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Abstract

This thesis aimed at exploring teacher cognition (knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices) in relation to the teaching of grammar of English as a secondary language at upper secondary school in Norway, academic VG1, vocational VG1, and VG2. Its relevance was based on there being no specific grammatical requirements as part of the English curriculum of LK06, the grammatical expectations are based on generalized statements of learner competence that requires implicit or explicit grammatical knowledge. The thesis further aimed to obtain the learners' opinion on their teacher's methodology. The data was obtained through a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews with five teachers and focus group interviews with 30 learners, divided equally.

The study revealed that the majority of the teachers had negative attitudes towards the teaching of explicit grammar and that they never approached implicit acquisition of grammar as a primary aim. Although they considered grammar important as part of language acquisition, most expected that their learners should have acquired the necessary grammar prior to upper secondary school. The teachers' cognition regarding grammar was reflected in how irregularly they addressed grammar throughout a year.

The findings of the study suggested that the learner context was the most influential factor as to why and how often they taught grammar, especially in regards to the vocational teachers who had to adapt to the extreme differences in proficiency among their learners. The teachers varied in regards to how they addressed grammar explicitly and implicitly, and the majority in accordance with their cognition. Feedback to written and oral activities, grammatical presentations, and grammatical task work were revealed as the primary approaches and techniques used in order to teach explicit grammar.

The teachers' primary focus was on the acquisition of grammar implicitly through input and output. There were no signs that indicated common agreement among the teachers regarding a preferential activity of reading, writing, or oral activities, although the individual teachers had their own preferences, which stemmed from teacher cognition based primarily on their individual learner context, previous experience, and education.

The learner interviews largely reflected the cognition of the teachers in a positive manner, especially the use of feedback and variety. Although there was one case which

showed to be particularly negative, even though the teacher had similar sentiments towards the weaknesses, unveiled by both teacher and learner.

The significance of this study is that there is a clear knowledge gap regarding research on the teaching of grammar at upper secondary school in Norway, specifically at academic VG1, vocational VG1, and VG2. Thus, this thesis contributes to a field which has not been given sufficient attention. It may also be used by teachers in order to gain insight into how grammar is being taught and into the influence of a learner context on teacher cognition. Further research may be done on learner-context-based teaching and applying appropriate approaches, methods, and techniques to learner contexts in multi-level classes.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim and research questions

This thesis is an investigation into the current methodology and cognition of teaching and learning second language English grammar at upper secondary school in Norway: academic VG1, vocational VG1, and VG2. The study is based on semi-structured qualitative interviews with five teachers and focus group interviews with 30 learners.

The study will try to answer the questions.

1. What methodologies are currently being used by teachers in order to teach English grammar at upper secondary school, academic VG1, vocational VG1 and VG2, in Norway?
2. What is the teacher cognition behind their choice of methodology?
3. How do learners respond to these methodologies?

The lack of clearly defined grammatical aims in the LK06 curriculum was the initial motivation to start this thesis. Research has shown that a co-operative mixture of both implicit and explicit teaching would likely be optimal for second language acquisition (Dörnyei, 2009:272). However, VG1 second language curriculum in Norway does seemingly not demand any specific grammatical knowledge of their learners, but rather has a focus on general statements of competence that would require grammatical knowledge (www.udir.no). Thus, without specific guiding points, it might be important to look into the methodologies of teachers in Norway in order to research the methods they use to achieve the goals set in the curriculum and how the learners respond.

1.2 Relevance

This research is primarily based on two premises. Firstly that there is a research gap in regards to research on the current situation of grammatical teaching, teacher cognition, and subsequent learner response at upper secondary school, academic VG1, vocational VG1 and VG2, in Norway. This research provides important insights into the current teaching and learning of English grammar at upper secondary school. Thus, this study is useful for teachers at upper secondary school and for aspiring teachers who wish to teach English at upper secondary school in Norway. The thesis provides insight into the current grammatical teaching methodologies, the cognition behind them, and how the learners respond to them.

The other important premise of this research is that it may give insight into the situation created by the requirements of the upper secondary English curriculum, part of the LK06 (www.udir.no). The English curriculum has no specific requirements regarding English grammar at VG1, it is rather generalized through statements of learner competence that requires grammatical knowledge (Ibid). This suggests that teacher cognition is an important part of their teaching method as they are not, according to the curriculum, required to teach any explicit grammar. Plus, there are no clearly defined learning outcomes in terms of grammar. It is rather an overall competence aim for the learners to be able to ‘express themselves in writing and orally in a varied, differentiated and precise manner, with good progression and coherence’ (Ibid). Similarly, the learners are expected to be able to read and listen in order to locate information (Ibid). In order for the learners to meet these expectations, they are required to have inherent knowledge of grammar, be it implicit or explicit, in order to be able to express themselves in a varied manner. Thus, the leniency given to the teachers may very well be reflected in their different teaching methodologies.

1.3 Theory

There are a number of decisions teachers need to make. Firstly, they need to decide whether to teach grammar, and to which degree if they choose to. Secondly, they need to decide whether they want to approach grammar implicitly, or a mixture of both – followed by the choice between the inductive or deductive approach to grammar. Thirdly, the teachers needs to decide upon a vast selection of approaches, methodologies, and techniques to use, which leads to numerous choices that does not necessarily fit each other. Finally, although unlikely the last step and rather a continuous presence to all the choices, the teachers need to consider how their choices will affect the acquisition of their learner context. A few of these questions will be briefly dealt with here.

Ur (1991:76) initiates her discussion on grammar pointing out that grammar is a controversial subject in foreign language teaching. The problem is not grammar as such, it is between the intuitive and explicit knowledge of grammar. While first language grammar is often intuitive, it is not necessarily as easily acquired in second language learning. The important question is then perhaps if explicit grammar helps, not if it is necessary for second language learning.

First language acquisition, grammatical or otherwise, through implicit knowledge is not as effective when faced with second language acquisition later in life (Dörnyei, 2009:270). The inability to implicitly, or automatically, acquire a second language through

language exposure leaves the necessity to rely on explicit teaching/learning. Explicit teaching methods, usually focusing on linguistic features such as grammar and vocabulary, have been found to be more effective than purely implicit instruction. However, this does not mean that implicit methods should be discarded, rather, Dörnyei (Ibid:271-272) claims that the optimization of co-operation of both explicit and implicit methodology would bring about the most effective results. Thus, it is easy to say that explicit learning of grammar is helpful, and it may be an important part of learning. Therefore, the challenging aspect to teaching grammar is to find a balance between explicit and implicit teaching approaches, methods, and techniques. Furthermore, the successful application of any methodology is based on the teacher's cognition in regards to the learner context.

Three teaching approaches that may represent three different ways of acquiring a second language is – grammar-translation, the audiolingual method, and communicative language teaching. Dörnyei (2009:272) says that most teachers today say that they follow the communicative approach, but those who follow a genuine communicative approach seem to be a (solid) minority. This is likely due to the different methodological developments and individual beliefs that have divided its theory from actual practices. The differences between the three methods in regards of grammar are that grammar-translation is an almost purely explicit method where one would teach grammar through rigorous repetition of rules and regularities. The audiolingual grammatical approach focuses on both the explicit repetition of grammar drills as well as the implicit nature of dialogue teaching techniques that would replicate 'habitual' real situational speech. Similarly, the communicative approach is originally a mixture of both implicit and explicit learning of grammar (Dörnyei, 2009: cf. 272-275).

When a teacher has decided to explain a rule it is important to decide on an approach, for example an inductive or deductive approach. The inductive approach requires the learner to try to explain the rule based on examples that are shown. The deductive approach consists of the teacher explaining the rule while the learners would try to make examples of it. The approach should, according to Ur (1991:82), be chosen based on the learner context, i.e. whether the learners are able to perceive and define the rules themselves or if they need the rules presented.

Teachers often depend on various methods of feedback as an important tool to deal with oral and written errors, but also as a tool for teaching grammar. Ur (1991:cf. 85-87) says that the manner feedback is given is important. Firstly, it may be important to note that the difference between a grammatical mistake and a grammatical error, an error would be

consistent mis-learned generalization and mistakes would be occasional and inconsistent oversights. Although difficult to pick up on, Ur (1991:85-86) suggests that the learners should be made aware of their errors. Furthermore, she suggests that errors may be corrected through positive reinforcement as a learning opportunity rather than viewed as inadequacy on the part of the learner or teacher. However, in order to correct something, it may be important to first look at the types of errors, how often they occur, and to which degree they affect comprehension in order to select errors for correction that may be of more importance.

When it comes to presenting and explaining grammar, Ur poses the question ‘how important is it to use metalanguage and should things be simplified?’ According to Ur (1991:81), there is a conflict between simplification and accuracy. If a grammatical structure is presented too simplistically, it may lack accuracy and, likewise, if presented too accurately, it may become too difficult. Thus, an important step in grammar presentation is to find the appropriate balance between the two and evaluate in with the learner context, for example older learners may benefit from terminology as they are more analytically-minded (Ur 1991:82).

The issues mentioned here will all be addressed in the research by looking at the individual components that the methodology of the teachers consists of. Furthermore, the cognition of the teachers will also be evaluated based on the theoretical framework that will be presented as part of this thesis. Similarly, the theory will be used in coalition with the learner interviews in order to analyse the learners’ statements.

1.4 Methodology

This is a qualitative study which focuses on analyzing education based rich data has been chosen due to the benefits of qualitative research. The flexibility of a qualitative study is important when researching the methodology of the teachers, because the aim of this qualitative research is to sample individuals with rich and varied insights into teaching second language grammar at upper secondary school, VG1. Thus, the individuals who have agreed to participate in the research have different backgrounds, experiences, and education and it would be necessary to ask them different and situational questions (about both similarities and differences among the teachers), with a sample size of approximately five teachers and thirty learners (Barbour, 2007:126-127).

The primary methods of data collection for this thesis are semi-structured interviews with the teachers and semi-structured focus group interviews with the learners. Walter and Gall (Walter and Gall 1989:452) claim that the semi-structured interview is the most used

method for research in education. This is due to its nature, starting with a series of structured questions where the resulting information of the questions can be followed by open-ended questions, which allow for deeper probing and more complete data. The benefits are thus that the research has the ability to remain objective while allowing for a thorough investigation of the opinions and reasons behind them. The possibility to gain insight into feelings, thoughts, intentions and past events is important when doing qualitative research, because it is the perspective of the respondent that is assumed meaningful and will thus be studied. (Patton 2002:341)

The semi-structured interview requires that the researcher has a solid overview of their research subject, and is then able to develop broader questions that can be modified depending on the situation of the respondent. The free nature of this interview format makes it important for the researcher to create an 'interview guide' as well as piloting it in advance, to make sure that the questions are not misleading or confusing in any matter. The interview guide also helps to ensure that the subject has been sufficiently covered and nothing forgotten. (Dornyei 2007:136-137)

The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with five teachers as well as semi-structured focus group interviews with each teacher's learners, approximately 6 learners per focus group, with a maximum of two teachers per school. The choice of individual teacher interviews was due to practicality and the possibility to compare differences in teachers even within schools. The individual information was not affected by anyone else, as the research puts emphasis on the subjective information. Although the semi-structured interview permitted a deeper understanding of the subject it also brings along the likelihood that more information would be collected from some participants than others. This could have been problematic in terms of analysis, where a completely structured interview would be easier to analyse (Patton 2002:347). However the flexibility was important in this research as the methodology of the teachers may have been very varied, and the conclusion of this research looked at both similarities and differences. As every informant brought unique information it was important to pre-prepare a set of starter questions that was relevant to all participants as well as being able to probe into areas that were not initially anticipated (Patton, 2002:347). Although the information gained from open ended questions may have been difficult to analyze, no matter what degree of structure, the questions resulted in open answers because of individual perceptions and experiences.

The benefits of focus group interviews with the learners may be that it could possibly have been easier and more encouraging for learners to discuss within a social environment the

grammar methodologies of their teacher, rather than putting learners in a more difficult position in which they have to elicit their own opinions on a matter they may not have thought about before. The focus group interview atmosphere was also something that benefits the learner demographic, as it was supposed to promote a comfortable and enjoyable group discussion. A big advantage was that focus group interviews required significantly less time. However this also meant that the amounts of questions had to be limited to approximately 10 questions per hour (Patton, 2002:385-386). The choice of using the learner's native language may have been an important part in order to encourage participation through a comfortable situation, and avoid uncertainties due to language barriers, prioritizing the acquisition of information. Focus group interviews was also practical as a random representation of the class as a whole (Barbour 2007:30-31).

1.5 Thesis outline

Chapter 2, 'Literary review', elaborates on relevant theory in relation to the teaching of English grammar at upper secondary school in Norway. The main section delves into some of the available approaches, methodologies and techniques of teaching of grammar. It additionally presents a theory of second language acquisition and gives a perspective of grammar through history and how it can be understood.

Chapter 3, 'Methodology', presents the methodological approach employed in the study, through the use of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews as a tool of qualitative research. Furthermore, it presents the process of selecting participants, data collection and analysis method, validity of research, and ethical dilemmas.

Chapter 4, 'Interview summaries', provides the individual teacher summaries and focus group interview of the study.

Chapter 5, 'Discussion', discusses the findings of the study and points to suggested areas for future research in the area of L2 grammatical teaching.

Chapter 6, 'Conclusion', concludes about the findings.

Chapter 2. Literary review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an introduction to some of the current theories on grammatical teaching in L2 classrooms. However, it is important to note that there was neither time nor space in this chapter to go through all the current theories nor perspectives. Thus, the material have been

selected due to their position as either L2 grammatical teaching theories relevant for the Norwegian context or due to scholarly recognition within the theoretical L2 English grammatical teaching community.

The following subchapters start with introducing the definitions of terms used in this thesis, before giving both a current and historical perspective on teaching grammar. It additionally gives insight into the acquisition process for second language learners and a perspective on approaches, methods, and techniques used to teach grammar. Furthermore, the chapter presents two different approaches to feedback and then focuses on teaching grammar in the Norwegian context.

2.2 Definition of terms

In order to facilitate the understanding of terminology that will be employed throughout the present study, this section deals with defining some of the key terms, such as *explicit knowledge, implicit knowledge, access, input, output, focus on form(s), inductive approach, and deductive approach*. Furthermore, this section functions as a tool to avoid possible misunderstandings, as there is not necessarily a general agreement on the terms used.

Method. H. Douglas Brown (Richards and Renandya, 2002:9) defines his understanding of method based on Edward Anthony (1963, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:9). Anthony's concept of method was the second part of three hierarchical elements: approach, method, and technique. 'Method was defined as an overall plan for systematic presentation of language based on a selected approach' (Ibid:9). There has, however, been some disagreement found in literature. Richards and Rodgers (1986, as cited in Ibid) said that 'method was an umbrella term to capture redefined approaches, designs, and procedures'. Despite this, and other definitions of the term, Anthony's definitions will be used for the present study.

Approach. Anthony defines approach as a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of language, learning, and teaching (Ibid:9).

Technique. Techniques can be defined as specific classroom activities consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well (Ibid).

Explicit knowledge. Rod Ellis (Richards and Renandya, 2002:169) emphasizes that 'explicit knowledge is not the same as metalinguistic knowledge'. Explicit knowledge is the kind of intellectual knowledge which is possible to gather about any subject, as long as, for example, grammar can be explained, it can be explicitly understood (Ibid:171)

Implicit knowledge. Rod Ellis (Ibid:171) defines implicit knowledge as ‘the kind of tacit knowledge needed to use the structure effortlessly for communication’.

Accordingly, *explicit instruction* is a teacher-centred presentation of a form and how it is used, which is then followed by learner practice. Implicit instruction is the result of drawing the learner’s attention to a form where they have to induce the rule or system underlying its use

(Richards and Renandya, 2002:158)

Interlanguage. H. Douglas Brown’s (Richards and Renandya, 2002:13) definition of interlanguage can be understood as a learner’s linguistic system which characterizes the output of a non-native speaker at any stage prior to full acquisition of the target language.

Access. Richards (1999, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:160) defines access as the learner’s ability to draw upon his or her interlanguage during communication. The context in which the learner is using the language as well as its purpose may affect the extent to which he or she is successful in calling up aspects of the acquired system.

Focus on form (FonF) is interpreted by Nassaji and Focus (2011:13-14) ‘as a series of methodological options that, while adhering to the principles of communicative language teaching, attempt to maintain a focus on linguistic forms in various ways. Such a focus can be attained explicitly and implicitly, deductively or inductively, with or without prior planning, and interactively or sequentially’. The term “form” includes various formal components of language including grammatical, phonological, lexical, and pragmatic forms.

Focus on Forms (FonFs). Long (1991, as cited in Ibid:10) distinguished a *focus on form* from a *focus on forms* (FonFs) and a *focus on meaning*. FonFs is the traditional approach based on the assumption that language consists of a series of grammatical forms that can be acquired sequentially and additively.

Inductive approach. Pihlstrøm (2013:40) explains that in an inductive approach to grammar, the learners have to figure out the rules for themselves.

Deductive approach. Pihlstrøm explains how in ‘a deductive approach to grammar, the learners are introduced to a grammar rule, then they are given several examples and finally they get to practice the rules themselves. This approach to grammar is more teacher centered’.

Testing (Ur, 1991:33) may be defined as an activity whose main purpose is to convey (usually to the tester) how well the testee knows or can do something, learning is not necessarily the main goal of test.

Errors vs. mistakes. Ur (1991:85) says that applied linguistic theory commonly defines errors as consistent and mis-learned generalization, which is contrasted to mistakes, which are

occasional, inconsistent slips. However, it is usually difficult to tell the difference with any degree of certainty. Thus, it is important to understand what grammar entails.

2.3. Understanding Grammar

Grammar instruction is dependent on the teachers' perception and understanding of what grammar is (Burns and Richards, 2012:258). Grammar may be viewed as 'the underlying knowledge of the system of rules which speakers apply in order to form correct sentences in spoken and written production, or more of a skill which speakers deploy creatively in acts of communication to achieve intended meanings.' The first view focuses more on explicit grammar knowledge, and the second view is more about implicit, or subconscious, knowledge. Ur (1991:75) starts her discussion on teaching grammar with first defining grammar as 'the way words are put together to make correct sentences'.

Furthermore, teachers are likely to choose their method of grammar instruction based on what they feel is most compatible with regards to instructional material, classroom activities, and teaching methods (Burns and Richards, 2012:258). Regarding materials and the first explicit view, and its focus on grammar as a knowledge-based system of rules, it is typically reflected in sentence-level exercises and test items which reward correct application of rules, aiming at accuracy. The second more implicit view addresses material through 'expression' in exercises and test items which reward the learner's ability to use appropriate grammar, aiming at creating meaningful texts. Further, conflicts may also arise in regards of a teacher's view of the purpose of explicit or implicit grammar, the views reflected in the course books and materials, or examinations that they may be required to use. Finally, teachers will inevitably rely on their own perceptions on how to teach grammar and how their learners approach learning it (Ibid:259).

Grammar may also be understood as a communicative resource used by speakers to interpret input when reading or listening and in order to produce language as output in speech or writing (Ibid). When producing output the learners use what they believe is the appropriate grammatical coding based on their current linguistic knowledge, or interlanguage – the individual learner's current understanding of a language (Richards and Renandya, 2002:13). Thus more advanced learners will be able to draw from a larger knowledge-pool, and will likely be able to access said knowledge more quickly than intermediate learners (Ibid).

2.4. Grammar teaching: A historical perspective

The history of language pedagogy has shown that grammar has for 'thousands of years' been at the center of language teaching, as there were no distinctions between language teaching

and grammar teaching (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011:2). Language was believed to be mainly composed of grammar rules, and knowing these rules would result in knowing the language.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the emphasis put on grammar resulted in the Grammar Translation (GT) method, which expanded in use throughout the 19th century. GT focused exclusively on studying classical languages, such as Greek and Latin, their grammatical rules and structures (Ibid). The various grammatical categories were taught deductively through explicit explanations of the rules with memorization and translations of texts L2 to the first language (L1). Language teaching focused primarily on written language, reading literature of the target language, and training learners' academic capacities. Different versions of GT are still in use today, although mainly in foreign language contexts (Ibid:2-3). However, language acquisition theories have evolved since then and the position of grammar has changed drastically since the 18th century due to a better understanding of the acquisition processes which learners go through while learning a second language.

Richards (1999) claims that the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) resulted in the gradual rejection of grammar-based instruction where communicative syllabuses, based on functions or tasks, were preferred over the grammatical syllabuses. Grammar-based methodologies, such as Presentation-Practice-Production (part of the situational approach), were replaced by function- and skill-based teaching. Accuracy activities, such as drills and grammar practice were replaced by fluency activities based on interactive small-group work (Ibid). This has led to the fluency-first pedagogy, in which the learner's grammatical needs are tested by fluency tasks rather than predetermined grammatical requirements in a syllabus (Ibid). It is also important that the communicative act should provide the learner with a sense of completion. CLT is based partly on the belief that successful language teaching depends on immersing learners in meaningful and natural communicative tasks that require them to negotiate meaning, through for example discussion-based materials, communication games, role-play, and other group activities (Richards and Renandya, 2002:154).

