

Class:.....

Title of the Lesson :.....

Time:.....

No	The behaviour to be observed during a grammar lesson	Observed	Not observed
01	The procedures followed by the teacher and the different techniques used during the grammar		
	-much emphasis is placed on the student's ability to form correct sentences (accuracy)		
	-much emphasis is placed on the student's ability to communicate (fluency)		
	- the different structures (the past perfect, the past simple and the past continuous) are taught separately		
	- the different structures (the past perfect, the past simple and the past continuous) are analyzed and		
	-the students have enough practice in pairs/groups		
	-the students do the activities individually.		
	-the students have enough practice that is characterized by repetition, substitution, transformation and		
	-the students have enough practice that gives learners opportunities to negotiate meaning, discover rules		
	-grammar rules are taught as an end in themselves		
	-grammar rules are explored to know the reasons for their use		
	- the students are asked to use the grammatical structures in sentences of their own to retain them		
	- T helps learners discover rules and patterns and apply them in their language use whenever appropriate		
02	The materials used by the teacher		
	- the grammatical structures are introduced through un-contextualized sentences.		
	--the grammatical structures are introduced through authentic texts (newspaper articles, scientific text,		
	-the grammatical structures are presented through artificial material for the purpose of language teaching		

	-the grammatical structures are presented through real-life material for the purpose to generate		
	The materials provide no opportunity to communicate (the aim is present the form)		
	- the materials generate communication		
03	The teacher's and the students' roles		
	- the students actively participate in the learning process		
	- the teacher acts as a facilitator and monitor		
	- much interaction between teacher/ student and between student/student		
	- no interaction between teacher/ student and between student/student		
	- active teachers and passive students		
	- active students and passive teachers		
	- learners are highly motivated and interested		
	- T facilitates language use and communication		
	- learners perform communicative activities (role play, games,....etc)		

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix C: Pre-test

UFC of Djelfa

Student's name:

Teacher: S. KHADROUN

Group:.....

Timing: 2 hours

The Pre-Experimental Test in Grammar

SECTION ONE: (7.5 points)

1. Complete each sentence using one of the alternatives (A, B, or C) (5 points)

- a-** While Iup the mountain, I got tired. But I didn't stop until I reached the top.
a- was walking b- had walked c- walked
- b-** After theythe alarm, the great ship turned to avoid the collision
a- had given b- have given c- were giving
- c-** Imy glasses three times so far this year
a- broke b- have broken c- have been breaking.
- d-** Last week, my husband gave me a painting for my birthday. Iit on a wall in my office.
a- have stuck b- had stuck c- stuck
- e-** When he came home, I.....my mother on the phone.
a- talks b- talked c- was talking
- f-** Kate reached to the floor and picked up her glasses. They were broken. She on them.
a- stepped b-had stepped c-was stepping
- g-** I Mark Miller ever since we were in college
a- have known b- had known c-knew
- h-** There had been an accident and men.....the injured people to an ambulance.
a- had carried b- carried c-were carrying
- i-** When I went to bed, I turned on the radio. While I..... somebody turned it off.
a- had slept b- slept c-was sleeping
- j-** I enjoyed visiting Tommy's class. It was an arithmetic class. The studentstheir multiplication tables.
a- were learning b- had already learned c-learnt

2. Which description (1-5) fits each sentence (a-f) (2.5 points)

1. A recent action in the past with an effect in the present
2. A finished action in the past
3. An action which started in the past and is still going on now
4. A past action at an indefinite time in the past
5. An action happening at the moment of speaking.

- a- I have never been to Tibet.
- b- Stan has had that car for years.
- c- We took the dog to the vet's yesterday.
- d- Look! The dog is digging your flower bed!
- e- Pete's just finished painting the kitchen.
- f- We had oysters and milk last night.