The communicative approach is originally a mixture of both implicit and explicit learning of grammar. However, the communicative approach is varied to such a degree that there are several communicative approaches, for example how it was thought of as a mixture between explicit and implicit teaching of grammar, and could be explained similarly to the two other methods. Furthermore, the communicative approach also uses implicit techniques

with the intention to learn grammar as a result of a primary activity, such as reading, writing or speaking (Dörnyei, 2009: cf. 272-275).

2.5. Second language acquisition process

2.5.1 Input and Intake

Understanding the process of L2 learning is one step towards being able to ensure that learners achieve acceptable levels of grammatical accuracy (Richards and Renandya, 2002:157). Richards (1999, cited in Ibid:157-158) draws on Van Patten (1993), Ellis (1994), and Skehan (1996a, 1996b) in order to explain the five stages of the learning process input, intake, acquisition, access, and output.

Input is the first stage of the learning process, which consists of the language sources that initiate the learning process - textbooks and commercial materials, teacher-made materials, and teacher-initiated classroom discourse are all part of the input that learners experience. Teaching materials have traditionally been based on an explicit linguistic syllabus assuming that it would determine the learner's second language acquisition. However, Krashen (1985, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:157) argues for a meaning-based syllabus, in which grammar should be handled incidentally. Thus, exposure to comprehensible second language input should suffice to trigger acquisition in the learner. However, Richards mentions that a different view of language acquisition is the inclusion of some form of linguistic syllabus with the aim to simplify the input, which is seen as essential in providing an appropriate level of difficulty for the learners.

A function of input may be to focus the learners' attention on a particular linguistic feature. Richards exemplifies this through five approaches. To begin with, *simplification* of input exposes the learners to texts and discourse which may contain a restricted set of tenses and structures. Secondly, *frequency* of exposure emphasizes a focus on a form (such as past tense) as the form appears more frequently in a text. Another approach is *explicit instruction*, which is teacher-centred presentation of a form and how it is used, followed by learner practice. Yet another approach is *implicit instruction*, which is the result of drawing the learner's attention to a form where they have to induce the rule or system underlying its use. Finally, *consciousness-raising* activities aim to make the learner aware of linguistic features in the input without the need to produce them. The Input stage is not assumed to result in learning, it is rather intended to facilitate the next stage in the learning process: intake (Ibid:158).

Intake can be understood as the result of linguistic information comprehended and attended to by the learner on the basis of the input. Portions of the input are assumed to remain in the long-term memory as intake, and are the basis for engaging language acquisition processes. There are primarily four factors thought to affect the passage from input to intake: *complexity*, the item should be at an appropriate level of difficulty; *saliency*, the item must be noticed or attended to in some way; *frequency*, the item must be experienced with sufficient frequency; *need*, the item must fulfil a communicative need. Together they will help intake; however, grammatical items such as articles, third person *-s*, and certain auxiliary forms may have lower saliency and although they may appear frequently enough, they are not easily acquired because they go unnoticed. Although they may appear frequently enough, they do not affect communication to a degree that makes them necessary (Ibid).

2.5.2 Acquisition

Richards claims that '[a]cquisition is the processes by which learners incorporate new learning items into their developing system or interlanguage' (Richards and Renandya, 2002:158). The information a learner acquires has to be *accommodated* and *restructured* as a result of fitting the information into their current system of interlanguage. Further acquisition may be facilitated by the learner being willing, and able, to experiment in order to develop their language system. If the information is not comprehended and incorporated into the learner's current interlanguage, it will unlikely be remembered (Van Patten 1993:436; Skehan, 1996b:19, cited in Richards and Renandya. 2002:159).

Researchers claim that the *experimental* output is a very important factor in language acquisition, meaning that acquisition does not always follow a straight line. The learners' hypothesis about the target language can be tested in a context that their current interlanguage is unable to create sufficient meaning through output. Thus, by pushing their limits to handle the output, which the learner hopes to be target-like, the learner may acquire more target-like language (Tarone and Liu, 1995, pp. 12, 121, cited in Swain, 1998, p. 11).

2.5.3 Access and Output

The learners' ability to *access*/remember the information in their interlanguage system and subsequently use this information in order to initiate the process of producing output are respectively the penultimate and last step. Further, the learner's ability to communicate accurately and fluently may vary depending on the communicative context, because of the learner's ability to access their interlanguage, based on previous experiences or practice and subsequent proficiency with the communicative context. It is, however, debated whether or

not output is a stage in language acquisition in itself. Krashen (1985, cited, cited in Richards and Renandya. 2002, p.160) proposes that input is sufficient for acquisition. However, Swain (1985, cited in Ibid) has proposed that output is essential in situations where the learners' current interlanguage is unable to produce sufficient meaning, encouraging the learner to develop.

2.6. Teaching grammar techniques, methods, and approaches

This subchapter will introduce some of the approaches, methods, and techniques suggested for teaching a second language, particularly aimed at grammar, based on the reading of Nassaji and Fotos (2011), Richards and Renandya (2002), and Ur (1991). There is a general view which suggests that there is no one method, technique, or approach which will handle any learning situation. However, Nassaji and Fotos, Richards and Renandya, and Ur argue for what they may think of as most appropriate in certain situations, suggesting that certain methodologies could possibly be better than others.

2.6.1 Task-based learning (TBL)

Task-work-based learning is a method of teaching. Richards (1999) addresses the recent development of TBL, addressing the grammar-gap issue (Richards and Renandya, 2002:153). TBL is based on involving the learners in meaningful interaction and negotiation focusing on completion of a task. The grammatical items are chosen on the basis of the learners' performances on tasks and their subsequent needs, rather than on a predetermined grammar syllabus, with a possibility of acquiring knowledge at three different stages: prior, during, and after the task (Ibid).

Richards continues with pointing out that approaches such as the Presentation-Practice-Production have been discredited and focus on form does no longer carry much credibility in linguistics or psychology (Ibid. 154). He quotes Nunan (1989), who points out:

The communicative task [is] a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulation, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form (Richards and Renandya, 2002:154).

In the classroom, Richards states that there are certain important differences between the communicative task work method and the traditional grammar-focused activities. The communicative task work method focuses on natural language, implicit knowledge,

vernacular speech style, automatic performance, improvisation, paraphrasing, reorganization, and real communication based on learner choices. However, he says that traditional grammar-focused activities focus on formation of correct examples of language, production of language as evidence of learning, explicit knowledge, monitored language, and practicing small samples of language, all which do not require authentic communicative language (Ibid. 154-155).

The assumption of TBL is that learners will develop both communicative, linguistic skills, and an acceptable standard of performance in terms of accuracy. According to Richards (Ibid:155), task work can be approached through primarily the ‘strong’ and ‘weak form’ methods. The strong form looks at tasks as the primary unit of teaching and as the drive force of the acquisition process. The weak form method considers tasks as an important part of language instruction but it is only a part in a more complex pedagogical context. The tasks are considered necessary, but possibly preceded and followed by focused instruction contingent on task performance (Ibid. 155).

Richards (Ibid) quotes Thornbury (1998, p. 112) and Kumaravadivelu (1991, p. 99) claiming that the strong form of task-based teaching stems from the belief that linguistic performances and acquisition of form addressed during task work, as grammar will be acquired implicitly with occasional help from the teacher. Grammar serves a mediating role, rather than an end in itself, as it provides flexibility in creation of meaning and options when the learner is presented with objectives and tasks.

Based on the five stages of language acquisition, there are primarily three points at which grammar can be applied to communicative task work in order to address accuracy – prior to the task, during the task, and after the task.

In order to facilitate grammatical accuracy there are primarily two techniques prior to a task – firstly, to provide language support that can be used in completing a task, and secondly to clarify the nature of the task in order to give the learner the opportunity to focus on accuracy (Richards and Renandya, 2002:161). This, Richards claims, can be achieved through three suggestions: firstly, by pre-teaching situational linguistic forms, such as vocabulary and questioning strategies in order for the learner to become familiar with solving the task form; secondly, by reducing the cognitive complexity for the learner through rehearsing similar tasks – supporting a focus on accuracy and language rather than structure and task management (Ibid); lastly, by prior planning of the task through problem-solving strategies focusing on form (Ibid:161-162).

Teachers may promote a focus on form, fluency, and linguistic performance during the task by choosing how a task is to be carried out. Hence, the teacher may avoid an excessive dependency on, for example communication strategies and overuse of ellipsis and non-linguistic resources, which are not the desired focus of the task work. Furthermore, Richards claims that there are primarily five factors that influence task implementation (Ibid 162). Firstly, participation, whether the task is handled individually or in cooperation, influences the learning process. Richards (Ibid) references Brow, Anderson, Shillcock, and Yule (1984, cited in Skehan, 1996b, p. 26) saying that the social, or peer, pressure created by group tasks encourages the likelihood that fluency will dominate as a goal over accuracy for the learners. Secondly, the materials and resources necessary to use in completion of the task may affect the task performance by providing an accessible framework, such as background information or appropriate models, which allows for learners to focus on planning or performance of other areas of the task (Richards and Renandya, 2002:162). Thirdly, by dividing a task into several shorter procedures, each part of the task focuses on one element of the task at the time, making it more manageable for the learner - for example, by dividing and focusing it on elements such as: schemata, vocabulary, and language; dialogue listening or practice task, providing appropriate models or clarification (Ibid). Furthermore, the order of prior task work may also influence use of intended structures in tasks if the learners have experienced similar or relevant material to the task at hand, as it may both ease the cognitive processing load as well as increase the accuracy and amount of intended structures that are used (Ibid. cf.:160-163). Finally, the written or oral product which the learner is supposed to produce influences the learner's opportunity to apply themselves to linguistic form. Each of these five points provides different opportunities for restructuring task work (Ibid:163).

After a task there are, according to Willis and Willis (1996, cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:163), three types of performances that will address grammatical appropriateness. The first type addresses public performance after the completion of a group task, because public performance may encourage learners to perform the task at a more complex linguistic level. Willis and Willis (Ibid) also claim that during the performance the learners have an 'increased capacity for self-monitoring' on aspects of their performance not initially focused. Similarly, repeating the performance and simply modifying some of the elements, such as the time available, Nation's (1989, as cited in Ibid) research shows learner long-term improvement in fluency, control of content, and to a lesser extent, accuracy. Furthermore, learners may gain input through observing other performances made by more

advanced or native speaking learners who have completed similar tasks; the less proficient learner may then focus on the other learners' use of linguistic and communicative resources and incorporate it into their own interlanguage (Ibid).

Richards (1999, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:164) reveals concerns about the communicative task work (TBL) being too implicitly focused on grammar. Therefore, in order to develop the method, it needs to be able to incorporate a greater focus on grammar in the process of designing and using tasks. The task based learning method presented in this Literary review chapter is based on an attempt made by Richards and Renandya to refine a weak form of task based approach in order to incorporate grammar to a larger degree. Thus, task work and corrective feedback by the teacher may not be sufficient to achieve acceptable levels of grammatical accuracy in second language learning. (Ibid).

Richards (Ibid:155) points out that, despite the many positive effects, there are still concerns regarding the TBL method. The first one addresses the modification of learners' linguistic output through the process of negotiation of meaning. In a careful re-examination done by Foster (1998:1, as cited in Ibid) on intermediate English foreign language learners completing information-gap tasks in pairs and small groups, little evidence was found of negotiated interaction and modified utterances as strategies that learners were predisposed to use when encountering knowledge gaps.

The next concern is the effect of extensive task-work activities on the development of linguistic competence. Investigating research done by Higgs and Clifford (1982:78, 61, as cited in *ibid*), Swain (1998, pp. 5-6, *ibid*), and Skehan (1996b:22, *ibid*), Richards identifies issues of communication resulting from unstructured communicative activities where grammatical accuracy has been minimized, or ignored completely. Although they may result in a larger vocabulary and a high degree of fluency, they may also result in lacking morphology, syntax and discourse patterns. The communicative competence acquired could result in learners who have the ability to produce comprehensible meaning, but at the cost of communicative accuracy – by asking 'problem?' instead of 'What is your problem?' (Richards, 1999, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:156-157).

2.6.2 Feedback

Teachers often depend on various versions of feedback as an important technique for teaching grammar. Ur (1991:cf. 85-87) claims that the manner feedback is given, if given at all, is important and that although learners make mistakes, this is part of an inevitable learning process towards mastery of a language. First, it may be important to repeat the difference

between an error and a mistake. Errors are consistent mis-learned generalizations and mistakes would be occasional and inconsistent oversights, although the distinction between errors and mistakes may be difficult to identify. Ur (1991:85-86) suggests that errors may be corrected through positive reinforcement, viewing the correctional process as a learning opportunity rather than inadequacy on the part of the learner or teacher. In order to correct something it may be important to first look at the types of errors and the frequency in which they occur, as certain errors can be considered more important because of how much they affect meaning. Hence, the teacher should present the learner with the useful information and how the learner should use this information in order to progress. Furthermore, through identifying errors and mistakes, and perhaps more importantly, distinguishing them from each other, the identification process can provide the teacher with information regarding structures that the learners particularly struggle with - giving insight on topics which could be focused on in future teaching (Ibid:86-87).

Similarly, Nassaji and Fotos (2011:80) also looked at the difference between errors and mistakes and the importance of being aware of which errors should be corrected. In the same manner as Ur, Nassaji and Fotos make a distinction between what an error and a mistake is. An error occurs when the learner lacks the knowledge to produce the correct form, and therefore, often affects understanding and communication, for example, through wrong word order or inappropriate lexical uses. However, a mistake is a performance error, meaning that it usually consists of morphological or function words mistakes, which normally would not affect comprehension too much (Ibid:80). Thus, Nassaji and Fotos (Ibid) suggest that it usually is more important to focus on errors, rather than mistakes, and similarly to Ur, evaluate the errors based on frequency and the degree to which they affect comprehensibility.

Additionally, Nassaji and Fotos (2011:71) discussed *interactional feedback* as a technique for L2 and grammatical acquisition. Interactional feedback bases itself on utterances that indicate to the learner that something about their output is erroneous. *Negative evidence* is the process of informing the learner of incorrect target language use. This is contrasted with *positive evidence*, which is information that is given showing correct target language use. Nassaji and Fotos claim that negative evidence is most commonly received through grammatical explanations of various explicit and implicit corrective feedback on the learner's non-target like utterances. On the other hand, positive evidence is mainly received as correct models of language in the input (Ibid). Although there is debate surrounding the need for and effectiveness of L2 feedback, Nassaji and Fotos claim that a majority of L2

acquisition researchers (Ibid:72), including themselves, agree on the fact that adult L2 learners cannot achieve native-like accuracy on the basis of only positive evidence or models of grammatical input. Thus, learners need both positive and negative evidence in order to acquire an L2 successfully.

There are several different types of interactional feedback but they are generally categorized under two subcategories: (1) reformulations and (2) elicitations (Nassaji, 2007a, as cited in Nassaji and Fotos, 2011:73). Reformulations include all feedback strategies that rephrase the learner's erroneous output, providing the correct form for reproduction, while elicitations try to motivate or prompt the learner directly or indirectly to self-correct, not giving the learner the correct form (Ibid).

Interactional feedback is found in both L1 and L2 contexts, in school and everyday life, and often as a result of learners interacting with native speakers. These modification and negotiation strategies include for example, clarification requests, repetitions, and confirmation checks that occur during interaction. This usually occurs when the learner interacts with someone who either anticipates, perceives, or experiences difficulties in understanding the learner's intended meaning (Ibid:72-73). Long (1996:451-452, as cited in Nassaji and Fotos, 2011:73) proposes that negotiation for meaning facilitates acquisition 'because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways'. Similarly, Pica (1994, as cited in Ibid) suggests that 'negotiation supports L2 acquisition in three ways: by making messages comprehensible, by enhancing L2 input, and by facilitating the production of modified output (learners' revision of their erroneous output following feedback)'.

Although the majority of literature on interactional feedback is on oral errors, it is also possible to use it on written errors. Interactional negotiation is primarily conducted post task completion, either during the current or subsequent classroom session. Nassaji and Fotos (Ibid:79) use learners' written journals as examples of how a teacher can look at a piece of writing to identify samples of erroneous writing, following up on these errors with oral feedback. A teacher should then use the appropriate feedback strategy depending on the nature of the errors (Ibid).

2.6.3 Benefits and challenges of teaching grammar

Teaching grammatical accuracy as a basic underlying structure is important because grammar is necessary in order to be able to communicate common types of meaning successfully. Thus, it is important to identify the degree to which certain structures may help the learners'

comprehensibility, although it may be difficult to identify these structures prior or without knowledge about a learner context – except the most frequently appearing structures such as basic verb forms, interrogative and negative structures, the use of the main tenses, and modal auxiliaries. Thus, a teacher should evaluate how beneficial a grammatical structure may be for a learner in order to create appropriate meaning, and subsequently select and teach the grammatical structure(s) based on its possible positive influence on the learner ability to create meaning (Richards and Renandya, 2002:153).

Furthermore, Swan (Ibid) emphasizes that acquiring correct grammar is important in social contexts, native or otherwise, as deviations of form may hinder integration/acceptance and promote feelings of prejudice – a person who speaks “badly” may not be taken seriously, may be considered uneducated, or unintelligent. Societal grammatical prejudices may then have to be taken into account when teaching, even if it means teaching more grammar than necessary for comprehensibility, in order to satisfy a grammatical level required of future employees or examiners. Thus, the grammar should be selected on the basis of the teacher’s circumstances and the learner’s aims in order to minimize unnecessary time spent on grammar teaching (Ibid:153-154).

Ur (1991:76) explains that the process of teaching foreign-language grammatical structures is a difficult process that involves the teacher understanding the subtle differences in a grammatical structure’s written and spoken forms, its nuances of meaning, and what would potentially cause difficulties for a learner. Furthermore, it is important for the teacher to know how to present examples and formulate explanations that clearly convey the necessary information about these structures in a simple, accurate and helpful manner (Ibid:81). However, Ur emphasizes the conflict of being too accurate or over simplifying. Being too accurate may prevent learning as it is too difficult to comprehend, and in the same way, over simplification may lead to a lack of necessary information in order to comprehend the grammatical structure’s function.

Balancing the reasons and consequences of teaching too much or too little grammar, is one very important challenge which teachers will face. Furthermore, teachers may choose to teach it just because it is there, focusing on the individual words and their grammar rather than intelligibility (Richards and Renandya, 2002:149). Although attaining knowledge of grammar may be reassuring and encouraging for learners, as they can acquire and master certain parts of language, structural competence does not count for more than a portion of language mastery. Thus, although some learners may find grammar encouraging and positive, it may also be misleading and can be detrimental for other important aspects of language

learning due to teacher and learner focus. Furthermore, if a teacher feels that grammatical rules such as tense and aspect, the use of articles, relative clauses, and so forth, are very important for language acquisition they may be overvaluing the position of certain grammatical aspects which could lead to incorporating too much grammar into their teaching and perpetuating their value of grammar onto the learners (Ibid:150).

Additionally, by teaching too much grammar, no matter the reason, may result in learners who falsely assume that they know a language. However, they may only know the grammatical part of it, lacking important elements such as vocabulary and fluency, creating difficulties for the learners when attempting to maintain a conversation. The focus on grammar also leads to a focus on what is right and wrong. This, Swan (Ibid:151) says is counterproductive due to it making learners anxious to make mistakes, undermining their confidence and motivation.

However, there are also reasons for and consequences to not teaching enough grammar. To teach little or no grammar may lead to a complete disregard of the structures of language and may be just as damaging as teaching only grammar. Swan uses Britain in the 1970s as an example of teachers using the communicative approach as a justification to teach only 'functions and notions' or 'skills' instead of grammar. One of the most significant downfalls of this was that it left the following generation of learners, who became teachers, completely ignorant of any structures of language (Ibid).

Swan (Ibid) also claims that it is important for teachers to create awareness about grammar among their learners, because some learners have a tendency to think of grammatical rules as dependent on each other, hence, they believe that to manage the language one must master every aspect of grammar. This, he states, is a myth and although some aspects of grammar may be more systematic than others, some linked together tightly or loosely, some are completely independent and detachable.

Teachers may also find confidence, comfort, or encouragement in the fact that they know more than the learners when dealing with grammar, as grammar is a system of teaching which is more easily mastered. Learners may have better accents and a larger vocabulary based on something they are familiar with, for example, American pop idioms. If teachers are feeling insecure, they may return to the comfort of grammar because of its complicated rules and arcane terminology, something not even native speakers of the language may be able to speak confidently about (Ibid:150-151). Thus, one should not necessarily teach based on what is most comfortable.

Challenges may also arise if a teacher or school has chosen an instructional textbook which is not appropriately aimed at the contexts of the learners, for example, the learners' level of interlanguage, environment, native language, and learning purpose. Similarly, the book may not fit the teaching schedule, because it requires more time than what is made accessible by the class schedule. That is why it is important, according to Swan (Richards and Renandya, 2002:148), to choose grammar according to the relevant needs of the learners, rather than blindly picking the "appropriate" grammar or going through all the grammar from A-Z.

Keeping the prior points in mind, it can be important for a teacher to follow Swan's suggestions of teaching selected grammatical subsystems on the basis of three concerns (Richards and Renandya, 2002:150). Firstly, what does the learners already know from their L1? (German learners may know about English article use through their first language). Secondly, what are the necessary aspects, which they do not already know from their L1? Lastly, what aspects are there time to teach?

2.6.4 Teaching grammar to L2 learners

Ur, like most of the other theoreticians referred to in this thesis, points out the controversial position of grammar. Although she agrees that part of knowing a language is knowing its grammar, she also points knowing a language may consist of both intuitive or explicit grammatical knowledge (Ibid). Although implicit grammar is less likely to be acquired in an L2 because the learners are exposed to substantially less input compared to what they experience as part of their L1. Thus, she emphasizes her firm belief that grammatical teaching will help the L2 learner, 'provided it is taught consistently as a means to improving mastery of the language, not as an end in itself' (Ibid:77-78). Furthermore, she mentions that unless grammatical instruction is provided in a school setting, there is no guarantee that the learners would want to self-educate.

Furthermore, Ur (1991:76) points out the importance of teaching how grammar influences meaning: '[i]t is no good knowing how to perceive or construct a new tense of a verb if you do not know exactly what difference it makes to meaning when it is used' (Ibid:76). Ur exemplifies this by how it may be much more difficult for both teacher and learner to teach/explain the use of present perfect and past simple, compared to the use of plural -s. Thus, in order to assist a higher level of fluency it is important to teach these differences in grammatical meaning.

Ur emphasizes how the learners' L1 may influence the acquisition of L2. Not all languages have the same instances of grammar, for example, English verbs have aspects, such as progressive, which some languages do not. Hence, depending on the L1 and target L2 there will likely be differences and although some might be more apparent or less salient, it is difficult to predict whether or not the grammatical differences will be challenging for the individual learner (Ibid).

When presenting and explaining a new grammatical structure Ur suggests that teachers should follow seven guidelines. She believes that a good presentation should consist of both oral and written, including both form and meaning and that the presentation should contain plenty of contextualized examples of the grammatical structures in order to facilitate learning. She also finds that the use of terminology should depend on the age of the learner, as older learners will be more analytically minded. Further, depending on the situational context, the teacher should make a judgement call on presenting the grammatical structures in either the learner's L1 or L2. Ur also suggests that grammar should be simplified but only to the point where it covers the major instance in which the learner will encounter the particular structure. Grammatical exceptions should be noted, but can make it more difficult – rather too simplistic than too accurate. Furthermore, the teachers' presentation should be delivered at an appropriate speed, both orally and when writing, in order to facilitate learning, while making the contextual choice of giving the explanation inductively or deductively (Ibid).

Ur also emphasizes a point of caution, as she states that many learners struggle with having to consciously monitor grammar when they are trying to produce free speech or writing. Although learners may reproduce the structure in a grammatical test, they make mistakes when trying to produce it in fluent speech or writing because they have not yet mastered it (Ibid:83). Thus, Ur points out that the teacher's job is to facilitate a 'bridging' through shifting the focus from form focused accuracy work to fluent, but acceptable, production. This, can be done through 'a variety of practice activities that familiarize [learners] them with the structures in context, giving practice both in form and communicative meaning' (Ibid).

2.6.5 Teaching according to learner context

Nassaji and Fotos (2011:136-137) claim that there is no one instructional strategy or method capable of addressing all the goals of language acquisition and pedagogy. They emphasize that language learning does not necessarily have an inherent and directional relationship to language instruction. Thus, Nassaji and Fotos emphasize that all recognized methods may

have their use, depending on the situational context. This suggests that teachers may greatly benefit from acquiring knowledge regarding a wide array of grammatical teaching methodologies, as each method may function to help teachers properly assess the learning situation and appropriately apply one or more teaching methods in order to maximize effective learning. Furthermore, depending on the prior points and the language acquisition goals the teacher has to apply their appropriate instructional strategy with a high level of instructional quality in order for it to succeed.

Thus, each teaching approach, method, or technique may have its use and the more a teacher knows about different approaches, methods, or techniques the easier it may be to appropriately respond to a learner context, where the teaching approaches, methods, and techniques have a suggestive function rather than being strict rules on how to teach (Ibid:138-139). Furthermore, the general concept of this ‘post-method’ view by Nassaji and Fotos is supported by Kumaravadivelu (1994, 2006, as cited in Ibid:139), Long (1991, Ibid), and H. Douglas Brown (1997, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002).

The learner context, especially learners’ L1, may significantly influence the manner in which certain grammatical forms may be acquired (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011:136). For example, some grammatical forms may be learned implicitly while focusing on the message, while other forms may need a more focused instruction. Focused instruction might be particularly necessary for grammatical forms with low frequency or salience in the input, for example function words (such as, infinitives or possessive pronoun), and morphological features (root words, affixes). Furthermore, linguistic complexity of the target form and the learner’s first language may also influence the relationship between instruction and learning (Spada and Lightbown, 2008, as cited in Ibid:136). For example, Nassaji and Fotos suggest how singular –s might be considered linguistically easy but at the same time difficult to learn. And if the first language provides learners with non-target like information regarding a particular structure, it is important that the learner is given either instruction or corrective feedback in order to learn the correct forms, because exposure to the target language cannot help the learner to overcome the error due to it being ungrammatical (Ibid).

Although the individual learner’s developmental readiness is an important factor to consider, Nassaji and Fotos also point out how the acquisition of grammatical structures may follow a predetermined developmental learning sequence. This is emphasized by Krashen’s ‘the natural order hypothesis’ (Krashen, 2009:13), which claims that the “average” order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for second language learners follows, respectively, the pattern: learning progressive (-ing), plural, copula (“to be”), Auxiliary (progressive, as in “he

is going”), article (a, the), irregular past, regular past, third person singular –s, and lastly possessive –s. However, a teacher must evaluate whether their learners are developmentally ready to learn the intended structure, while being aware of the fact that certain structures should be learned in certain stages in order to assist the learning process. It is certainly challenging for a teacher to know when a learner is developmentally ready to learn a particular grammatical structure and then appropriately include every learner’s readiness in addition to appropriately choosing the teaching method (Nassaji and Fotos. 2011:136). Other individual differences that further challenge the teacher are how second language instruction is affected by the learner’s aptitude, personality characteristics, language proficiency, motivation, attitudes towards learning, and cultural background (Ibid:137).

However, Nassaji and Fotos do claim that there is a current view that curriculum should include ‘components of grammar instruction, communicative language usage, writing skills, comprehension skills, listening skills and reading skills, often text- or genre-based’ (Nassaji and Fotos. 2011:139), with a focus on understanding and producing the L2 with both accuracy and meaning.

Finally, the last section examines the Norwegian context of teaching grammar, in order to properly understand the main content of the present study, namely ‘how grammar is taught in Norway’.

2.6.6 Teaching Grammar in Norway

Pihlstrøm (2013) aimed to give insight into the teaching of English grammar to average and below average learners, exemplified with her VG1 class, in Norway. Furthermore, Pihlstrøm (2013:39-46) looks at some of the most debated aspects of teaching second language grammar and the ideas of Michael Swan (‘How to teach grammar’¹ and ‘Some things that matter in grammar teaching, and some that don’t’²), Stephen Krashen (1988³) and Hilde Hasselgård (2001). Throughout her short chapter on grammar teaching, she looked at three grammatical problem areas that she has experienced with her own VG1 learners, but has also seen other teachers struggle with in Norway – most notably the learners’ lack of interest in grammar and the far from impressive results of teaching grammar.

One of the key issues that Pihlstrøm emphasizes is the manner in which learners are supposed to be exposed to grammar, through being taught formally/explicitly or through the

¹ www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/michael-swan/how-teach-grammar

² www.teachingenglish.org.uk/seminars/what-matters-grammar-teaching

³ http://sdrkrashen.com/content/articles/teaching_grammar_why_bother.pdf

use of a variety of authentic and interesting material. In general, she believes that most teachers in Norway would agree to a combination of both, although explicit teaching of grammar would have a lesser role of the two. Her biggest concern is reflected in Krashen's (1988, Pihlstrøm, 2013:39) claim that there is no relationship between formal grammar study and the ability to write. Thus, Krashen advocates learner exposure to as much language input as possible. However, Krashen believes that starting upper secondary school learners should also be taught grammar explicitly, because he believes that the learners should then be analytically capable of remembering and applying explicit grammar, in addition to continuously exposing themselves to extensive reading. However, Pihlstrøm considers the importance of Rod Ellis' (Ibid:40) statement, that learners should only learn grammar when the teacher knows that the learners are ready for it, even though Krashen generalizes it for upper secondary school.

The second grammatical issue that she had experienced may arise if a teacher believes that grammar should be taught explicitly. Primarily, there are then two choices: should you teach through the inductive or deductive approach (revisit definitions) (Ibid).

The third issue regarding grammar presents itself as the dilemma between which language grammar should be taught in, Norwegian (L1) or English (L2). Her impression seems to be that most teachers of general studies prefer the second language. However, in vocational schools a lot of teachers use Norwegian when teaching grammar (Ibid). Although Pihlstrøm refers to these three points as key problem areas in the Norwegian context, she tries to answer the three issues by using other second language acquisition theoreticians, such as Swan^{4 5}.

According to Pihlstrøm, Swan's answer to the abovementioned issues in the Norwegian context is, 'it all depends' (ibid:40). The reason is that Swan believes that the learners vary greatly in their response to grammar and generalizing about grammar teaching is extremely difficult. However, Swan suggests that teachers should follow some basic guidelines, to give explanations on how the grammatical items work and claims that good, realistic, and suitable authentic material in the form of for example advertisements, cartoons, and songs are vital and can make the examples memorable. Furthermore, Swan says that variety is key to grammar learning and suggests that teachers use techniques such as: gap-filling, exercises where learners practice grammar rules about an interesting topic of choice, and combining grammar and vocabulary learning. However, Swan (Ibid:40-41) finds that his

⁴ www.teachingenglish.org.uk/seminars/what-matters-grammar-teaching

⁵ www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/michael-swan/how-teach-grammar

biggest challenge is to get the learners to use the grammar they have learned in spontaneous real life situations such as writing an essay a few days later. Furthermore, Swan suggests that the teaching of grammar should also obey a certain time regiment, where 25% of the time should be spent on teacher input (explanations and examples) and 75% should be spent doing exercises. Furthermore, Swan supports the inductive approach and believes that the learners need teacher support – emphasizing that grammar rules should be simplified by the teacher in a manner that makes them more comprehensible for the learners (Ibid:41). Finally, Swan believes that grammar should be taught in Norwegian if possible.

Pihlstrøm references Hilde Hasselgård (2001, as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013:41-42), as she addresses the learners' struggle to apply the grammar that they have learned in class to real life situations, such as writing an essay. Hilde claims that at least part of the problem is due to learners seeing grammar exercises as a separate unit within the English course. The communicative approach to grammar, through the use of authentic material and linking grammatical forms to meaning and actual language use, is suggested by Hasselgård as a possible solution. Pihlstrøm exemplifies that through reading an authentic text in class the teacher could ask the class to look for specific grammar points that they feel could be important and then identify how these points may be linked to the meaning and structuring of the text – such as, markers of comparison and contrast, or identification of adjectives describing one character in the text (Ibid:41-42). When Pihlstrøm approaches the dilemma of learners struggling with applying grammar taught in her VG1 class in Norway, she finds making the learners cognitively aware of the importance of grammar as key to acquisition. Her belief is that learners who think that grammar is either of little importance or think they know enough grammar already are less likely to remember and subsequently apply it (Ibid:42).

She also suggests an approach that she calls the 'tree of grammar', a visual aid, which creates awareness of difficulty as well as a number of specific forms that learners need to learn to apply in order to perform well on their exam. The tree contains grammar which her learners at VG1 usually have to work on for their exams. On this tree there are high and low hanging fruit/grammar, and accordingly to the degree of learning difficulty they are put higher on the tree. For example, she puts 'a/an', 'it/there', and 'capital letters' as low hanging fruits because they are not too difficult to learn. The middle consists of slight variations in difficulty/height, such as linking words, sentence structure, -ing, and concord. At the top of the tree she puts 'idiomatic English' and 'wide vocabulary' because she considers them as interconnected as well as requiring a lot of effort to work on (Ibid:42-43).

Furthermore, in order to get insight into her learners' grammatical proficiency, she conducts a diagnostic test with her learners at the beginning of each year. This method provides her with insight into the individual learner, while she can give her learners the task to write down the aspects of grammar that they need to work on and hand this in. Furthermore, the insight makes it easier for the teacher (herself) to decide upon which aspects of grammar should be worked on individually or in class.

2.7 Summary

The present chapter presented a foundation for one way of understanding grammar and a brief account of grammar's history, followed by insight into how language and subsequent grammar may be acquired through the process of input, intake, acquisition, access, and output. Finally, the majority of this chapter has introduced various approaches, methods, and techniques to teaching grammar, such as TBL, feedback, and the importance of considering the learner context while teaching, Norwegian or otherwise.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will explain the thesis' methodological choices starting from choice of qualitative approach; continuing with participants sampling; data collection method; data analysis method; validity of the research, involving the conditions for the interviews; and finally, the ethical issues that presented themselves throughout the thesis.

The choices that were made and presented throughout this chapter were based on the following sources: Dornyei (2007), Walter and Gall (1989), Barbour (2007), and Patton (2002) on qualitative research. Similarly the choices made were heavily influenced by the parameters set by the research questions:

1. What methodologies are currently used by teachers in order to teach English grammar at both vocational and academic VG1 in Norway?
2. What is the teacher cognition behind their choice of methodology?
3. How do learners respond to these methodologies?

3.2 Choosing a qualitative method

For this MA thesis the qualitative method was chosen instead of a quantitative method due to its merits within the educational research community and similarly the necessity to be able to analyze contextual content in order to answer the research questions. One of the deciding factors was its flexibility when researching the individual human experience (Dornyei 2007:126) – such as the methodology of the teachers and their reasoning behind it. The aim of this qualitative research was to sample individuals with rich and varied insights into teaching second language grammar at upper secondary school (VG1), to explore the teacher's cognition, and the subsequent learner response to the teachers' methodology. Thus, in order to get a representative sample of what the situation might be for other schools, teachers, or learners today in Norway it was important to choose teachers for the research that had different backgrounds, experiences, and education. Subsequently, these differences made it necessary to ask them questions which were pre-planned but also based on the individual and situational context. The resulting individual teacher interviews and focus group learner interviews proved that the qualitative research method was the optimal method to support the teachers' varied circumstances and answers, where quantitative research would not have provided as complete data. This allowed for research to be done on the similarities and

differences among the teachers while working to understand their cognitive reasoning. In addition, Dornyei (Ibid) also claims that an experience based setting would be best facilitated by a qualitative method.

Unlike the quantitative method, which can be divided into two distinct phases of data collection and data analysis, the qualitative method is not necessarily as straightforward regarding the process of data collection and analysis, because the process of analysis and data collection may overlap and be repeated throughout the process (Dornyei 2007:124). However, for this thesis, and due to the fact that qualitative research may be very time consuming and the time allotted for this thesis is limited, I chose to first acquire the data through interviews and then proceeded to analyse the data collectively after finishing the individual teacher interviews and learner focus group interviews transcription.

There are several challenging aspects of qualitative research, one Dornyei (2007:125) emphasizes to be its messy nature to record massive amounts of rich data reflecting the complexities of real-life, and subsequently present textually. Thus, in order to solve this issue I had performed pilot interviews with three teachers and five learners followed by revision of the interview guide, limiting the teacher interviews to a maximum of one hour, and maintaining a conversational focus on questions that related to the teaching of grammar. This resulted in rich and relevant data, which was analyzed in relation to previous research done on second language acquisition, and specifically grammar acquisition (Ibid).

3.3 Participant sampling

The qualitative participant sampling differs greatly from the quantitative participant sampling. Quantitative sampling requires a straightforward approach that involves a sizeable sample, the researcher has to analyze the idiosyncratic differences based on the answers given by the participants. However, qualitative research looks to describe, understand, and clarify a human experience(s) (Dornyei, 2007:126) – in this case, looking at the experience of how and why teachers teach English grammar from the perspective of the English VG1/VG2 teacher and how this is experienced by their learners. Hence, the priority was to find individual teachers with varied experiences and insights into the teaching and learning of English grammar and willingness to give rich data on the topic and their reasoning behind it.

Although certain regularities and patterns are pointed out throughout the investigation, it is not a big enough sample to be representative of even the district of Rogaland, in Norway. This study is rather aimed at maximizing what we can learn about the cognitive reasoning behind the teacher's methodological choices regarding teaching grammar as part of the

obligatory English class at upper secondary academic VG1 and vocational VG1 and VG2 (even if it means the reasoning behind the choice of not teaching English grammar).

Furthermore, this study looked at the learner perspective and their view of the methodology of their teacher, if they felt that they learned (to any degree) grammar from it or if they thought they would learn more from other activities. This provided insight about the teacher's methodology, which could then be compared with the cognition of the teachers.

Based on the parameters set by the research questions academic English teachers at VG1 and vocational English teachers at VG1 and VG2 in Norway were chosen as the primary participants. Both Vocational VG1 and VG2 learners had the same educational expectations as the academic VG1 learners, therefore, both were valid for this research. Furthermore, the teachers' learners were chosen based on a random selection of volunteers. The circumstances of this thesis required several teachers and learners in order for the research to answer the first and third question. Dornyei (2007:126) suggests that the qualitative participant selection process should remain open until all the data is collected, analyzed, and until it has been shown that there are no gaps left unchallenged through the process of *iteration* – the repetitive process of re-checking and re-acquiring data. Due to the time limitations of this thesis, the process of acquiring data on the grammatical teaching methodology and cognition of the teachers and the learner responses, there would have been difficulties reaching complete *saturation* – the point where the data is complete and the individual teachers simply repeats previous information (Ibid). Thus, in accordance with the time limitations and the research done by Dornyei (2007: 126-127,144) on the importance of knowing when to stop gathering more data, the number of teachers had to be limited to five individual teacher interviews, with a maximum of two teachers per school, and for each teacher six learners were chosen for the focus group interviews. Hence, by limiting the number of participants more time was allotted for each participant interview and saturation was made possible.

In order to obtain participants I had to go through a *purposive selection process* where then feasibility, in terms of time and respondent availability, had to be taken into account. In addition, it was important to choose cohesive/homogeneous participants (Dornyei 2007:127) – in this case the participants had to meet these criteria: (a) English teachers of either academic upper secondary VG1, or vocational upper secondary VG1 or VG2 in Norway; (b) English teachers with different experiences in regards to teaching English, especially the number of years of experiences; (c) teachers that would allow learner participation and subsequently have learners that would be willing to participate. Hence, the sampling strategies that I chose were selected primarily due to their merits, but also secondarily due to convenience. The first

method of selecting teachers, three out of five, were through the *convenience sampling strategy*, which is the least desirable but most common sampling strategy due to its practicality (Ibid:128); hence, three teachers were selected and contacted through personal contacts at the University of Stavanger. Two other teachers were acquired through *chain sampling*, with two of the teachers who were already selected being asked to recruit one more participant (Ibid). Finally, *homogeneous sampling* was used among the learners – as they share a common learning experience which allows for in-depth analysis to identify common patterns among the learner groups that volunteered (Ibid:127).

The teachers were selected based on preliminary background information, which were aimed at providing teacher samples with varied age, education, and experience as part of purposive sampling (Ibid:126). Thus, before the selection process was decided on the teachers had been asked to give some information about their age, education, and years of experience. This provided the research with teachers who had between 23 years of experience to no experience prior to the year of the interviews, education from more than six years total to two and a half years, and ages between 47 and 28 years old – gender was not prioritized.

The learners were sampled based on the requirement that three focus groups would be academic upper secondary school learners, while two focus groups were vocational upper secondary school learners. The learners were randomly sampled from one of each teacher's class, intending to give a representative overview of the class as a whole. Thus, the learners' age, grade, or other influential factors were not taken into account prior to the random selection. Willingness to participate was the last criteria, as no learner had to participate, making it a voluntary sampling.