Actions	1	2	3	4	5
Sentences					

SECTION TWO: (7.5 points)

1. In each of the following paragraph, there are 5 errors in verb usage. Write the error in the table and then correct it. (2.5)

I am walking along the deserted streets of the town to look for somewhere to make a phone call. My car broke down outside the town and I wanted to contact the AA. There was a cold damp wind blowing off the sea which nearly threw me off my feet every time I crossed a side street. It rained in the night and water was dripping from the bare trees that lined the street. There had been no sign of a call box nor was there any one whom I could ask. I had thought that I might find a shop selling the Sunday papers or a milkman doing his round, but the town had been completely dead.

	Error	Correction
1
2
3
4
5

2. Read the following text carefully then complete it with the given verbs. Choose the adequate tense: (5 points)

At half past six, John (decide)**1** that he(do)**2** the work for one day. His secretary (already/ go)**3** home, so he (be)**4** alone in the office. He then (turn)**5** off the lights and (shut)**6** the door. The lock (be)**7** an automatic one , but he (be)**8** always careful to put the door slightly to make sure. After the door (be)**9** locked , he(remember)**9** that..... (forget)**10** the keys in his desk. Not only the keys of the office but also those of his flat and his car.

SECTION THREE : (5 points)

1. Complete the sentences using the adequate tenses: (2.5 points)

1. Our guests before so weto introduce them to one another. (meet/ not need)
2. The old mana great traveller in his youth and.....tell a tale about many strange places. (be/ can)
3. Johnnothing to smoke because heto buy tobacco. (have / buy)
4. The ground.....under water because itraining for six days and nights. (be/ not stop)
5. Theyfor twenty-four hours andvery hungry indeed. (not eat/ be).
.....

2. Alexander and his wife went to a restaurant to celebrate their wedding anniversary. Complete the third sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the previous two sentences. Use an adequate time adverbial (when, as soon as, after....etc) (2.5 points)

1. The waiter showed them to the table. They asked to see the menu.
.....
2. He brought them the menu. He finished his cigarette.
.....

3. They suddenly lost their appetite. They ate half of their chicken.

.....

4. The waiter brought their coffee. They finished their sweet.

.....

5. The waiter gave them the bill. He told them that service wasn't included!

.....

Appendix D: Post-test

UFC of Djelfa

Teacher: S. KHADROUN

Timing: 2 hours

Student's name:

Group:.....

The Post-Experimental Test in Grammar

SECTION ONE: 8 points

1. In this extract, the writer received two letters from her parents. Read the extract and then answer the questions: (5points)

The letters came after I had been back at college for three days. They were in my pigeon-hole when I came out of breakfast. I opened the box, took them and went back to my room to read them.

They had both written, presumably by agreement , so that I would get both letters at once. Obviously they had timed the whole thing carefully to coincide with the end of the vacation. It made me realize what a strain the last few weeks must have been for them. I opened Mother's first because I always saved Dad's till the last in any batch of letters.....

In “ A Share of the World”. (Andrea Newman: 1964)

1. When did the writer receive the letters?.....
2. In which paragraph does she think that her parents agreed to write the letters at the same time so that she could receive them in her vacation. Write the number of the paragraph and the sentences.

§....

.....
.....

3. Which tense conveys a chronological order?.....
4. Which tense signals a time contrast.
5. Which tenses carry the main story line and which ones provide background information about a past event ?

.....
.....

2. Read the following text carefully then fill in the gaps with verbs in brackets. Choose the adequate tenses. (3 points)

While in Nigeria from 1964 to 1966 on my first overseas teaching assignment , I(meet) 1 and was able to talk on one occasion with Chinua Achebe, the well-known Nigeria novelist. I asked him how he (be able) 2 to acquire such a perfect English, what he (do) 3 that made his different from my university-level students. Achebe thought about my question , and then he (tell) 4 me of his early passion for the novels of Charles Dickens. He (be) 5 fascinated not only about the stories Dickens told but by the way in which he told them. Achebe (become) 6 as an adolescent , a very efficient analyzer of Dicken's discourse, and the results were phenomenal.

In " What Role for Grammar after the Communication Revolution?" (Celce-Murcia,1990:212-213)

SECTION TWO (5 points)

1. Read the following text carefully notice the underlined verbs. If the verb is correct , write RIGHT. If it is wrong correct it. (3 points)

TEXT	RIGHT	WRONG
The conference was (1) very successful . The	(1).....
seminars and talks had been (2) extremely	(2).....
interesting . It was obvious that all the speakers had		
prepared (3) their materials very thoroughly. There	(3).....
were, however, a number of problems . When we		
arrived (4), we discovered that the hotel manager	(4).....
reserved (5) the wrong room for us and therefore we	(5).....
did not have (6) enough space. Unfortunately, he	(6).....
could not let us have the larger room because he	(7).....
gave (7) it to another group. He had also	(8).....
misunderstood (8) the letter explaining what food we	(9).....
required. In fact, we suspected that he lost (9) it		

2. Here is an extract from a newspaper article. It is about a man who was being quizzed by MPs. Decide why the past perfect was used in each case. (2 points)

RUPERT Murdoch was attacked today while being quizzed by MPs over the News of the World phone hacking scandal.

The 80-year-old News Corp Chairman was defended by wife Wendi Deng, who leapt up to slap the assailant away. The man , who had given his name on Twitter as Jonnie Marbles, lunged at Mr Murdoch with a paper plate covered in shaving foam. Marbles had posted a message on the site before the attack, saying: "It is a far better thing that I do now than I have ever done before ". Cops led the job from the room and TV pictures showed him being detained outside. Scotland Yard confirmed that a 26-year-old man was arrested because he had assaulted the News Corp Chairman. Later, in the police investigation, the young man said that he had unjustly been fired from the corporation.

In The Sun , 28th April,2011

1. had given (line2).....
2. had posted (line 3).....
3. had assaulted (line 7).....
4. had been (line 8).....

SECTION THREE (7 points)

1. a) Use the words in brackets to complete the final sentence in the passages below. Use the appropriate tenses. (1.5 points)

1. Researchers at Stanford University were trying to teach American sign language to a gorilla. They continually exposed her to signs for the food items and toys in her environment. One day she was hungry but couldn't find any bananas. She went to the researcher and made a good approximation of the sign for "banana". Later, (research team/ know/ gorilla/ make/ connection/ between / sign/ the object /it/represent)

Later,
.....

2. The teams were on the field. The officials placed the ball on the ground, and a whistle sounded. (National Championship/ finally/ begin).

.....
.....

3. In the first year of the Jamestown settlement, the Indian tribes cooperated with the Englishmen. The settlers learned about native crops from them, and everyone shared local hunting and fishing grounds. (first permanent British colony / finally/take root/ in 1607 / thanks to /efforts / these native people).

.....
.....

b) Using the prompts given in brackets, write correct sentences. Use the adequate tenses.

1. The burglar alarm went off and a crowd began to gather. Soon, the police arrived at the scene of the robbery, but they were too late. (The thieves / already/ go).

.....

2. The restaurant was closed by the health inspectors. (Last week, they /visit/ it and found that / it / break/ food regulations/ many times).

.....
.....

3. I told my family that I was thinking of taking a cooking job. The roars of laughter were rather discouraging . No one believed that I could cook at all. (I never / have/ a chance to practise at home).

.....
.....

2. You certainly had a hard experience about choosing the field of the university studies for you to major in. In no more than 10 lines, write a paragraph relating how you made that decision, whether you were influenced by others and what effects it had on you.

Appendix E: Sample lesson

Tenses and Sequence of Past

Events in a Narrative

Text:

Wild Life

1. Context Reading :

- Before you read:

Class discussion :

- Have you ever wanted to do something different or unusual, such as climbing a mountain?
- Name some challenges that you would like to face.
- Why do some people like to face great challenges?