3.4 Data collection method

The *one-to-one interviews* can be divided based on their level of structure and whether there are a single or multiple sessions (Ibid:135). The typical qualitative interview strategy is single session interviews lasting for 30-60 minutes. However, Polkinghorne (2005, as cited in Dornyei 2007:135) argues that they rarely are able to provide 'full and rich descriptions necessary for worthwhile findings'. Although more than one interview per participant is suggested, it would be very time consuming and therefore not possible to do within the limits of this thesis. Thus, single session teacher interviews with an approximate time span of 45-60 minutes were chosen as the most appropriate tool. Similarly, single session focus group learner interviews were chosen lasting 15-25 minutes because the learners might have a tougher time verbalizing their experience regarding the topic.

The structure of an interview may follow three distinct variations: firstly, *structured interview*, which involves the interviewer having to follow a pre-prepared interview guide that contains a preset list of questions. Its benefits are that it makes comparison among participants easier, albeit it may lack saturation (Ibid). Secondly, *Unstructured interview* (also known as ethnographic interview), which is a strategy involving minimal interference from the research agenda, without an interview guide. Its benefits are that it intends to create an informal context in which the interviewee may reveal more than in a formal context (Ibid: 136). Lastly, *semi-structured interview* is a compromise between the two.

The primary method of data collection used for this thesis was semi-structured individual teacher interviews and semi-structured focus group learner interviews. It is the most used method for research in education and the choice of data collection method was based on the research by Dornyei (2007), Patton (2002), and Walter and Gall (1989:452, as cited in Patton 2002). The semi-structured interviews were chosen because it provides the researcher with the possibility to probe deeper than initially intended with on the interview guide, providing additional interesting, situational, and more complete data (Patton 2002:347). Thus, while remaining objective, it allows to investigate the teachers and learners opinions, and their subsequent reasoning. Furthermore, the investigation into the teachers' and learners' feelings, thoughts, intentions and past experiences was paramount to this qualitative research, because it was the perspective of the respondent that was assumed meaningful and should thus be studied (Ibid:341).

Semi-structured *focus group interviews* were chosen as the secondary method of data collection to be used with the learners based on the research done by Patton (2002) and Dornyei (2007). The benefits of focus group interview was its ability to inspire and challenge group thinking and participation, based on the issues pointed out in the interview questions, encouraging learner discussion and social agreements on the grammar methodologies of their teacher (Dornyei, 2007:144). However, if individual learner interviews had been conducted, I believe, it might have come at the cost of the quality of the data, as the learners might have had to elicit their opinions on a matter that they may not have thought about before. Thus, by creating a more comfortable interview atmosphere for the learners, through collective focus group interviews, it likely increased the quantity and quality of the data by promoting participation without the necessity to participate, making it a choice of the learner. Therefore, the focus group interview benefits the learner demographic, as it is supposed to promote a comfortable and enjoyable group discussion. Another advantage of focus group interviews is that they require significantly less time, because they incorporate the experiences of multiple

learners simultaneously. However, it meant that the questions had to be limited in order for it to not last too long, limiting the questions to approximately 15 questions, in addition to situational questions per hour (Patton, 2002:385-386). Furthermore, to accommodate a comfortable setting, I chose to use the learners' native language, in order to avoid uncertainties due to language barriers, prioritizing the acquisition of information. In addition, focus group interviews also function as a practical and random representation of the class as a whole (Barbour 2007:30-31).

For this research the semi-structured interview requires the preparation of an interview-guide for both the teachers and learners. The benefit of the interview guide was that it made sure that the time was spent without waste, and was especially essential to focus group interviews as it kept the interactions focused (Patton, 2002:343-344). Both interview guides were organized into subsections (see Appendix 1 and 2). The teacher interview guide started with preparing the interviewee with opening remarks regarding the intention of the research and proposing to the teachers whether they would prefer conducting it in Norwegian or English, every participant chose Norwegian. The teacher guide continued with background questions about their education and teaching experiences, which could have had an influence on their teaching methodology and cognition. Similarly, the next subsection focused on the teacher's experiences and expectations of their learners, in order to reflect upon the teaching context. The third subsection covered the teacher cognition and methodology. The fourth section approached assessment, and was aimed at giving information on when the teachers evaluated their learners' grammar and if evaluations influenced their teaching. The fifth section aimed at acquiring knowledge regarding the manner in which the teachers' gave feedback. Finally, the last section was in order to make sure that the teacher did not feel that anything relevant was left out.

The learner focus group interview guide similarly started with opening remarks and background information, in order to prepare and gain insight into the learner context. The next subsection regarded the learner context, and aimed at gaining insight into the opinions of the learners on grammar and how they were currently experiencing it. The third subsection dealt with assessment and how grammar affected the learners. At the end, the learners were asked whether they felt anything relevant was left out.

Both semi-structured interviews required that the researcher had a solid overview of his research subject in order to properly prepare and developed the interview guides and in addition to reactively ask broader questions that could be modified depending on the situation of the respondent, probing outside of the questions of the interview guide (Patton, 2002:347).

This open nature of the semi-structured interview makes it important for the researcher pilot the interview guide in advance in order to make sure that the questions were not misleading nor confusing in any manner - ensuring that the subject was sufficiently covered and nothing was forgotten (Dornyei 2007:136-137). The process of creating an interview guide is a circulatory one based primarily on the parameters set by the research questions, the literature used, and piloting.

One of the aims to piloting was in order to ensure that the data acquired achieved as high as possible a level of saturation, although complete saturation never was possible with five teacher participants. Due to practicality and the difficulty of acquiring further participants for the piloting, the participants were not ideal because they were not working upper secondary school teachers, however, the resulting feedback was satisfying and assisted in the preparation of both interviews guides. When performing the teacher piloting two classmates functioned as primary participants, both working on their English applied linguistic MA, with significant teacher education, and some teacher experience; in addition the secondary piloting was done with my supervisor. The two classmates provided the most similar qualifications to the real teacher participants in this survey, thus, they were the primary indicators for the changes that had to be made to the interview guide in terms of difficulty of the questions, but also gave insight on questions that needed to be added. Due to being in the position as a first time interviewer, it was also important that my supervisor gave significant feedback on my performance as an interviewer – emphasising interview strategies that should be used.

The piloting of the learner interview guide was conducted with five academic upper secondary learners. However, due to the learners' time schedule, it was not possible to conduct more than one focus group interview, in which two learners participated, followed by three individual learner interviews – involving sufficient time in between each interview for the revision of the guide. The one focus group interview prepared me for the role of mediator and interviewer, as the role as a focus group interviewer is different from the individual interviews (and similar to the other pilot interviews it helped to prepare me for the role of asking situational questions). In addition, the individual pilot learner interviews significantly improved the interview guide, in terms of appropriate level of difficulty and adding or removing questions. Thus, through the process of piloting both the teacher and learner interview guides resulted in acquiring rich and relevant data.

3.5 Data analysis method

Although the semi-structured interview permits a deeper understanding of the subject it also brings along the likelihood that more information will be collected from some participants than others. This may be problematic in terms of analysis, because a completely structured interview would be easier to analyse due to its strict interview structure that permits only the use of a set of pre-prepared questions that are similar for all cases (Patton 2002:347).

However, the flexibility of a semi-structured interview was important for this research as the methodologies of the teachers were expected to be, and indeed were, very varied. However, the information gained from any open-ended questions, no matter what degree of structure, will result in open answers which provide difficulty when analyzing because of individual perceptions and experiences that are not so easily compared (Ibid). Thus, the choice of semi-structured interviews would provide flexibility and much needed insight into the interviewees' situation and cognition, although at the cost of slightly increased complexity and subsequent difficulty when analysing.

When analysing introspective data - the reported data acquired based on the experiences and opinions of the participants - it was important to be aware of the fact that the information provided represents information influenced by the individual's context and their underlying cognitive processes. Hence, each teacher and learner interview provided only one, of many, valuable piece of data on the situation of grammatical teaching that has to be subjected to qualitative analysis (Dornyei, 2007:150). It was also important to take into account that the interview(er) and how the articulation of the questions may influence the teachers' cognition and subsequent answers regarding the subject at hand – this was even mentioned by one of the participants that the interview functioned as a task of reflection (Sindre). Hence, with these precautions in mind I approached the acquired data for analysis.

Interpreting introspective findings was a highly logical endeavour that based itself on my examination of the interviews and my own knowledge and perspective. The subjective perspective was well noted as influential on the evidence and hence the interpretations were 'tried and tested against the acquired data, rival explanations, disconfirming cases, and data irregularities in order to conform to academic standards' (Patton, 2002:477-480). By definition interpretation means going beyond the descriptive data as it is the process of attaching significance, making sense, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, and making conjectures/hypothesis – in essence imposing order on the rich and disordered interview data (Ibid: 480). According to Patton (2002), there are primarily two aims to choose from regarding introspective analysis that are important to keep in mind in order to know what

prioritized when performing analysis: (1) to identify cause-and-effect relationships or (2) to seek understanding of human experiences (Ibid: 478-479). Appropriately, the research at hand, an analysis and subsequent understanding of the teacher and learner experiences, was more likely to provide the necessary reflection required to answer the research questions. Thus, a focused analysis of the teachers' and learners' experiences led to an understanding of their individual, but at the same time holistic, and cognitive reasoning, beyond the descriptive data. This choice of aim was further supported Patton (Ibid:480) references to Stake (1995:39) and Bateson (1978:13) about how it is important to portray the individual holistic context relevant to the situation being analysed. The method of interpretation is best represented in a paragraph by Patton:

The ongoing challenge, paradox, and dilemma of qualitative analysis engage us in constantly moving back and forth between the phenomenon of interest and our abstractions [understandings] of that phenomenon, between the descriptions of what has occurred and our interpretations of those descriptions, between the complexity of reality and our simplifications of those complexities, between the circularities and interdependencies of human activity and our need for linear, ordered statements of cause-effect. (Patton, 2002:480-481)

Bateson (1978:13, as cited in Ibid:481) states how the need for linear, ordered statements of cause-effect should be changed due to the fact that 'communication necessitates context, and without context there is no meaning'. However, some of the descriptive data presented were not interpreted as its function was to enhance understanding and create context, rather than answering the question of "why" within a context (Patton, 2002:478). At last, I took into account that interpretation, according to Patton (Ibid:480), may take the following forms: "(1) To confirm what we know is supported by the data, (2) disabuse us of misconceptions, and (3) illuminate important things that we didn't know but should know". Thus, central to the findings were questions such as: what did their statements mean? What did this tell me about their teaching practices/experience/opinions etc? What did the learners' response tell me about their teacher's methodology/how the learners learn grammar etc?

In order to facilitate analysis of the conducted interviews organization of the data is quite helpful. Hence, through investigation of appropriate organizational methods I reached the conclusion that content analysis would be best suited for the task at hand. This was supported by Patton's (2002:452-453) claim that interviews are usually organized through

content and that the qualitative content goes through an examination process which attempts to recognize core themes and/or patterns. Thus, the content was divided into appropriate themes based on the examination of the semi-structured interview transcripts, where thematic patterns were revealed among interview questions and the participant answers. This facilitated not only analysis but also an easy initial organization of the data as the major themes were already part of the interview guide's sub-headings.

The major advantage of introspective analysis proved itself to be that it gained access to the cognitive thought processes of the teachers and learners, which are inaccessible in any other way (Dornyei, 2007:151). Thus, by combining a thoroughly planned and performed introspection with the recorded audio data it greatly enhanced the richness and reliability of the data making it possible to meet the requirements of scientific research (Ibid).

All the interviews were audio recorded as a means to be able to obtain all the details within the nuances of personal meaning and experience, without being disruptive (Dornyei, 2007:139). According to Dornyei (Ibid), there are primarily two methods that would accommodate the data acquisition of this thesis: (a) video recording and (b) audio recording, each method commanding their own benefits and difficulties. Video recording provides the most complete data in form of recording both verbal and nonverbal cues, however, it also brings about an intrusive atmosphere and subsequent additional difficulties in data analysis. Thus, Dornyei (Ibid) recommends that video recording should only be used if deemed necessary. Although the use of audio recording results in some loss of data, it was chosen for this thesis due to its ability to obtain the core data that is required and its less intrusive nature. It may also be important to note that the audio recording equipment was tested as part of the piloting, where two devices were chosen as the most secure manner in performing the recordings, in case one would fail during the interview.

3.7 Ethics

In accordance with the Norwegian Social Science Data services (www.nsd.uib.no) the methods of this thesis were approved prior to conducting the interviews. The significance of the NSD is its role as a national infrastructure facility for access to data for research in addition to functioning as a channel for data dissemination and partner in statutory data privacy requirements in the research community (ibid). Thus, through approval from the NSD this thesis passed all ethical and legal concerns – among which are the signing of an official form informing all participants about the study, their rights, anonymity, and that all audio-

recording will be deleted upon completion. Furthermore, as a researcher I was obliged to inform them about the recording.

In accordance with ethical procedures of qualitative research, the participants and schools were promised anonymity and duly informed about the research and their rights. One of the ethical issues was considering how much information should be given prior to the interviews. Providing the participants with information could influence the respondents' answers based on their assumptions of research intent, which may result in answers influenced by what the respondent might have thought would be the most appropriate answer, rather than a truthful response (Dornyei, 2007:150). It was decided that the participants would be given sufficient information regarding the topic and intent of the research, however, they would not be presented with the interview guides or in-depth knowledge prior to the interviews – although the situation did not occur, it is important to note the guide would be presented upon request, by either learners or teachers.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has gone through the methodological choices made for this thesis, beginning with identifying the qualitative research method as the optimal choice for educational research. Furthermore, the chapter gave insight into the choices made as part of the participant sampling, selecting teachers based on preliminary background information, such as age, education, and teacher experience. Subsequently, semi-structured individual teacher interviews and semi-structured focus-group interviews were selected as part of the data collection method. Additionally, the rich and varied data required an introspective data analysis method, in order to gain access to the cognition of the teachers and learners through analysing audio recordings. Finally, all ethical problems encountered as part of the research was handled accordingly to the rights of the participants of this research.

4. Interview summaries

4.1 Teacher interview summaries

Introduction

The present chapter presents summaries of the interviews conducted with the five teachers, henceforth ‘the teachers’. Pseudonyms are used to keep the names of the teachers anonymous.

The teacher summaries do not strictly follow the organizational pattern of the interview guide due to the conversational nature of semi-structured interviews conducted with the individual teachers.

The summaries initially inform about the educational and professional background of each individual teacher, followed by information on approaches, methods, and techniques to teaching English grammar as a second language, reflecting how grammar can be taught either explicitly or implicitly, whether or not it was the teacher’s intention.

All participants chose to answer my questions in Norwegian, thus all the quotes are a result of my translations. The amount of information provided by the teachers regarding a subject often indicates how much they had thought about the subject prior to the interview. Subsequently, differences among the teachers as to the amounts of information given were expected and may have reflected the importance of a topic for the individual teacher.

Chloe (age 47)

Chloe had a literary English master’s degree from the University of Bergen. The degree included one grammatical module called ‘Pragmatics of English word order’. In addition to a six month pedagogical education called ‘pedagogisk seminar’ she had several (but an uncertain amount of) pedagogical developmental one day courses throughout her 23 year long career as an English teacher at upper secondary school.

Throughout her 23 years of experience Chloe had noticed that learners had gradually become less interested in written grammatical accuracy but at the same time become gradually better at oral communication. She felt that this was a result of a change in how English teaching (in Norway) had gradually focused less on grammar and that learners did not read enough. In addition, she believed that their oral abilities were heavily influenced by social media and the way Norwegian oral communication had integrated English words into daily use. Thus, she felt that it had become more difficult to emphasize the importance of grammar because the learners felt that their English was satisfactory for their current use and

the learners did not realize the importance of correct grammar in a work setting in order to avoid ridicule and prejudice.

However, Chloe stated that although there may be less focus on grammar both at and prior to upper secondary school and that the learners may not be able to remember grammatical rules as well as learners used to do, there would always be some learners who were able to give the correct grammatical answer, be it implicitly or explicitly. She ascertained that her biggest challenge when teaching English grammar was a result of the learners' poor grammatical knowledge in their first language (L1). She believed that the inability to transfer L1 grammatical knowledge into an L2 learning context created uncertainty in the learner. Furthermore, she felt that there were too many other requirements that had to be done as part of the teaching schedule that she could not spend too much time on grammar.

Chloe said that she had the freedom to choose how she approached grammar and teaching. Thus, she taught grammar dependent on the learners' level, needs, and her prior experience. However, she would teach in the same manner even if she (had) taught adults.

When commenting on the generalized grammatical competence expectations set by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training school and state she said that she saw the logic in it: 'In Norway the learners learn English through a more naturalistic method', which she compared to her German third language teaching experience, which focused a lot more on grammar.

Chloe did not particularly believe that isolated grammatical knowledge was beneficial beyond the point that 'basic grammatical elements' may function as a foundation for language learning although she felt that grammar, both implicit and explicit, was important to the point of accuracy in language. However, she believed that the learners could learn as much grammar from reading and writing, as from her grammatical presentations and task work. Thus, she wanted more time in order for the learners to be able to write assorted types of texts and subsequently learn grammar through correctional work, rather than presenting explicit rules to her class. When asked why she taught grammar she only said that she taught explicit grammar, partly, to satisfy her own conscience because she felt bad if she did not. However, she also indicated that time prevented her from teaching grammar through reading and writing activities because she had so much else on her teaching schedule.

She claimed that her classes did not involve much explicit grammatical teaching, having approximately one session every two weeks. Grammatical explanations were usually done through presenting the rules to the class on the blackboard followed by relevant task

work, either individually or in pairs, which she facilitated by monitoring and assisting those who needed help. In addition, she would post the explanations on 'itslearning' for those who wanted to revisit the task at some point after class. The explanations were simplified by giving a practical example of a typical mistake before introducing grammatical terminology. In addition, she did not teach grammatical exceptions to the rules because they would only be confusing for the learners.

Chloe prepared for her grammatical classes by consulting a grammar book in order to be aware of all the exceptions to the rules she was going to introduce in class. She then made a power point presentation or word document for the learners to use while she presented the grammatical rule(s) on the blackboard, unless the learners were supposed to work with translation tasks. When she presented a grammatical rule, she started out with a practical example showing a typical mistake in order to get the learners' attention. Although she and her class used a book with very little grammatical terminology, she introduced terminology as part of the explanation.

Some of the common mistakes that she experienced from the learners were third person singular -s ('no matter the individual level of the learner'), vocabulary, uncountable nouns, and the distinction between the use of 'it' and 'there'. Thus, she usually focused on teaching the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns, present simple and continuous tenses, the use of 'it' and 'there', relative pronouns, questions and negatives, adjectives and adverbs, and modal verbs. She rather preferred them to practice in order to induce for themselves the differences and their correct usage. Some of the specific grammatical elements which she would not teach included prepositions (because she felt the learner learns more by practicing by themselves), active and passive verb forms, question tags, and possessive pronouns.

Some of the tasks she used were what she called 'traditional' task work, such as translating from Norwegian to English and fill-the-gap tasks. She used very few online tasks because she believed that it was important to write with a pen, rather than typing.

Chloe felt that she could only assist the individual needs of the learners by providing feedback on tests and making sure that her learners always had task work to do. Sufficient task work benefitted the stronger learners by giving them enough work, and at the same time, the weaker learners, who were not necessarily able to finish in time, could be given an answer sheet if they wished to finish later. Furthermore, she pointed out that even if the learners may have successfully completed their task work, with a focus on a specific grammatical rule, they generally struggled with applying the rule to writing a text, even if it was the next day.

In order to give instruction suited for the individual learners' levels, she felt that grammar could be best facilitated through corrective feedback on the individual's written texts/tests. She would receive the tests online on 'it'slearning' and would return the test to the learners with corrections on their mistakes and comments regarding the mistakes. She corrected every mistake but elaborated on the repetitive errors. Her feedback on the errors and mistakes was primarily done in writing based on the learners' tests. Furthermore, every three months, she gave the learners oral feedback, which reflected on their past mistakes. She gave the oral feedback because throughout her career she had noticed that the learners consistently repeated the same errors in writing and she believed that this was the best way to facilitate grammatical learning. Thus, she instructed her learners to go through the feedback they had been given upon receiving it and especially prior to tests in order for them to learn but also avoid making the same mistakes.

In class Chloe tried to encourage the use of English rather than Norwegian orally as much as possible through pair work, or presentations. Although the learners did not always speak English as part of class participation, she would ask her learners to speak in English if they tried to speak in Norwegian. She also presented grammar in English, even though she emphasized that she was aware of the fact that many would disagree whether or not L2 or L1 was the more appropriate language, especially due to the use of terminology. However, she occasionally used some L1 terminology in order to create awareness of differences between the terminologies of the two languages. Other than that, she expected her learners to be aware of some of the fundamental equivalents in L1 and L2 terminology.

Although it was not part of the teaching plan, her class read one novel each year. The novel was chosen by Chloe, because she saw how those who enjoyed reading benefitted from it. Further, they read approximately eight short stories throughout a year and 'some' poems. She said that she could see the difference between those who read and those who did not. Those who read were often much better at structuring their texts and had a larger vocabulary, unlike those who watched a lot of television who acquired a 'superficial and basic vocabulary'.

Chloe did not test the learners on explicit grammatical knowledge. She tested the learners' grammar based on translation task work or 'coherent text production', usually as part of a content related text. Correct grammar was expected of them and erroneous work reduced the overall grade. Furthermore, she did not make graded tests that focused on testing the learners' proficiency with one of several grammatical rules that they had recently had. She expected half of the class to get the correct answers and produce output without many

grammatical errors. However, in terms of oral expectations she did not focus as much on grammar due to the informal nature of oral communication, except from when incorrect grammar interrupted the flow of speech. She rather focused on the learners' pronunciation, accent, and clarity as requirements for oral grades.

Marge (age 43)

Marge had a one and a half year English education from the University of Stavanger, which included 'likely two' (could not recall the exact amount) grammatical modules. She also had a one year pedagogical education, in addition to one pedagogical developmental course on 'how to teach oral English'. Marge had worked as an English teacher for six and a half years. All her experience was at a vocational upper secondary school, specifically as an English teacher at the electronic department. She had seven English classes that semester.

The first topic dealt with in the interview was how Marge experienced the learners, an important aspect in how she chose to teach:

'some educational approaches may work with one class of learners but not with another class of learners. Some learners are more suited to games and social educational approaches whereas other learners prefer individual task work on their computers'.

She believed that the educational context was important because she experienced that creating an interesting educational situation for the learners was the most challenging aspect of teaching grammar. Most of the learners, she believed, were already aware of the importance of English for their future.

Marge felt that the learner's command of English grammar had not changed much throughout her six year career. Rather, she saw that her learners either had command over their grammar or did not. In addition, her learners' grades were usually below average at her school. The acceptance level for Marge's school was 2.8 out of 6 this year and '50-70% of the learners have been given 3 as their grade', a grade which she felt would have been lower in other schools. The reason for the low grades, she explained, was a large number of learners with reading and writing difficulties, some severe, in each of her classes. Furthermore, her class consisted of a large part of immigrant learners who spoke up to six languages, which influenced them as they often mixed the grammatical rules of the languages, some 'not even able to use correct word order'. In addition, the non-Norwegian learners often made mistakes

that were ‘lacking a logical language pattern’ compared to Norwegian learners whom made the same ‘Norwegian mistakes’. Although the foreign learners were given two hours a week of extra tutoring by a service center, Marge realized that it was a difficult task to quickly acquire up to ten years of missed English education. Thus, the ‘extreme’ differences between learners made it difficult for Marge to identify changes in grammatical competence throughout her career. However, some of the specific grammatical rules that Marge’s learners had difficulties with were: distinguishing between the present forms of the verb ‘to be’, correct use of punctuation, and verb tenses. In addition, Marge was challenged by a very high amount of class absence and the occasional large age differences, namely, some of her learners were 40 years old, and were thus used to different ways of learning.

Marge explained that vocational learners often differed greatly depending on what their main subject was. Her learners were electricians, ‘who enjoyed detail oriented and computer related work’, which she felt was one of the reasons why they could find interest in the detailed information of grammar. She contrasted the electricians with learners who studied construction, ‘who were not as inclined to theoretical and detail oriented work’. Thus, she used the electricians’ interest for computers to teach, rather than ‘boring textbooks’. She used educational websites with fill-the-gap or multiple-choice activities focusing on vocabulary and grammar. Their answers were checked by the site by pressing a ‘check answers’ button, indicating only if it was correct or not, followed by corrective work. After repetitive mistakes, the learners usually asked ‘what is wrong’ and then she explained it. Furthermore, their textbook, ‘Tracks for yrkesfag’, had grammar related task work at the end of each chapter, which could also be accessed online.

Marge deemed variation as important

‘because one after another the learners usually complain about how they have had English since elementary school and hate to read, write, and speak English, especially in front of others, choosing a vocational education expecting to avoid it’.

Thus, during the interview Marge brought a box filled with educational games that she used to encourage learning. Quickly, these games can be explained as grammatical or content variations of i.e. ‘pass the bomb’, ‘memory’, ‘bingo’, and ‘jigsaw puzzles’. She considered these relevant because ‘there is grammar in everything: adjectives, fruits, vocational relevant tools, tenses etc.’ although it rarely was explicit grammar. However, she emphasized that even

educational games could become tedious and she felt variation was very important in order to keep her learners' attention to the input.

The manner in which Marge taught reflected upon her learners' context and what she felt appropriate because she had the freedom to choose how to teach. She had started her teaching career with presenting grammatical rules, for example, the differences between adverbs and adjectives, on the blackboard, followed by relevant task work. What she experienced then was that she was asked 'what is an adjective?' Thus, because the learners lacked so much 'basic' grammatical knowledge, she chose to not teach explicit grammatical rules anymore, rather incorporating grammar through the use of language. She felt that there were 'more important aspects of language' that had to be prioritized due to the learners' level and she asked me rhetorically 'is it really necessary for the learners to be able to point out a verb in their vocation?'. What she considered necessary for her learners was the ability to order items online and communicate, especially because there were a lot of immigration workers within their vocation. Thus, Marge commented that 'learner fluency and courage to use the language is more important than grammar. Although the learners' language may not be perfect, they will be understood', reflecting her implicit approach to grammar teaching.

Marge said at the start of the interview that she 'taught little grammar'. However, when she did, she primarily approached grammar teaching through oral and written feedback on the learners' graded tests (three tests each semester), such as an essay, or task work. The oral feedback was given by going through the learner's texts together with the learner; looking at structure, content, and language. The feedback was focused on preparing the learner for the next test by pointing out, for example, incorrect tense usage and emphasizing that the learner had to re-check these errors on the next test. Similarly, a written list was handed out to the individual learner reflecting their errors and appropriate homework for it, which she always checked. Her reasoning for approaching feedback individually was that she felt that they were much more susceptible to learning (grammar) one on one. If she had approached it collectively, she said 'the learners would have lost their concentration', because of a lack of learner interest and how computers could be 'incredibly disturbing but at the same time helpful in the classroom'.

On tests Marge allowed her learners to bring papers and books on grammatical rules and content focusing on the production of output. Occasionally, she would also write other information such as the rules for prepositions and the use of the indefinite article on the blackboard. She gave tests which were as similar to the exams as possible, consisting of one

short answer and long answer part, in addition to providing a premade table of contents for the test which assisted the learner with their writing.

One of the most challenging experiences for Marge's learners was speaking English in front of the whole class and writing freely. Thus, in order to introduce oral activity, in addition to the educational games, Marge had the learners read one on one with her or in groups of two to three. These activities, she said, functioned to promote a more comfortable environment in order for the learners to have enough courage to speak English later in their vocations. Because free writing was such a severe challenge for Marge's learners, some struggling with producing more than three sentences while writing an essay, she facilitated her learners by providing them with 'recipes' consisting of practical tips on writing. These recipes gave instruction on how each part of the text should be written, 'making it easier on the learner'. Although she provided a comfortable environment for her learners to speak and assisted her learners with practical tips on writing she did not relate it to grammar. Her focus was to get her learners to produce output and subsequently acquire grammar implicitly but with a focus on her giving them the courage to speak and write. Thus, Marge's approach to grammar was implicit, and how she taught was relevant to how her learners acquired grammatical features into their interlanguage and supported her reasoning for why she chose not to teach much explicit grammar.

Marge chose not to speak much English in class because then the learners would often not understand what she was trying to explain. She used to use the target language earlier in her career but said that she had adapted to her learners. Similarly, her learners did not need to speak English in class because she did not want to force them into a peer pressured situation that they are not comfortable with, as mentioned above. Rather, she encouraged oral participation one on one in a more relaxed environment, 'due to the fact that the learners are going to be electricians it is not relevant for them to be able to able to speak in classes'.

Marge said that changes in examinations did not affect how she taught written grammar because it remained primarily through implicit learning, correctional work, and task work. However, she mentioned that since oral exams had been added the previous year, it made her aware of the fact that she had to prepare her learners for the expectations set by the oral exam also. Marge felt that since there was an acceptance level of 2.6 for the school she worked at, she felt it was inappropriate for her learners to be expected to perform at a generalized level for the entire country, which they are not necessarily at. Furthermore,

‘it is unnecessary for learners with reading and writing difficulties to follow the demand to read Shakespeare or similar literature from the 15-16th hundreds. The learners should learn what language is currently like not how it was, as it only creates confusion.’

Even though Marge was aware of the fact that there were disagreements regarding different approaches to L2 and grammar teaching, she stood firm in her belief that her method was appropriate to teaching a second language for her learners. She based this primarily on approximately six years of experience at the same level with electricians as her learners, with several classes each year.

Angelina (age 41)

Angelina had worked as a teacher for eight years, whereof a total of four years at upper secondary school - three years with vocational VG1 classes and two years at vocational VG2 classes. At the time of the interview she taught English for VG2 construction learners.

Angelina had studied English for three and a half years, a year and a half of French, and a year of psychology, sociology, and pedagogical education. Her English education included two modules on grammar. She had attended some professional development courses, primarily pedagogically aimed, but none concerned with grammar.

We opened the interview by discussing her opinion on the changes in the grammatical accuracy of her English learners throughout her four-year vocational career. Similarly to Marge, Angelina said that her VG learners had never been particularly accurate in regards of written grammar. Thus, it was difficult to pinpoint changes based on only four years of experience. However, she had noticed a development towards more colloquial language and ‘text message language’, particularly ‘gonna’, ‘wanna’, ‘ain’t’, ‘they was’ and other similar informal uses of language. Specifically, she reported that her learners struggled grammatically with verbs, concord, it/there is and word order. However, their oral grammatical accuracy has remained unchanged.

Angelina said that the ability to talk explicitly about grammar was based on the individual learner’s previous schooling in first and second languages. Thus, their explicit knowledge varied a lot. What she did this year was to use a multiple choice questionnaire in order (for her) to gain insight into what they remembered, especially, from VG1. The questions were aimed at both content and grammar, such as ‘which one of these three words is an adverb’. Although she admitted that several learners probably guessed the correct answer

she did experience for the first time a learner that explicitly explained what a verb, adjective, adverb, and noun was.

Angelina felt that the greatest challenge of teaching grammar was that her learners found it incredibly boring. She also found that English grammar was quite tedious, compared to French grammar. Furthermore, Angelina pointed out that she had learners who differed greatly in regard of their English proficiency. She had learners who enjoyed the subject and delivered at a high level, learners who did not like it, and learners who had had only Norwegian due to either severe reading and writing disorders or due to the learners receiving first language education, in an L1 different from Norwegian. Due to these challenges she felt it was important to incorporate learner enjoyment in her classes because she thought that if the learners enjoyed themselves they were more likely to show up for class. Hence, she selected teaching material based on creating a class atmosphere which focused on enjoyment and simplicity, claiming that they learned enormously from it. Furthermore, enjoyment was important because it was likely that some of her learners would fail the exams and some would not show up for the exam due to bad prior experiences, which had made them hate school in general and specifically English. She even had one learner who had throughout lower secondary school only signed his name and handed in every English test blank. He did not do this now because she assisted him at the start of each test. Thus, Angelina's goal for all her learners was to not give up, try, learn something, and get through.

Angelina said that she presented explicit grammar to her class approximately once a year, typically prior to the spring test. She would have wanted to do it in preparation to the fall test, which was only weeks before the interview, but did not have the time for it. However, she used a power point presentation showcasing what was relevant for writing a text such as the structuring of the text, capitalization, full stop, and 'other grammar at this level leaving out the exceptions to the rules'. Her focus was on the learners achieving the best possible written grade and if that meant that a learner required grammatical explanations she would give very simplistic explanations in addition to examples.

Although Angelina did not focus on teaching much grammar, she did believe that it was very important for learners in their earlier stages of learning the English language. She said that second language learners would not get anywhere without practicing 'you are', 'I am', and so forth. However, in regards to her current learners who had not already learned the grammar prior to upper secondary school she felt that 'if they had not learned it yet, it was because they are not at the level at which they can'. Angelina said that her learners who lacked grammatical knowledge were also weak in general in regards of the subject. She

wanted to focus on the correct use of capital letters – which she did not consider as grammar - punctuation, use of paragraphs, and structure in order for the learner to be understood. Thus, what she said was not that grammar was unimportant but that due to her vocational construction learners' English proficiency, it was not something which could take part of her classes. Rather, she felt that grammar should be handled based on the individual needs of the learners.

Angelina approached the individual needs of the learners through individual feedback on their texts one on one. She gave both written and oral explanations on what could be done differently and what the learner could work on. Even though giving individual feedback was time consuming, she felt that the learners 'profited from it enormously'. Furthermore, for the more ambitious learners she would also give additional relevant task work. For example she had a Polish learner who, due to his first language, never used articles, although he had well organized structure and content when writing. Additionally, if she had a learner who had proficient content, language, and structure, she would individually explain to the learner what grammar he/she had to work on in order to get a better grade. Similarly, when they had an oral presentation or a conversational evaluation, she usually conducted them alone with the learner and responded with oral feedback. However, apart from the feedback she taught very little grammar because she felt that if she approached it collectively with the class, they would not pay attention.

When I asked Angelina about her classroom writing activities, she said that she 'primarily did content-related question answering, "find ten facts", and practicing how to write for example an introduction' with her learners. She chose not to give mock tests with free writing activities due to it being too much work for herself, who had 70 learners in total.

Similarly, when asked about her classroom reading activities, Angelina responded that they typically read informational texts from the textbook, excerpts from novels, short stories, poems, and song lyrics. She gave her learners the choice if they wanted to read on their own, in pairs, listen to an audio recording, in groups, or with her because she focused on the acquisition of information.

In class they rarely spoke English, sometimes she tried to initiate a conversation on a topic but speaking English was 'easily forgotten'. The reason why she chose to not actively initiate oral English in class was because she prioritized the learners' attention to the content. She had considered first speaking English in class and then repeating it in Norwegian in order for the learners to get English input as well as being able to focus on content. However, she deemed it a waste of time and believed that the learners would in turn lose interest.

Angelina felt that the way she taught she was partly influenced by the exams because of the change in written focus from ‘everything should be extremely correct’ to ‘the ability to communicate’. If the demands set by The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training were focused on grammar, she believed that teachers would have to change their teaching methods.

Angelina assessed the learner’s grammar primarily if a learner had the content and structure required to produce above the average grade of 3. She exemplified that if a learner were to obtain a 4, grammar would be quite important as it would require the learners to have structure, capital letters, correct tenses and singular/plural form of the verb ‘to be’, varied vocabulary, correct spelling, and few grammatical mistakes. Subsequently, a 5 would require even more variation in vocabulary, almost no grammatical mistakes, and better content. However, an important point was that her primary aim was to get her learners to pass.

Angelina felt that the grammatical requirements set by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training was appropriate because it moved the focus away from grammar, something she expected them to know after ten years of English in order to get a good grade. Communication, content, pronunciation and form were the focus of her evaluation.

At the end of the interview, Angelina commented that she was aware of the large differences between her learners at her school and other non-vocational upper secondary schools. Thus, she emphasized that ‘we have to take the learners into consideration, if not we cannot be teachers’. Even though she had smaller classes, there were great differences in English proficiency among the learners, some had never had English as a school subject and some came to Norway 3 years ago and were challenged by all the curriculum plus learning Norwegian and English at the same time. Thus, she was aware that the learners who were good enough to benefit from grammar were not taught grammar. However, she believed that all her learners could benefit from her methodology.

Sindre (age 28)

Sindre was teaching his first year as an English teacher at an academic VG1 upper secondary school, exempting the time he spent as a teacher during his one year pedagogical education. He had an English literary master from the University of Kristiansand and had spent a semester at the University of York as part of the master. Throughout his education, he had had three grammatical modules.

Sindre explained that his learners ranged from extremely proficient to those who made some grammatical mistakes in many areas. Thus, he found it difficult to accommodate the

differences in proficiency and identify what grammar his learners needed in order to progress. Furthermore, he found it strange that although his learners were very proficient they found grammar to be very tedious to learn.

Sindre noticed that in writing his learners repeatedly struggled with third person singular -s, suffixes, level of formality in writing, and use of contractions. Occasionally, the learners would make article mistakes, such as ‘on internet’ in addition to what he called ‘vagueism’, meaning that they answered vaguely. However, he emphasized that his English learners were very proficient, and that he was impressed by their use of the comma. He thought that their informal written language was likely influenced by TV or other social media.

Sindre was quite impressed with the oral proficiency of his learners. He could only occasionally hear them make verb mistakes when they talked, even though the learners did not correct themselves, he felt that the fluency that they had was a positive thing.

Sindre expected that his learners’ command of grammar would include regular and irregular verbs, ability to conjugate verbs, and making few mistakes. He did not expect his learners to know subjunctives or the exceptions to the main grammatical rules. Moreover, he said the average acceptance level of the school was high enough to validate that the learners should be sufficiently proficient to be able to deliver based on his expectations. Furthermore, some of his learners could often explain orally what was grammatically wrong based on either implicit or explicit knowledge. He said that his learners were quite good and that on average his learners had a 4+, grade which reflected the requirements for entering his school. He expected grammatical accuracy of their writing, more than of their spoken language. However, he saw that the learners often made the same mistakes when they spoke and when they wrote. He ascertained that the errors were likely a result of the learners not thinking explicitly about grammar when they wrote.

Earlier that year Sindre had approached his learners in class regarding their use of contractions. He noticed that there was a low level of tolerance towards learning grammar and that his learners quickly grew tired of only talking about contractions. He contrasted this experience with his teaching Norwegian (L1) at the same level and pointed out that those learners were much more accommodating to learning Norwegian grammar. He believed that this was due to the learners’ perception that English was fundamentally more fun and that Norwegian instruction would always occasionally involve some grammar instruction.

Sindre explained that what he saw as the biggest challenge was to find entertaining games which could incorporate grammar. This was something he had not yet done in his

English class, only in his Norwegian class. The approach he considered using was to encourage friendly competition through small rewards, which had worked very well in his Norwegian class.

Although Sindre felt that his learners were very competent, they made some mistakes with the verbs every now and then which he felt he had to correct. He tried to create awareness on what a subject, subject clause, and predicator clause were without the use of clause terminology. He focused the learners' attention on what a subject and verb were in order for the learners to see the correlation. He believed that there were not many learners with this deep understanding of what a subject and verb was and this created difficulty. Sindre exemplified how he simplified his teaching of the subject and verb correlation: 'the subject is the one who does something and that the learners should count how many subjects there are and then look at the verb in order to identify its form'.

Sindre chose not to use grammar-related task work during his classes due to grammar not being a main focus with his learners' high level of English proficiency. However, he considered using task work which was related to the feedback given to the learners as a result of tests, directed at grammar. He wanted to use feedback related task work because he felt that explicit grammar was very useful for the individual learner and something he could use as part of his classes in the future. He thought that this could give his learners a sense of mastery. Thus, he believed it would likely make them more inclined to learning grammar in addition to its educational benefits. He based his reasoning on how he had approached grammar in his Norwegian (L1) classes.

Sindre approached grammar teaching primarily through experience-based implicit grammar because he was not aware of his learners' proficiency or their problem areas prior to his first year. Approximately 15 percent of his classes were spent teaching implicit and explicit grammar as he saw fit, including: individual and class feedback and instruction. However, he doubted that he would have any grammatical theme as the basis of an entire class session because he wanted to disguise explicit grammar. Thus, grammar was introduced sporadically when he felt it was appropriate. Sindre chose the grammatical points to focus on by examining the learners' tests. He approached the learners individually by pointing out each learners' mistakes and would then often refer to a rule in addition to an explanation and give a suggestion for further work. If there was a problem that most of his learners had, he would address it collectively in class. In addition, he felt that an awareness of the age of the learner was important in order to facilitate the learning of grammar and that implicit grammar was easier to acquire at a younger age.

Sindre felt that he had control of how he taught and incorporated a lot of reading into his teaching schedule, although he felt that it could be difficult to incorporate all the teaching goals. However, he felt that he managed it well. One class session each week was spent focusing on reading for thirty minutes, five minutes spent on a reading log – where the learners wrote about what they had read -, and the remaining time was spent on a learning log, which was supposed to reflect what a learner had learnt. He mentioned that either his learners had not mentioned that they had learned anything about grammar in both types of logs. He thought it was likely due to his learners having greater implicit knowledge of the language than their explicit knowledge. He believed that ‘if you do not read, you will not get input on general grammar’. In addition, he felt that his learners had very little experience with reading English books. He let them choose their own books in order to encourage reading enjoyment. Reading also helped their language and literary abilities. His other sessions were often based on a theme such as analysis of a poem or short stories, Great Britain, or source use, such as being critical to online sources and referencing.