- As you read:

Read the following text about a young woman who wanted to participate in an educational program called Outward Bound.

Text: Wild Thing

With the wind biting my face and the rain soaking through my clothes, it didn't seem like July. I watched a puddle form at the foot of my sleeping bag as the 10-foot plastic sheet above me gave me way to the wind. I hadn't eaten for almost a day, and a rumble in my stomach demanded why I was in the Northern Cascades of Oregon –alone, soaked in the first place. With two more days alone in the wilderness ahead of me, I had plenty of time to think about that question.

I'd always admired people who had been in Outward Bound, basically because I'd always lumped myself in the I-could-never-do that- category. For one thing, I just assumed I was too small and urbanI also wasn't a big risk-taker. I'd always relied a lot on my family and friends, and I evaluated myself on how well I met their expectations of me.

- After you read:

1. Write true or false for each statement:

1. ____The young woman was going to spend two more days alone in the wilderness.
2. ____She had always been self-confident.
3. ____She was not hungry.
4. ____It was summer.

2. Work in groups and check your answers.

3. Summarize the text:

- Get in pairs and together write a summary of the text.
- Get in groups of four and exchange the summaries .
- Try to keep the same tenses used in the text.

2. Examining Form:

1. Refer back to the text . See the underlined verb. Which tense is it ? Find the other verbs used in the same tense and underline them. What are the other tenses used in the text? Use a different colour and underline them.

2. Identifying the form:

Fill in the gaps with the verbs and tenses provided. Use the appropriate form of the verbs needed in each blank.

I(walk/past perfect simple) along the river many times since meeting the fisherman that day in winter, but I..... (not see/past simple) him again until spring. It (.....be/past simple) late afternoon, and I (bicycle/past perfect simple) to a point along the river about a mile downstream from where we (meet/past perfect), hoping to find a deserted spot to draw a picture. I (find/past simple) a niche in the sloping floodwall and..... (start/past simple) drawing a junk moored not far from me.

3. Analysis :

1. Look back at the text (Wild Life).Work in groups and answer the following questions:
 - What tenses appear in this passage? In which lines of the first paragraph do the tenses shift?
 - In which sentence on the first paragraph does the woman tell about a situation or event that happened at an earlier point in the past?
 - Look at the first sentence in the second paragraph. What is the function in the text of this sentence? Does it describe something before or after?
 - With which other tenses is the past perfect used? Why?
2. The woman explains why she wasn't a big risk-taker? Which tense is used?
3. Was the woman self-confident? Why? Which explanation is given?
4. Which tense is used for the main events of the story? Which tense is used for the background of past events? Give examples.

Story-line events	Background events

5. Discuss with your peers the use of the past perfect in the text. Then in groups show your peers what you have found.
6. Because the past perfect describes events which happened before other events , it is very useful in giving clear explanations or the background of a past situation.

Consider the two following sentences.

- I wasn't a big risk-taker.
- I'd always relied a lot on my family and friends.

Which conjunction can be used to link them?

Check your answers.

4. Grammar in discourse:

Activity A: Look back to the text and fill in each blank with the appropriate form with the verbs indicated.

1. Before the writer..... (join) the Outward Band, she
.....(always / think) she could never do such an experience.
2. After she arrived at the Outward Band , she..... (call) her mother and
friends. She (always/rely) on them.
3. When she started running , she(feel) terribly hungry. She
.....(not/eat) for almost a day.
4. She was alone in the wilderness. She(start) doing things she
.....(never/do) before.

Activity B:

a- Work in pairs. Use the words in parentheses to describe what happened and what had happened before. Use the past simple and the past perfect. The first one has been done as an example.