Sindre chose to always speak English in his classes. The only exceptions were when he had to talk about a subject which involved difficult terminology, such as referencing and using sources. Thus, if his use of English would hinder the learners’ ability to acquire the necessary information, he would rather speak Norwegian (L1). He said that he was aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of such a situation. He emphasized that he promoted the use of English in his classes in order to promote a culture used to speaking English. In order to encourage learner participation, he expected a certain amount of learner participation in class; the reward for this would be a possibility for a higher grade. Furthermore, his oral activities would also occasionally involve playing interactional games with his learners and group work or pair discussion followed by class discussion.

If a learner said something which was grammatically incorrect, Sindre would, at times, correct her/him by saying ‘did you mean this?’ This hid the correction and did not deter the learner from further participation. In addition, if he noticed a general grammatical problem for the majority of the learners, he would address it in class. However, he did not expect that it would be necessary to address much grammar in class due to his learners’ high level of proficiency. Thus, he based his teaching of grammar on the repeated mistakes of his learners on tests or in class.

The writing activities which Sindre used with his learners were analyses of poems and short stories and homework. He gave them instructions on how to perform the analyses in addition to assisting the learners that needed help. Sindre also delegated written homework

tasks based on a theme, such as Great Britain, or related to preparing the learners for a test. He enjoyed the use of homework tasks in order for the learners to be able to focus more on their language use, which he felt they did not necessarily have sufficient time for at school. He wanted to see if the homework tasks made the learners avoid their typical grammatical mistakes by giving them more time. However, Sindre did not evaluate the homework because he felt he only had time available to evaluate graded tests.

When I asked Sindre about the expectations related to grammar set by the school and state, he was aware of the general demands of the learners to be able to communicate, without any specific grammatical demands. He felt that the demands were appropriate, but that without grammar communication would be interrupted. Thus, he believed that the demands were not aimed at encouraging an intense grammar program but rather an implicit 'learning by doing' approach.

Sindre said that he would take into account what he had experienced this year and apply it to his teaching next year, teaching concord, formal writing, article use, and the differences of formality in contractions. He had not prepared any specific grammar this year because he did not know what to expect from his learners before the start of the year. In addition, he mentioned that this interview had helped him to reflect upon the subject of grammar.

Lucy (age 32)

Lucy had worked as an English teacher for three years at upper secondary school, at all three levels. Her education included an English bachelor, half a year at the University of Leeds studying 21st century literature, and a master in Literacy studies (not an English master, just conducted in English). Her first year studying English included two grammatical modules. She also had a one year pedagogical education and two seminars on assessment, one of which was conducted by Hellekjær.

Lucy had noticed that her learners were slightly more proficient grammatically and in general this year than her previous two years. In general, her learners obtained above average grades (4 or 5). Only 1-3 learners had an average graded of 3 and they were primarily foreign learners, meaning English was at least their third language. However, she was uncertain about what had caused the sudden increase in proficiency in her learners this year. She believed that her learners might be better 'intuitively' (implicitly) due to being exposed to more English input, such as reading or TV. However, she emphasized that her learners were much more proficient orally than in writing. Furthermore, they were more confident in their language

individually with the teacher than in class. She believed that the cause of their social fear of speaking English was an ‘extremely competitive school culture, it is all about being the best’.

Specifically, Lucy’s learners struggled grammatically with: concord, run on sentences, spelling, the spelling of the relative pronoun ‘which’, distinguishing between the adverb of time (then) and ‘than’ for comparison’, ‘it is/there is’, incorrect use of the semicolon and writing formally. She believed that the long sentences were a result of the computer age’s ‘stream of consciousness’, where the learners’ ‘syntactic delusion’ was that the longer the sentence the better, as they wrote down every thought. Her learners felt that the semicolon was the solution to everything. Thus, Lucy did not allow its use because she felt that explaining the rules was too complicated for them, and would come at the cost of the use of linking words and phrases.

Lucy expected that her learners should know the use of ‘basic structures’, such as subjects, verbs, and third person singular –s. She understood why they could not differentiate between ‘then’ and ‘than’ and why they made auxiliary verb mistakes. However, she wished that they could differentiate between the words ‘witch’ and ‘which’, because it was spelling-related, but at the same time something not worth focusing too much on. She expected them to know how to structure their sentences and to be able to communicate without too much disruption, although she always expected them to make mistakes.

Throughout the year, she had given grammatical presentations for her learners on the correct use of ‘there is/it is’, placement of auxiliary verbs, and ‘not to divide their infinitives’. She taught these points when it became relevant during the first semester based on the output of her learners. In the second semester she had planned to give grammatical task work.

Lucy did not consider teaching grammar before she knew what her learners struggled with because she felt she did not have time to teach them something they already knew. Thus, her learners had to make a written or oral mistake before she would approach it, because the learners changed each year and so did their mistakes. However, there had to be enough of her learners who struggled with the same errors in order for her to approach it in class; if not, she would approach grammar individually. In addition, Lucy mentioned that she felt that when she had worked 60%, instead of the 100% she was working during the interview, she had had a better understanding of her learners because then she had the time to perform more evaluations.

Lucy felt that lack of time was her biggest challenge when teaching grammar, in addition to time being a challenge in general. She felt that her learners were grateful for specific grammar related task work during a short school session, but that it took too much

time to prepare good and relevant examples for a specific grammatical aspect. In addition, to be able to explain it well enough, she needed to study the rules due to all the terminology. She was further challenged by her one-to-two-week-long writing projects, because she felt that grammatical instruction would interrupt the project, if introduced during a project. The writing projects usually consisted of her learners producing a longer text, which they were given feedback on prior to handing in a final-draft. However, immediately after her learners had handed in a piece of writing, she identified their grammatical problem areas and then approached her learners.

As can be clearly seen from the interview, Lucy preferred learners learning through writing, followed by correction. Lucy let her learners deliver texts prior to the final hand-in for correctional feedback. Primarily, she aimed at developing her learners' intuitive understanding by giving them correctional work with correct examples. However, every now and then when she felt that it was appropriate or that the learner had to get explicit instruction in order to understand, she would give short grammatical explanations.

When I asked Lucy about the general expectations set by the school and state, she said that she 'loves the teaching plan because it is so open' because she was an 'individualist and liked doing things her own way'. She believed that the open teaching plan benefitted the teachers with enough education but was uncertain about how much the learners benefitted from it. However, she believed that it benefitted the learners by having teachers who were motivated, engaged, and comfortable with their method and material. In addition, she was convinced that a teacher's familiarity with their own methodology would save them time, as they did not have to learn a new methodology to teaching and could more easily prepare themselves. She also thought that the general grammar competence requirement was too vague to be helpful for her learners.

Lucy felt that any method would come at the cost of 'one linguistic component'. Thus, if the grammar requirements had forced her to include 1-10 grammatical items, she would not necessarily consider it as something negative because she believed that she could incorporate it into her methodology. However, she felt that shifting the focus away from the detail oriented grammar opened for a broader focus on language and development of the cognitive abilities of her learners: reflection and argumentation.

Whether or not Lucy's learners spoke English in class varied to a great extent. However, she planned to not accept anything else than English in the second semester. The reason why her learners did not always speak English was because she felt that the competitive culture made it too uncomfortable for her learners to speak, which infuriated her.

On tests it was ‘of course’ mandatory for her learners to speak English but also when they read and discussed in pairs. She never taught any grammar related to oral performances because they ‘do not make oral mistakes’. Further, she emphasized to her learners that no matter how many mistakes they made, how much or little they participated in class, or what kind of accent they had in class, it would not affect their grades.

Lucy tried to always be a very good role model in regards of spoken and written English language. She said her oral language was very informal and her written language was very formal, a good example of how to structure sentences, ‘sentence length’, vocabulary use, and exemplifying the use of ‘may’ and ‘might’.

Her methodology to teaching was influenced by her previous teachers and her experience with the ‘bottom-up’ method, which had not worked particularly well for herself. Furthermore, she emphasized her belief that learners would acquire language faster through implicit acquisition of language and grammar, than if they had to acquire explicit grammatical structures before knowing its contextual use. Lucy said her method consisted of a mixture of implicit and explicit grammar teaching. However, it was mostly implicit, through reading projects (where they chose their own novel based on the level of their English proficiency), text production, and correction of text work. Explicit grammar instruction ‘involved only minor adjustments, primarily, given through correctional feedback’ and consisted of giving the correct answer and occasionally the reason as to why “this is correct”. Further, she said that she differentiated between errors and mistakes, although she corrected her learners on mistakes as well. However, if a mistake was repeated, she would approach the problem. Throughout a year, explicit teaching of grammar covered approximately 8-12% of her classes.

Other than Lucy’s one-to-two-week-long writing projects, she also conducted a large variety of other writing activities, such as a take-home assignment, task work done either individually or in pairs, reading and writing diaries, writing job applications, fill-the-gaps, and writing letters, résumé, informative, and reflective texts’. She used such a large variety of written work because she thought that writing which focused on meaning before form would develop her learners’ language skills the same way children learn their first language. In addition, she believed that by writing, especially by hand the learners would structure and communicate better in their texts. However, she did not feel that the teaching schedule accommodated writing by hand because there were ‘massive amounts that had to be done’. Specifically, she believed that writing longer texts helped her learners think and write in a more structured manner, aided memory, and created awareness of their own language

weaknesses. She had a great belief in reading but felt that it was completely necessary to write something relevant to the reading task such as analysis of poems or song lyrics.

Lucy stated that her learners ‘read a lot’. They often read formative informational texts, poems, or short stories out loud in pairs or smaller groups. In addition to her learners reading their own novels, short stories, or poetry by themselves as part of the reading project. She felt that the most important part of reading was that learners became more reflective and gained a larger vocabulary.

Lucy said that she was aware of previous experience being a factor, she even felt that her method ‘just barely worked sometimes because it seems as if they are too used to an explicit approach from previous schooling’. However, she saw the positive results of her teaching as her learners usually had a higher average grade than their peers from the same school. At the beginning of the year, they were not used to the method. That is why it took some time before her learners trusted this kind of implicit learning. ‘They become very competent, develop a larger vocabulary, and are able to express larger thoughts’. Specifically, she felt that how they worked with writing helped her learners implicitly, because it helped them remember the structure, style and content of a text.

Reflecting Lucy’s focus when teaching, she prioritized content over form when grading her learners. She wanted to ‘cultivate good citizens not grammarians’. Thus, she felt that it was more important for her learners to be good thinkers and feel safe with their reflective thoughts and arguments. However, she said that without grammar her learners could never be comfortable in their communication, although she felt that grammar was not a big issue with her learners. Therefore, she chose not to prioritize time for grammar and rather focus on developing learners with a mature and reflective way of thinking, because it was more difficult to teach and develop in her learners, required more time, and her learners had little prior experience with this way of teaching.

4.2 Learner interview summaries

Introduction

The present section presents summaries of five focus group interviews with 30 learners, divided into six learners per group. The interviews were conducted in Norwegian and later translated into English for the summaries. The learner interviews follow the order of the teacher interviews respectively. General agreement upon a subject among the learners is reflected in the generalization of ‘the learners’.

The summaries of the interviews do not strictly follow the structure of the interview guide. The interviews had to be simplified enough in order for the learners to understand, thus their answers were often short and simple. In addition, the conversational nature of the semi-structured focus group interviews did not always correspond to the interview guide.

Chloe's learners

Chloe's learners were all 16 years old, studying at an academic upper secondary school VG1 in Norway. Each of the six learners had lived in Norway their entire life without any interruption to their English education.

When asked about their opinion on Chloe's classes, the learners felt that the sessions with Chloe had very little variation as the classes were usually task-work based. Furthermore, a learner felt that he had gone down one grade due to a lack of oral activity in Chloe's class, which he had also experienced throughout major parts of lower secondary school. Thus, he wished that they could have more discussions in class and not only work on their own. The learners also felt that the task work they had was without any specific purpose, they were 'random tasks that we had to do'. Another learner felt that she wanted more writing tasks, writing longer texts and more individual oral presentations because she felt that not everyone worked equally well in groups. The learners also felt that they did not 'write sentences' or longer texts. Their experience was that they wrote short answers relevant to the task work, exempting a writing exercise in which the learners had to write a letter.

When I asked the learners what they felt about learning grammar, most of the learners stated that they felt that they could learn grammar better by reading a novel than through task work which included the possibility of checking the answers with their peers. Furthermore, one learner felt that the correctional feature on the computer could help, because it spotted the mistake and made him 'think twice' before he corrected it. Another learner felt that grammar was not as important to learn as long as one understood each other, without too many mistakes. Similarly, he felt that there was too much grammar focus on tests, which would reduce the overall grade of an otherwise very good text. A third learner felt that grammar was not as important in regards of the oral performance but if they were in a situation where they had to write a lot, it would have been more important to use grammar correctly.

The learners felt that they 'had perhaps learned a bit of grammar this year'. Specifically, they mentioned that they had looked at grammar and the use of 'it is/there is' in addition to affixes and 'new words', but they did not remember anything else.

With regards to the oral activities, which they felt there were too little of, a learner said that ‘the oral activities they had in Chloe’s class usually involved discussions relevant to post task work, nothing else’. The other learners did not show any signs of disagreeing with her even when asked directly.

The learners said that they read texts relevant to their task work, which involved various types of texts, such as their textbook, and the novel ‘Lamb to the Slaughter’. Some of the learners said that they would enjoy a larger focus on reading instead of task work.

One of the learners said that Chloe would correct them if she saw that they had made any mistakes when they went through the task work. Chloe pointed out grammatical mistakes by making them rethink what could be correct, before she would give them the correct answer. In addition, the learners emphasized that if they ever asked for help with grammar, she would always answer them. However, when the learners worked on grammatical task work, Chloe did not give individual feedback. Rather, she gave the correct answers collectively and if the learners’ answers were incorrect, they had to correct them. One of the learners emphasized that she was not satisfied with the feedback on oral performances that she had been given, because they did not get individual feedback on what they had done well or about their mistakes on their presentations. Similarly, one learner felt that average students might benefit more from the teacher’s feedback. However, if a learner was struggling or found the class easy, they might not have gotten the help needed.

When asked to explain about the types of activities done at various point of the lessons, one learner said that the beginning usually involved Chloe presenting or explaining something on the blackboard, power point or talking about some images. For example, she had explained the rules for ‘it and there is’ on the blackboard. Then, during the middle of the class, they progressed into task work relevant to the prior presentation or explanation. However, if a lot of the learners had the same errors, Chloe could approach grammatical instruction. The last part of the class would at times involve Chloe going through the task work on the blackboard by reciting the tasks and giving the learners the correct answers or let the learners work through the tasks because not everyone worked as fast. If there was any unfinished task work, the learners had to finish it at home. The learners also pointed out that they did not feel that there was much variation to what happened in Chloe’s class. However, one learner pointed out that at the start of the year they would also end the class through translational task work.

It was early in the year and the learners had had few evaluations. The learners felt that grammar did not affect their oral grade much. However, one learner mentioned that he felt that pronunciation affected their grade more than grammar did.

The learners felt that they did not think about grammar when they wrote. Rather, after finishing the text a few of them might go through the text and its grammar. One learner tried to be explicitly aware of his spelling but not all the time.

As for their speaking skills, the majority of the learners said that they did not consider grammar when they spoke because it went ‘automatically’ for them. One learner said that if he caught himself making an oral mistake, he would correct it. Another learner said that he ‘pictured the words in his head’ as he spoke if he noticed that he had made a mistake. However, another learner said that she at times thought about grammar when she spoke because when she wrote manuscripts for presentations she had to focus on grammar in order for it to be correct.

Marge’s learners

The majority of Marge’s learners were all 16-year-old males, studying to become electricians at a vocational upper secondary school VG1 in Norway. Four of the learners had lived in Norway their entire life without any interruption to their English education. There was one exception who was a 17-year-old immigrant, who spoke six languages as a result of having lived in various countries. In addition, another learner had dyslexia, although it had not interfered with his English education. There were six learners in total which were randomly selected from Marge’s class.

Four of the learners felt that fluency and comprehension were of greater importance than grammar, while two felt that grammar was equally important. They felt that they had learned some grammar so far, but emphasized that it was still the first semester of the school year.

Two of the learners said that they thought they would learn more from speaking than writing. However, in class they primarily talked in Norwegian (L1) unless they were reading texts out loud. One of the oral activities that they had had was a group activity in which they named the Norwegian, British English, and American English names of tools relevant to their occupation. However, one learner wanted even more vocational focus in their classes, specifically to expand his vocabulary. Another learner emphasized that he felt that he learned more from the oral activities than by reading.

The texts that the learners read were usually related to history; currently they were reading about the United States of America, but they also occasionally read vocational-related texts. At times they would read in class while the audio recording of the text was played. Although the learners felt that listening to the text while reading helped, it was difficult for them to ask for help if there were parts of the texts that they did not understand as the tape kept running and they could not stop it without resetting it. Thus, one of the learners felt that they would lose their concentration by either losing their focus on general meaning or by overly focusing on individual words and not keeping up with the text.

The learners said that Marge regularly used the webpage of their textbook 'Tracks'. One of the learners emphasized that he felt that he learned more from such digital tasks. The online activities involved tasks such as 'fill-the-gap', 'true or false', and small tests on reading comprehension. Apart from digital tasks, they had a written test where the learners had to write about a sport they enjoyed, why they liked it, why they did not like it, and what the rules were.

The learners said that Marge would help them with their grammar if they asked. When they asked, she would give them the correct answer or the tools to solve the problem themselves. However, one of the learners felt that he wanted more help with 'it is/there is', differentiating between the use of 'where' and 'when', and other grammar.

When asked to explain the beginning of the class, they said that the classes varied. If the learners were beginning on a new text they would start by reading the text with the help of an audio recording of the text and continue by working on content related task work, but also grammatical task work. Variations to the norm had been that they watched a movie and one time they worked on how to create a power point presentation. They had never had any grammatical explanation at the start of the class. The middle of the class usually involved content related or grammatical task work and if the learners finished the task work early, they would usually read 'CNN Learner News', which they had done two or three times so far. Everyone agreed that they finished the class by revisiting the task work with Marge.

The learners felt that grammar influenced their oral grade to varying degrees: 'yes, some', 'yes, it does', 'it influences quite a bit'. In addition, they commented that a person who had poor grammar would also be difficult to understand. Thus, one learner wanted more English oral activity in the classroom, such as discussions, but not necessarily presentations. He wanted to develop a more advanced vocabulary and felt that movies had helped him a bit with his vocabulary, in addition to prior explicit grammar in school.

One of Marge's learners emphasized that his main focus when writing texts was that he did not misspell anything by mixing letters. Two others commented that when they wrote on the computer, they did not consider grammar because they thought that the correctional program in Word would correct them if they made a mistake. However, they consistently made 20-30 mistakes, each time when they received their individual feedback on their texts.

When the learners received feedback, they said that Marge would take them out one by one and talk to them about what they had done and what they can improve on. In the feedback, Marge would point out the learner's grammatical mistakes but also whatever was relevant for the individual. The learners were happy with the feedback that they got and they felt that it was better than any previous experience they had had with any other teacher. Thus, they said that they would not change anything about the feedback nor about anything else in their English class.

Angelina's learners

Angelina's learners were mostly 16 year old males studying to become construction workers at a vocational upper secondary school VG1 in Norway, except from Steven, who was 20 years old. Each of the learners had lived in Norway their entire life without any interruption to their English education. The six learners that were randomly selected from Angelina's class were: Brad, Christian, Luis, Lucas, Steven, and Joe.

The learners said that their teacher primarily spoke Norwegian in class and for the learners it varied whether or not they spoke English. Some of the learners would occasionally reply in English, some would never reply in English, and some would always reply in English.

The learners found Angelina's English class educational, but wanted more diversity as they felt that the same routines became tedious. However, they only emphasized that they would like more movies as part of class and argued that they felt they would acquire language as a result of watching movies. The learners said that Angelina's class usually included quite a bit of reading, analysis, and preparing them for tests through writing tasks.

The learners said that they had had no grammar as part of class, and they felt that it would be useful to have it even though it was not particularly fun. Three of the learners emphasized that it would be useful in order to become more proficient and one commented further that it would be useful if they were to write more in the future. Thus, they felt that grammar could be useful, but that it was more important for them to be able to communicate orally as part of their vocational life. Furthermore, they felt that when they were supposed to

write in their professional life they could rely on correctional programs and ‘Google Translate’. Google Translate was used by three of the learners currently, primarily to translate a word from Norwegian to English. One learner commented that he wanted some more help with the use of the indefinite article as he usually chose depending on what sounded correct.

The learners said that they felt that English was important for them, especially for future use, although one of them jokingly added that it might be more important to learn Polish. All the learners felt that it was more important to be understood and to speak without too much hesitation than to be good at grammar.

The learners felt that they had learned some grammar this year based on the feedback given individually by their teacher on two of their texts, as part of two tests, but they had never had any grammatical instruction as part of the class. The grammatical feedback was given primarily orally but one of the learners emphasized that he had received both written and oral feedback on his grammar. The learners were also given feedback on their oral graded presentations, but none of the learners felt that they were given any grammatical feedback, except from one learner who had been given the comment that his grammar was ‘good’. However, they said that the feedback usually revolved around ‘how they talked and conversational flow’, and the structure of their sentences.

As for the topic of reading, the learners felt that they primarily read about different countries and -related topics, such as occupational safety and health (‘HMS’). They felt that reading provided them with information on a specific topic, but did not feel it had to do with their language skill.

When asked what the learners did normally at the start, middle, and end of class, the learners said that the start usually consisted of going through some informational text. They had never had any grammar at the beginning of the class, unless they were given individual feedback on a text. The middle part of the class usually involved task work relevant to the informational texts that they had read in their textbook. They would usually end the class by collectively revisiting the previous activities which they had finished.

The learners differed in the manner in which they thought about grammar while writing. The first learner said that he thought about grammar while writing and another said that the only time he felt like he was thinking about grammar was when he consulted the dictionary. The third learner said he would not think about grammar even if he struggled. And the fourth learner said that he never did it and said that it was likely due to him having an English family, which he had learned a lot from. However, none of the learners thought about grammar in spoken performance.

There were also different opinions on the degree to which grammar influenced their written grades. Two learners emphasized that it had quite a negative impact on their grades, while two other said that it was not Angelina's main focus, she rather focused on the structuring of their text through the use of paragraphs and the structuring of content.

Sindre's learners

Sindre's learners were all 16 years old, studying at an academic upper secondary school VG1 in Norway. The majority of the six learners had lived in Norway their entire life without any interruption to their English education, except from one who had lived in Iraq until the age of six.

The learners reported that both the teacher and learners usually spoke English in class. If a learner felt that they could not express themselves sufficiently in English, they were allowed to ask Sindre if they could say it in Norwegian. He would also encourage them to try but if they still did not manage, he would allow them to speak Norwegian.

The learners felt that when they spoke, they did not think much about grammar. However, two learners said that they thought a bit about grammar during spoken performance. Specifically, one thought about irregular verbs when he spoke, such as 'send and sent', but he felt that the thought process was quick enough that it did not hinder him.

The learners were divided and uncertain about their opinions on the usefulness of grammar. One emphasized that he felt that grammar was 'extremely boring', while another felt that there should be a greater focus on grammar because that was how it was in lower secondary school for him and it would especially help for writing purposes.

The learners said that they were given feedback digitally through 'It's learning' through comments on their texts. Primarily, the feedback focused on content and not as much on grammar. When Sindre gave feedback on grammar, he usually told them to either 'work on this at home or ask for help in class'. However, none of the learners felt that they needed any particular help with grammar and thus had not asked for help, except from one learner who wanted a bit more help with his sentence structure. Throughout the first semester they did not feel that they had learnt any grammar.

The learners felt that free flowing communication was more important than grammar, in order to avoid the use of the dictionary. However, one learner emphasized that the importance of grammar would vary depending on what kind of vocation each learner would chose. He said that if it was a vocation which involved writing reports or articles in English,

grammar would be useful - if not more useful than being able to speak with a high level of fluency.

Every Monday the learners read different kinds of text, only once from the textbook. The learners felt that by reading they could acquire implicit knowledge on how to structure their sentences and vocabulary, especially how to use words that they normally encounter through reading. In addition, a learner felt that through reading text composition 'sticks to your brain and it becomes natural' after having read a lot. However, one learner was uncertain in regards of the benefits of reading, other than the text being informational.

The learners said that Sindre usually started the class by writing on the blackboard what they were supposed to do that day and 'spent usually most of the start of class talking', although said with a hint of humor. The rest of the class was usually spent on written or oral task work in groups, such as oral discussion of a topic or working on a task revolving around analysis of texts, while finding various sources to use for the analysis.

In regards of their opinions about their English class with Sindre, they said that the classes were usually theme-based and the learners felt that they read perhaps too much, but were otherwise content with Sindre's classes. However, one learner felt that it could be beneficial if they wrote a bit more because it was after all their writing which would be evaluated on tests. Another learner emphasized that he felt he gained more from speaking as it required less time to cover a greater amount of information but felt that one might learn more if one devoted the time to writing.

As for assessment, the learners said that Sindre's demands in terms of grammatical accuracy depended on the level of formality required in the task. The learners felt that they themselves had a greater focus on grammar when writing because then they could 'see the mistakes'. They felt that a couple of grammatical mistakes would not influence their grade much, but if there were several repeated mistakes, it would affect negatively the overall impression of a text, which had good content. When the learners spoke, they said that there were no formal requirements. However, their oral grades had been deducted due to incorrect grammar.

Lucy's learners

Lucy's learners were all 16 years old, studying at an academic upper secondary school VG1 in Norway. Most of the learners had lived in Norway their entire life without any interruption to their English education, except Peter, who had lived in Norway the past thirteen years and

Rachel, who had lived in Norway the past ten years. The six learners that were randomly selected from Lucy's class were: Peter, Mark, Ross, Rachel, Monica, and Gloria.

The learners said that Lucy always spoke English in class and that they would occasionally reply in English because they had the option to choose. The reason why they did not want to reply in English was that they felt it was 'awkward' to reply in front of the whole class. However, a learner felt that when the teacher spoke English it expanded her vocabulary.

In regards of the learners' view of Lucy's classes, they felt that Lucy's English classes were educational and that the focus of the classes usually revolved around writing, for example how to write an analysis or how to write about literature. Lucy usually presented them with an outline on how to write a formal text on the blackboard.

The texts that they had read so far were poems, Shakespeare, lyrics, and their individual reading project, which involved a book of choice, usually a novel. In addition, they mentioned that they rarely used their textbook. One of the girls said that they did not read out loud, which she wanted more of. The learners did not feel that they read too much, even though the learners had a reading project. They were supposed to write a book analysis and present it for an oral grade. The learners had selected books which challenged them sufficiently in length and content that it meant that they had to read at home as well, in order to finish one book each semester and then select a new one for the next semester. However, they said that they did not read a lot when they were at home, not leisurely at least. They rather watched TV and listened to music, which they felt helped their vocabulary.

The learners felt that the benefit of reading would be that it helped their vocabulary and text structure. However, a learner emphasized that it might depend on the book, because he felt that had he chosen a book that he only understood 20% of, he would not gain anything from it. When asked whether or not Lucy had talked to them about the benefits of reading, they said that she had not mentioned anything.

The majority of the learners agreed upon the value of grammar and on whether they thought it should be included as part of their class. The learners felt that grammar was necessary in order to write well, but felt that being able to speak and write with a high level of fluency was more important than being grammatically correct. They felt that they had not learned any grammar so far this year, other than having worked on formal writing, and specifically on formal vocabulary. However, they felt that it might be necessary to focus more on grammar in order to assist them with their writing, especially, due to the large focus on writing in class. Another learner commented that he felt he did not need more grammar after seven years of it previously, as he felt proficient in regards of grammar.

The learners said that the only way Lucy actively helped them with their grammar was when they were given feedback on their texts. The feedback would show the correction of the mistake alongside a comment about it. However, the comment would not involve any grammatical rules or an explanation as to why Lucy's answer was correct. They were quite satisfied with the feedback they were given, as they knew what it would require of them in the correctional procedure.

The learners' typical English class involved starting the class with Lucy talking about what they were supposed to work on, initiating content-related class discussion, and answering a few questions. The middle part of class usually involved learners pairing up for task work, a five minute break after the first hour, followed by individual work. They emphasized that their classes were very varied and thus it was difficult to point out any common patterns, as they could one day work in pairs restructuring a text and the next they would work alone for two whole hours. However, they read each Friday for the first hour, followed by work that had to be completed by the end of the week. 'The classes varied from copying what Lucy wrote on the blackboard to reading Shakespeare'. The learners agreed that the variation was a positive thing.

In regards of an oral grade, the learners felt that Lucy focused on and expected them to be grammatically correct, to be concrete when they spoke, and to pronounce clearly - 'no mumbling'. None of the learners thought about grammar when they spoke.

The learners were divided about whether or not they thought about grammar when they wrote. One never considered grammar when writing because he wrote 'that which felt natural', reflecting an implicit approach to grammar in writing. Three learners always started their writing without thinking about grammar, but revised the text afterwards to spot grammatical mistakes, while one of them specifically looked at only her use of the present forms of the verb 'to be'. However, one of the learners said that she thought a lot about grammar when she wrote, because she had previously had issues with grammar being repeatedly emphasized in her feedback.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The present chapter discusses the findings of the teacher and learner interviews. Both interesting individual findings and trends found across the interviews are interpreted in relation to the relevance of the research questions, regarding current English grammar teaching methodologies and teacher cognition (beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and practices) at academic VG1, vocational VG1, and VG2, in Norway, and subsequently the learners' response to their teacher's methodology.

The present section is divided into two main sections: 'Methodologies and teacher cognition' and 'learner response'. 'Methodology and teacher cognition' gives an overview and cognitive reflection on the L2 English grammar teaching methodologies encountered in the interviews. Furthermore, it compares the methods of the teachers to that of second language grammar teaching theory. 'Learner response' discusses the opinions of the learner on their teacher's methodology.

5.2 Methodology and teacher cognition

5.2.1 Learner context and grammatical presentation

The teachers selected for this research reflected a large variety of methodologies on how and why teachers in Rogaland, Norway, taught grammar throughout the 2013/2014 school year in upper secondary academic VG1 and vocational VG1 and VG2 schools. Thus, this section gives a presentation of their methodologies, approaches, techniques, and cognitive beliefs. However, it is important to note that the teachers said that they did not spend much time on grammar and that the learners' grammatical acquisition primarily came as a result of a secondary aim to a primary task, such as reading or writing.

The learner context was an important part of each teacher's cognition and influenced the position of grammar in their classroom as part of their methodology. The most common and crucial variable for how the teachers taught was the learners' level of English proficiency, although they were also influenced by learner interests. Marge and Angelina were the two most outspoken about the learner context and its impact on how they taught grammar. Both had vocational learners with 'extreme' differences in English proficiency. Furthermore, the majority of these learners had different reasons as to why they struggled with learning English, and subsequently, English grammar – some had mild to severe learning difficulties, some had English as a third or even sixth language, and some simply dreaded or hated the English subject altogether due to different personal reasons. Therefore, both vocational

teachers felt that in order to be able to include every learner they had to sacrifice certain aspects of teaching and adapt according to the learner context. For example, they had almost no explicit grammatical activities because they felt they would be inefficient due to the learners' low level of proficiency and disinterest for learning explicit grammatical rules.

Furthermore, the two vocational teachers felt that their learners' ability to communicate in a vocational setting had to be prioritized in combination with a focus on content. Although sacrificing explicit grammar in order to focus on communication might sound slightly contradictory, especially, since neither the learners nor teachers spoke much English in their class, both teachers reported that they had integrated grammar as part of other language activities, teaching grammar implicitly. Further, their implicit approach towards grammar reflects upon the view of Rod Ellis (Pihlstrøm, 2013:40), that students should only learn grammar when the teacher knows that the learners are ready for it. Thus, based on Rod Ellis' statement, Marge and Angelina's cognitive reasoning may be argued to be appropriate choices because their aim or expectation was not necessarily at the learners' correct use of grammar, but at the educational process of giving their learners the necessary tools required to produce understandable output. It may not be the ideal aim for any teacher, but it might certainly be a realistic one in order to address the learner context. Furthermore, it may be argued that Krashen's (1988, as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013:39) claim that learners should only be taught explicit grammar when they reach upper secondary school, may be considered out of context because the theory does not relate to a learner context in which the average learner is below state expectations. Thus, the vocational teachers' argument that the majority of their learners were not at the level of proficiency expected of upper secondary learners may be supported by the theory of Ellis and Krashen, as the learners might not be analytically minded enough to be exposed to explicit grammar. Thus, a learning situation which only provides explicit grammatical explanations based on a teacher's cognitive evaluation of its necessity for the individual learner may be, considering circumstances, appropriate. Marge would most certainly stand by such a statement and, similarly, Angelina felt that the learner context was of utmost importance to any teacher.

On the other hand, the academic teachers also considered their learner context when teaching grammar, but had primarily learners who were, seemingly, above or at the expected level of English proficiency of upper secondary learners in Norway. They only had a few learners who struggled, primarily foreign learners. English was at least their third language, but they still delivered at least average grades. Based on an evaluation of the academic learner context in comparison to Krashen and Rod Ellis' statements above, they would presumably

support the teaching of explicit grammar with the academic learners. However, how much explicit grammar may be difficult to claim. According to theorists such as Ur (1991), Pihlstrøm (2013), and Swan (as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013), whether grammar should be taught or how much depends on the learner context. Hence, there is no one answer which may generalize across three learner contexts.

Furthermore, when asked if they taught grammar, most of the teachers answered based on how often they presented grammar, and upon this assumption most replied that they did not teach much grammar or any grammar at all. This could suggest the teachers expected explicit grammar to be the primary focus of this research, or that the teachers themselves might not have been cognitively aware, at the time, of the teaching of grammar through implicit approaches, even though they later commented on the acquisition of grammar as a result of input or output. It might suggest that although they were aware of it, they had not thought about it as a secondary aim to a primary task. However, it is very speculative, as only Lucy mentioned that she had knowledge of both implicit and explicit acquisition of grammar, while the other teachers reflected upon it without the terminology.

When presenting grammar one of the first things a teacher has to choose from is whether to present it through a deductive or inductive approach. According to Ur (1991:82), a teacher should choose based on the learners, whether they are able to perceive and define the rules themselves or if they need the rules presented. However, the teachers did not mention whether they considered the use of an inductive approach, only using the deductive approach when teaching explicit grammatical knowledge. In regards of the vocational teachers, the learner context would likely be best supported by a deductive approach. However, the academic teachers could further evaluate their learners, but with a quite high certainty that both approaches may work.

Based on the findings of the interview, Chloe taught explicit grammar frequently compared to the rest, and the other academic teachers taught grammar collectively in class when a majority of their learners made the same mistakes, but also individually if deemed necessary. However, Chloe taught explicit grammatical even though it contradicted with what she believed to be the most beneficial method of teaching grammar. She felt that her learners would benefit much more from a larger focus on reading or writing exercises, similar to Lucy's methodology, than the presentation of explicit grammatical rules and relevant task work. Chloe did not follow her conviction because she felt that there was not enough time in order to teach grammar through reading and writing activities. Furthermore, she had identified that her learners struggled with applying the rules to written activities and subsequent task

work after acquiring them from Chloe's grammatical presentations, a point addressed by Ur (1991) and Hasselgård (2001, as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013:41-42). Hasselgård claims that it is partly due to the learners seeing grammar exercises as a separate unit within the English course. However, she believes it can be addressed in the form of reading activities aimed at locating the same specific grammatical elements.

Lucy and Sindre had quite similar arguments as to why they had chosen to not teach (much) explicit grammar, because their learners had a very high level of English proficiency (and expected a high level of proficiency based on the admission levels of their school, which was 4,6, on a scale of 1-6). Thus, both felt that their learners did not necessarily need explicit grammar, even though the research of Rod Ellis (Pihlstrøm, 2013:40), Krashen's (1988, as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013:39) Ur (1991), and Hasselgård might suggest otherwise. Lucy explained further that she did not want to focus on grammar because she prioritized developing her learners' cognitive abilities, such as reflection and argumentation. This, she felt, was a much more challenging task for her and more important and rewarding for the learners. In addition, she also felt that creating grammar related task work based on the individual learner would require too much time to prepare. The development of the learners' cognitive abilities and the understandable implication that teachers have a limited amount of time is regrettably outside the scope of this paper. Furthermore, Lucy's method can be understood in the light of Krashen's view (1988, as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013:39-46) that there is no relationship between formal grammar and the ability to write. Thus, similar to the method of Lucy, Krashen advocates exposure to as much input as possible, which she provided in the form of reading, although she also provided her learners with a lot of output in form of writing activities. Thus, one may argue that she did indeed promote the learning of implicit grammar with her learners appropriate to the Krashen's views, albeit without a focus on explicit grammatical instruction.

On the other hand, Sindre seemed aware of potential weaknesses, due to his inexperience, in his method of teaching English as a second language and his approach to grammar. However, this year he taught explicit grammar based on his notion that the majority of his learners were of a very high level of proficiency and that he had no prior knowledge of common mistakes among learners similar to his. Thus, he had chosen to not prepare any explicit grammar because he felt his learners did not need it, unless he noticed that a majority of his class made the same mistakes. This contrasted with his beliefs that the learners could benefit greatly from explicit grammar based on the needs of the individual, and that correct tasks would give the learners a sensation of mastery and further encourage them to learn.

However, he felt challenge by the lack of interest from his learners and finding or creating appropriate task work which would engage the learner when teaching explicit grammar. Although the views of the theorists above may not reflect the methodology of how Sindre taught grammar, it was nothing that he was not aware of and prepared to change, as he found the interview functioned to make him reflect upon his current methodology for teaching English as a second language. Furthermore, the other teachers reflected upon the importance of their experience, which may give insight into how any inexperienced teacher may struggle with a learner context, which they were unaware of while planning their first year. Hence, Sindre, and Lucy, had planned to possibly incorporate and prepare more explicit presentations of grammar next year, based on the common mistakes of their learners this year. Similarly to Lucy, Sindre exposed his learners to large amounts of input through either reading or oral exercises, which may be considered appropriate in the view of Krashen (Ibid) as part of implicit acquisition of grammar.

What can be mentioned is that both Lucy and Sindre felt that, if they had the time, appropriate task work may be beneficial for their learners in terms of learning explicit grammar. However, one may reflect upon the statement made by Chloe, in line with Hasselgård's (2001, as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013:41-42) claim, that she had noticed that her learners struggled with transferring the application of the relevant rules to any other written work. Thus, Hasselgård's (Ibid) claim may support the fact that Lucy and Sindre did not use grammatical tasks with their learners, unless the task work would also be combined with meaningful reading activities aimed at locating the same grammatical rules or as part of the communicative activities used by Lucy and Sindre. This could also mean that Hasselgård's claim would suggest that Chloe could benefit from applying meaningful reading activities aimed at locating relevant grammatical rules.

5.2.2 Feedback

Even though each teacher said that they did not include much explicit grammar as part of their method for teaching English as a second language for upper secondary learners, the common agreement among the majority of the teachers was that they used feedback as their most important tool to address both explicit and implicit grammar, and specifically the individual grammatical needs of any learner. The teachers had chosen to not differentiate between errors and mistakes when they gave written feedback. Lucy's explanation may give a general indication of why they did not address the differences between errors and mistake when giving feedback. Lucy said that when she had a 60% teacher position she felt she had a better

understanding of what each learners' mistakes were because she had fewer learners and more time available to evaluate her learners, presumably making the identification process easier. Thus, a plausible explanation is that differentiating between errors and mistakes was too time consuming for the teachers, who already felt time was an issue. Furthermore, Ur (1991:85-86) mentioned that identifying the differences between errors and mistakes was a difficult task, which may have influenced why the teachers did not differentiate between errors and mistakes because it required more of them. Although the teachers felt that some mistakes were more important than others, they did not mention whether they identified the grammatical mistake's severity based on the frequency or its effect on meaning. Thus, the teachers did not give clear indications to their learner about which mistakes were of higher priority, unless they emphasized it as part of a personal comment at the end of the feedback or for the teachers who conducted interactional feedback.

Similar to Ur's (1991:86-87) suggestion, some of the teachers used feedback as a tool to identify common grammatical mistakes that their learners struggled with, but rather than addressing the common mistakes in the feedback they approached the issues through presenting explicit grammar. Additionally, how the teachers had approached feedback, contradicted with Ur's (1991:86) suggestion that it may be important to identify and create awareness about the learner's mistakes in accordance with its effect on meaning rather than mistakes. However, Ur (Ibid:85-87) points out that feedback is a common and important tool to deal with grammar teaching, in the appropriate context, and the manner in which the feedback is given influences the acquisition process, which were reflected in the statements of the teachers.

The teachers generally used feedback as a means to teach grammar and handle the individual grammatical needs of their learners. The teacher's grammatical feedback primarily involved reformulating the learner's work or eliciting correctional work on all written mistakes and errors without presenting the learners with explicit grammatical rules. Explicit grammatical rules were given dependent on whether the teacher found it necessary for a learner in a given situation, which was rarely. In addition, the teachers' feedback also incorporated feedback on structure, content, and language. All the teachers gave written feedback on the graded textual work of their learners, which was usually followed by correctional work for the learner. The frequency of feedback varied based on the individual teacher as every teacher based their feedback on the correction of graded written texts or graded oral presentations. For example, Chloe gave interactional feedback to her learners every three months, which reflected on their past mistakes, in addition to feedback on each

graded test. Comparably, Marge and the other teachers gave feedback on each of the tests each semester or in regards of any graded situation, approximately three times each semester. Furthermore, a common point among the teachers was that they wanted the learners to revisit the feedback again prior to their next test or exam. Unique to Lucy was that she also gave textual feedback on the learner's texts prior to final hand-in of her writing projects.