1. We/go to the station/ catch the train to Paris, but/too late. train / leave / already.
 - We **went** to the station to catch the train to Paris , but we **were** too late. The train **had** already **left**.
2. I / wake up / early/morning, but / can't get back/ sleep. I / sleep for eight hours.
3. He/ offer / introduce me to Professor Newton, but it / not be/ necessary. I /already/ meet/
him
4. I / approach/ a stranger who looked like my friend and / start/ talking to him. It was clear
that I / make / a mistake.
5. I /knock/ several times. I /turn/ the handle but it / not open. Someone /lock/ it.

Activity C

1. This extract is the continuation of the text (Wild Life). Read it and insert the following sentence in its appropriate place (1) or (2):

I had never attempted mountain climbing or white-water rafting.

Signing up for an outward Bound course the summer after my junior year in high school was a chance to break away from that.(1) After all, the course are described as "adventurous-based education programs that promote self-discovery through tough outdoor activities." This is what I needed. But as the starting date approached, I became increasingly terrified. (2)

2. Explain your choice.

6. Using the past perfect in writing:

1. You certainly had a past experience. Describe this experience using the past simple and the past perfect.
2. Say what you did and what had happened before.
3. Provide some explanations for why you did things.
4. Use your composition as the basis for a three-minute presentation to the class.

Appendix F: Students' Scores in the Pre-test and the Post-test

Experimental group			Control group		
Students	Scores on Pre-test	Scores on Post-test	Students	Scores on Post-test	Scores on Post-test
Student 1	12	16	Student 1	08	10
Student 2	11	15	Student 2	12	11
Student 3	10	14	Student 3	09	09
Student 4	11	13	Student 4	09	10
Student 5	12	08	Student 5	10	10
Student 6	09	09	Student 6	08	08
Student 7	06	12	Student 7	10	11
Student 8	10	10	Student 8	11	10
Student 9	07	11	Student 9	08	08
Student 10	07	10	Student 10	06	09
Student 11	09	10	Student 11	10	11
Student 12	10	12	Student 12	12	10
Sum of the scores	114	140	Sum of the scores	113	117
Mean	9.5	11.66	Mean	9.41	9.75
Standard Deviation	1.97	2.46	Standard Deviation	1.78	1.05

ملخص

لمدة 10 سنوات الان, طلبة السنة اولى, جامعة التكوين المتواصل بمدينة الجلفة درسوا النحو الانجليزي على مستوى الجملة مع التركيز على القواعد بهدف كتابة جمل نحوية صحيحة. لاحظنا ان هؤلاء الطلبة لهم معرفة مقبولة فيما يخص القواعد غير انهم عاجزون على التواصل الحقيقي باللغة. بمعنى آخر يتحكمون في قواعد اللغة الانجليزية و لكنهم في بعض الاحيان يستعملون اللغة بطريقة غير سليمة. المعلومات التي استقينها من استبيان اساتذة جامعة التكوين المتواصل و كذلك ملاحظة بعض الاساتذة في الاقسام بين ان الاساتذة يولون اهمية كبرى للكفاءة النحوية للطلبة و لا يراعون معاني و مميزات القواعد النحوية من خلال تحليل الخطاب.

ان هذه الدراسة تهدف الى اثاره و عي الطلبة الى استعمال ال past perfect في اللغة الانجليزية (المرادف للماضي البعيد في عدة مراجع عربية) , و معرفة دلائله و معانيه عن طريق تحليل الخطاب من اجل مساعدة الطلبة على فهم الماضي البعيد و القدرة على استعماله بشكل فعال و صحيح.

من اجل ذلك قمنا بتجربة تشمل فوجين متماثلين (فوج تجريبي و فوج شاهد) يتكون كل واحد منهما من 12 طالبا. درس الفوج التجريبي الماضي البعيد من خلال الخطاب في حين درس الفوج الشاهد نفس الفعل عن طريق جمل معزولة و دون سياق.

بعد فترة الامتحان تبين ان الفوج التجريبي تفوق على الفوج الشاهد في فهم و استعمال الماضي البعيد بشكل احسن.