Nassaji and Fotos (2011:71-72) emphasized the importance of interactional feedback for language acquisition, such as the interactional feedback given by Chloe, Marge, and Angelina on their learners' graded tests and Sindre in communicative context. According to Nassaji and Fotos, interactional feedback revolved around a dialogue between the teacher and a learner, which provided the learner with either negative or positive evidence based on the learner's output. Negative and positive evidence provided, respectively, the learner with information regarding their erroneous or correct use of the target language and could be given during a communicative task or after both oral and written tasks (Ibid:72, 79). In addition, a majority of researchers agreed that adult L2 learners could not reach native-like accuracy based on only positive evidence or models of grammatical input. Two researchers that supported interactional feedback were Pica (1994) and Long (1996). Pica (1994, as cited Nassaji and Fotos, 2011:73) suggested that the interactional feedback's negotiation of meaning supported L2 acquisition in three ways: by making messages comprehensible, by enhancing L2 input, and by facilitating the production of modified output. Similarly, Long (1996:451-452, as cited in Nassaji and Fotos, 2011:73) proposed that negotiation for meaning facilitated acquisition 'because it connected input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways'.

The reported interactional feedback strategies used by four of the teachers can be organized under two subcategories: reformulations and elicitations. Reformulations rephrased the learner's erroneous output and provided the correct form. Elicitations tried to prompt the learner directly or indirectly to self correct, without giving the correct form. Reformulations were the most common feedback strategy used by Chloe, Marge, and Angelina and primarily used in regards of post written test work. They gave interactional feedback through a conversational approach with the individual learner. The teachers' conversations with a learner were usually based on a textual overview of the learner's mistakes on a written task, and subsequently focused on what the learner had to do in order to correct their mistakes. Explicit grammatical positive evidence would only be presented if the teacher deemed it necessary as a tool to facilitate acquisition. On the other hand, interactional feedback given on the learners' oral presentations was primarily given without any additional text based

feedback and would rarely include grammatical correction on their oral performances. However, Sindre would occasionally provide his learners with interactional feedback, he used both reformulation and elicitation strategies through negotiation strategies such as confirmation checks and clarification requests during oral interaction. He emphasized that he tried to conceal any form of direct feedback in order for the learner to not feel inadequate or intimidated because he wanted to encourage correction and acquisition and not discourage the learner's activity.

5.2.3 Task work

The teachers had different approaches to teaching English as a second language but everyone had task work as a common technique. However, the phrase 'task work' could be considered ambiguous and involved massive amounts of different types of tasks with different educational aims. Furthermore, most teachers would have had numerous types of task work available at their disposition, especially from their textbook. Three of the teachers reported that they had used task work aimed at grammar acquisition and two reported considerations to implement grammatically aimed task work, sometime in the future. The interviews for this paper included task work which were aimed at grammatical acquisition, such as the most frequently employed and more mechanically aimed fill-the-gap task work. Although the teachers may have used more communicative task work, they never mentioned grammatical acquisition as a result of them. The task work whose aims and procedures were not clearly defined by the interviewees can be assumed to have had grammar as a secondary aim, assisting the learners with grammar in an implicit manner, and would primarily have focused on writing activities aiming at for example the acquisition of informational content.

The interviews revealed that only Chloe and Marge used grammar-related task work with their learners regularly. They used slightly different types of task work and in different manners. Chloe used what she considered 'traditional' task work, which included translational and fill-the-gap task work. Task work was typically used by Chloe following explicit grammatical presentations in order to expose the learners to a practical use of an explicit grammatical rule. Richards' (1999, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:161) statement regarding pre-teaching situational linguistic forms supports Chloe's presentation of grammatical rules prior to the task work. The grammatical rules presented by Chloe familiarize the learners with solving the task, which reduced the cognitive complexity of the task work for the learner. Furthermore, her learners usually worked individually or in pairs and usually on hand written task work because Chloe believed that it was better in order to

stimulate learner acquisition of information (Thus, she rarely used online task work and preferred the use of hand written task work). When asked if she felt that task work would benefit the individual proficiency of a learner, Chloe said that her stronger learners would benefit by getting enough work, not wasting time in class by having nothing to do. The weaker learners would not necessarily be able to finish their task work during class but had the option to receive an answer sheet if they wished to finish later. Furthermore, she used task work as one way of testing her learners' grammatical knowledge. Richards (Richards and Renandya, 2002:154) discredits the 'Presentation-Practice-Production' approach which focused on form, stating that it does not carry much credibility in linguistics or psychology. The reason is that Chloe's traditional translation and fill-the-gap task work focused on the formation of correct examples of language, production of language as evidence of learning, explicit knowledge, monitored language, and practicing small samples of language, which did not require authentic communicative language (Ibid. 154-155). Further, Krashen (1988, as cited in Ibid:39) claimed that there is no relationship between formal grammar study and the ability to write.

Chloe stated that she had identified a possible weakness in regards of task work. Although her learners were able to complete their grammar related task work they would in general struggle with applying the rule if they were to write a text, even if it was the next day. Hilde Hasselgård (2001, as cited in Pihlstrøm, 2013:41-42) also identified the same issue and claimed that it was partly because the learners saw grammar exercises as a separate unit within the English course. Even though Hasselgård (Ibid) believed the learners' struggle to transfer the explicit rule to a text could be addressed in the form of meaningful reading activities aimed at locating the same specific grammatical elements, researchers (see above) discredits the value of traditional task work as part of the 'Presentation-Practice-Production' approach. Thus, research may support Chloe's assumption that there may be a weakness to her approach, in regards of her learners' ability to transfer what they have learned into a communicative context. Furthermore, her approach may be scrutinized because of her criteria for the way she taught through presenting explicit grammatical rules and relevant task work. Her explanation was that she felt bad if she did not teach some explicit grammar and further felt that she did not have the time to conduct her class in a manner which she felt would be more beneficial for her learners. Similarly to the findings above, the research may suggest that the manner in which she approached grammar through task work may not be optimized, as both the teacher and learners emphasized its flaws. One may then suggest that teachers may

benefit from courses on approaches, methods, or techniques that are more appropriate to their cognition, assuming that it would be possible within the class schedule.

Contrary to Chloe, Marge had chosen not to present grammatical explanations before task work due to prior experience at the start of her teaching career. She had then approached task work and grammar teaching through grammatical presentation followed by relevant task work. However, she felt that it did not facilitate acquisition because her learners lacked 'basic' grammatical knowledge, indicating that their implicit knowledge surpassed their explicit. Furthermore, Marge felt that the benefits of task work depended on the individual learner context, as some were more inclined individual task work and other to educational games or social educational approaches. Thus, She used her learners' interested in computers, teaching through online task work, such as fill-the-gap and multiple choice techniques focusing on the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar. The task work was primarily provided online by their textbook 'Tracks for yrkesfag' but also from other web pages. The online task work was automatically checked, in addition to how some online task work allowed Marge to access the work of her learners during task work. Thus, the auto correct of the computer encouraged correctional work but also gave Marge the option to intervene or for her learners to ask for help. In addition, Marge had mentioned that she would give appropriate task homework based on the feedback they were given on tests, albeit she did not mention which type of task work or if it was grammar related.

Although Marge used task work similar to Chloe, Marge conducted her classes on a completely different premise than Chloe, as she did not particularly focus on explicit grammatical acquisition, but on the acquisition of linguistic abilities, such as implicit grammar. Furthermore, she primarily based it on facilitating acquisition of language and implicit grammar through a variation of educational approaches, which were primarily aimed at retaining the attention and interest of a learner. One might assume that Richards (1999, as cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:154) supports Marge's task work, as they inherit similar traits to TBL, as Marge focused on the acquisition of natural language, implicit knowledge, and automatic performance. Richards contradicts this with traditional grammar-focused activities, similar to Chloe's, which do not require authentic communicative language (Ibid.).

Angelina did not incorporate grammar related task work as a technique to how she taught. She would only give task work to the individual learners who were interested in progressing. The task work was usually based on the feedback they had been given on their tests, such as task work on the correct use of articles. She did not specify the typical type of

task work used, likely because the type of task work would depend on the individual situation, and because it rarely occurred.

Lucy did not use grammar-related tasks in her classes. Even though she stated that she thought that her learners would be grateful for specific task work during a short school session, as she had used non-grammatical fill-the-gaps and other task work the first semester. Additionally, she had decided to not use grammar related task work because it took too much time to prepare good and relevant examples for a specific grammatical aspect. In addition, to be able to explain it well enough it took her time to re-educate herself in regards of the terminology.

Similarly to Lucy, Sindre had chosen to not use grammar-related task work because grammar was not a part of his focus and he felt it was unnecessary due to his learners' high level of English proficiency. He had only considered using feedback-related task work directed at grammar in the future because he felt that grammar was very useful for the individual learner. He felt that feedback-related task work would give his learners a sense of mastery that would likely make them more inclined to learning grammar, in addition to its educational benefits. He assumed this would also be applicable in L2 context, primarily because of his experience with teaching it in Norwegian (L1) context. However, he had used written homework tasks related to specific content or a theme because he wanted to see if the additional time available meant that his learners avoided their typical grammatical mistakes. He also conducted other theme- and content-related task work in class.

5.2.4 Integrating grammar with work on language skills

All the teachers felt that reading could assist the acquisition general linguistic knowledge, such as grammar and the structuring of texts, vocabulary, and other. The academic teachers felt especially strong about the benefits of reading and used texts such as novels, short stories, poems, lyrics, and informational texts, exposing their learners to large amounts of reading. The vocational teachers knew the benefits of reading but spoke little of the benefits in regards of their learners, as they perhaps felt the acquisition of grammar an unrealistic or neglected. They focused primarily on the adaptation of reading to a learner context that struggled with reading, severely reducing the amount of input possible through reading. They said that whole novels would certainly not be used, but adapted the reading through the use of excerpts from longer texts, such as novels, and reading short stories, poems, lyrics, and informational texts in order to expose their learners to written input. However, Angelina emphasized that her focus was on the acquisition of content and less on the acquisition of grammar.

Although the majority of the teachers felt that grammar was an important component in writing, most did not state anything specific about the acquisition of grammar as a result of writing, except from the grammatical writing activities and correctional work that followed feedback. This may indicate that they did not view writing as an activity in which learners may acquire grammatical knowledge from or as insignificant in the acquisition of grammar, implicitly or explicitly. In general, the teachers can be said to have focused on a large variety of content-based task work, but also on grammar-related task work, preperational writing activities on how to structure texts, and analysis of poems, lyrics, and short stories. Although it may seem obvious, the teachers found writing important and strived to make their learners as proficient as possible. However, the teachers reflected that writing was a time-consuming activity, which did not necessarily allow them to include writing activities frequently enough, and give proper feedback in the manner which they thought may be optimal. The contrast is clearest in Chloe's practice versus her beliefs; she said that she would prefer to focus more on writing and reading as a measure to acquire better grammar, structure, and other linguistic abilities implicitly. However, she felt impaired by the restraints of time and thus taught explicit grammar in a manner which she was unconvinced about and had recognized weaknesses in.

The exception was Lucy, who focused a lot of her teaching on writing projects. Although we did not delve too deeply into the specifics of her writing projects, she said that she believed that writing which focused on meaning before form would develop the language skills of her learners in the same manner as children would learn their first language. Furthermore, she believed that writing longer texts helped her learners to think and write in a more structured manner, aided memory, and created awareness of their linguistic weaknesses. She also felt that reading benefitted her learners greatly when it was combined with writing.

As for oral input and output, the general pattern was that the teachers did not specifically indicate that their learners would improve grammatically as part of the spoken input and output, but that the learners would improve linguistically in general. The teachers emphasized that their learners were much more proficient in spoken than written English, and that grammar was an issue for the academic learners, especially since they felt grammar was not as strict in the spoken language. Furthermore, the primary focus of the teachers seemed to be making the learners comfortable with speaking English, and whether or not the teachers spoke the L2 or the learners were expected to speak was based on a contextual evaluation of the learners. Both vocational teachers did not expect their learners to speak English in class and they did not predominantly do it either. Both felt that if they spoke English in class it

would hinder learner comprehension and subsequent content acquisition. In addition to a lack of proficiency among the learners, Marge indicated that she did not expect it of her learners because they were far from comfortable with speaking in front of the whole class. However, they expected them to speak English in smaller group situations, such as reading in pairs or graded situations.

On the other hand, Lucy always spoke English because she wanted to immerse her learners in language, adapting her language to what she would consider exemplary for her learners. However, she did not require her learners to speak English because they were also uncomfortable with speaking in a large classroom setting. The reason was not a lack of proficiency, but the ‘overly-competitive’ classroom culture of their school, which Lucy ‘hated’. However, she would expect everyone to participate orally the last semester.

Chloe and Sindre always spoke English and expected their learners to speak English regardless of the activity, and if their learners did not want to, they would encourage them to try. The only occasional exception for Sindre was when highly prioritized information and difficult terminology could hinder the acquisition of important information. Unique to Sindre was that he would occasionally give interactional feedback through negotiation of meaning to his learners based on erroneous statements, as he thought it hid the correction and did not deter future participation. Furthermore, he also encouraged his learners through a reward system that gave the learners who had participated sufficiently the possibility to improve their grade.

An interesting point to be made was that although the teachers had different approaches to their oral activity in their classroom, the teachers who did not expect their learners to speak gave the same reason: that it would have created a too uncomfortable situation for their learners. Furthermore, the teachers who spoke English only if their learners could comprehend the oral input they received, without hindering acquisition of content to a greater deal. Thus, the learner context influenced the teachers the most when deciding on the role of spoken English in their class.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training’s learner goals for spoken communication in the curriculum does not emphasize any specific claims that the learners should be able to produce language within a social or group setting. Although the learner goals emphasize that the learner should be able to ‘evaluate and use suitable listening and speaking strategies for the purpose and situation’ (www.udir.no), such a situation is generalized which cannot be specified as either dialog or larger social settings. However, the listening skills of the learners require that they are able to ‘understand the main content and

details of different types of oral texts about general and academic topics related to one's education programme'. However, these are the goals after finishing the academic VG1, not during, and the vocational learners have these as their requirements from VG1 to VG2. Furthermore, the vocational teachers emphasized that the majority of their learners were unable to fulfill the expectations set by the state, which they had to consider.

The benefits of the teachers' integration of language skills and the acquisition of grammar can be understood in light of the language acquisition theory by Richards (1999, cited in Richards and Renandya, 2002:157-160). The acquisition of language, and subsequently grammar, is based on the learners' experiences. Although there are acquisition processes in which a teacher cannot influence, there are two which are facilitated primarily by the teacher: input and experimental output. Input is the first stage of the learning process, which consists of the language sources that initiate the learning process such as reading or teacher based presentations of grammar (Richards and Renandya, 2002:157). Although the teachers did not mention that they facilitated the acquisition of grammar in any of content or linguistic activities that did not focus on grammar, the majority were aware that exposure to input and production of output may lead to acquisition. The theory suggests that the recognition of language patterns in input or output may eventually lead to the acquisition of implicit or explicit grammatical rules. There were slightly varying patterns in regards of the teachers' preferred choices of type of input, but they all adapted the input to accommodate the varying levels of learner proficiency. This made the process of intake and acquisition easier for the learner, which is the process of linguistic input being comprehended and attended to by the learner and then incorporated into their interlanguage (Richards and Renandya, 2002:158). If a learner is unable to acquire correct language based solely on the input, experimental output is considered vital to the acquisition of language, and subsequent grammar by researchers such as Tarone and Liu (1995, pp. 12, 121, cited in Swain, 1998:11).

Similarly to input, experimental output is facilitated through the process of intake, acquisition, and the ability to remember and apply the input. The assumption is that if the learner is unable to produce correct output, the learner may test their hypothesis about language through output, and by pushing their limit they may come closer to target-like language (Richards and Renandya, 2002:160). The experimental output activities which the teachers used was adapted to the learners' proficiency and consisted primarily of oral communicative activities or written task work. Thus, a teacher may create a situation which challenges the learner's current interlanguage, the inability to produce sufficient meaning forces the individual to produce output based on his/her hypothesis about the target language

(Ibid). Swain's statement that creating a context which pushes the linguistic abilities of a learner in order to produce target-like language, could be considered an uncomfortable situation for some learners, such as the with the vocational learners' or Lucy's learners' context, who did not have to speak English. Although it may prevent some acquisition, the three teachers saw creating a comfortable situation as more important, but still used reading aloud, written task work and other experimental output. On the other hand, Chloe and Sindre would actively encourage their learners to try in situations where their learners felt their interlanguage was challenged.

Research done by Pihlstrøm (2013), Nassaji and Fotos (2011), and Ur (1991) on language and grammatical acquisition suggest that responding to the learner context influences the likelihood of acquisition among learners. Pihlstrøm (2013:40) refers to the respective statements of Swan and Rod Ellis that learners vary greatly in their response to grammar and that the teacher should decide when the learners are ready to learn grammar. Furthermore, Ur (1991:cf) and Nassaji and Fotos (2011:cf) suggest that teachers should teach according to the learner context and apply the appropriate strategy with a high level of instructional quality. These authors suggest that the learner context and quality of instruction are pivotal to the successful acquisition of grammar. Hence, it is important to create awareness among teachers of various theoretical approaches and let the teachers make the difficult choice to evaluate theory against context and apply what they consider the appropriate choice. However, any teacher has to further evaluate whether they are capable of teaching their chosen approach with a high enough instructional quality.

The overall grammatical focus of the teachers was on the acquisition of grammar implicitly, through input or output, which is supported by communicative language teaching, and there is no doubt that the learners may acquire language and grammar through the methods, approaches, and techniques used by the teachers, such as CLT, which depends on immersing learners in meaningful and natural communicative tasks, similar to the desire of Lucy, requiring negotiation of meaning through, for example, discussion, communication games, or other group activities (Richards and Renandya, 2002:154). However, a tendency appeared that there was seemingly an expectation from the teachers that their learners should have, ideally, acquired all the grammar that there was to learn prior to entering upper secondary school, or at least the grammar relevant for schooling at this level. Any further grammatical acquisition, beyond the point which was expected of them, was primarily left to implicit acquisition, for example, through corrective feedback or reading, unless it was a common problem among the majority of the learners. Thus, the teachers' focus appears to

have shifted away from creating new meaning through the acquisition of new grammatical structures at a higher level. The aim of grammar instruction in upper secondary schools does not seem to have been clearly defined and the teachers might be further challenged by the learners' implicit knowledge of grammar being much larger than their explicit knowledge, which may be natural. However, this might impede the teachers, as was the case with Marge who had to stop teaching explicit grammar at the start of her career because her learners did not know basic grammatical terminology, a foundation that she felt was needed.

Furthermore, it seems as if the learners were not provided with the chance to create new, more complex meanings with new grammatical structures, because they were not given explicit examples of how to create new meaning nor given enough written or spoken tasks that were designed with a grammatical focus in mind. The pattern suggests that grammar was being taught reactively not proactively, based solely on the mistakes made by the learners. Thus, it might be a grammatical stalling point for learners who need to be able to produce new meaning for higher education, because of what is expected of them there. However, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has given the choice to the teachers to decide upon what they believe to be most important for their learners, by shifting the focus onto a learner context and away from specific learner outcomes in terms of grammar, but also partly due to generalized requirement to the learners' linguistic abilities. This is reflected in the diverse focus among the teachers, Lucy's focus on writing, Sindre's focus on oral activities, Chloe's focus on traditional task work, and Marge and Angelina's focus on learner interest and participation.

Additionally, there is a general focus on the acquisition of much content, especially among the vocational teachers, which may be facilitated by the generalized linguistic aims of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training and the demands set by the exams, which the teachers feel obliged to prepare their learners for. It seems as if grammar has been removed from the agenda as a tool to create more detailed meaningful output. The teachers primarily concern is to prepare their learners to be as proficient as possible in writing, meaning that grammar is seemingly being taught based on what was already expected of them and in order to perform well on tests. In regards of the vocational learners, the grammatical expectations meant seemingly impossible standards, from their teachers' point of view. Comparably, the academic learners, who had a high level of proficiency, were not necessarily given further tools to progress, unless it was deemed important by their teacher. An example may be how Sindre explained that his learners ranged from being extremely proficient to struggling with some grammatical mistakes in many areas, because of this Sindre found it

difficult to accommodate his learners' varied proficiency and identify what grammar his learners needed to progress. Thus, due to the curriculum's unclear goals, Sindre chose to not teach grammar, rather focusing on his learners' implicit linguistic abilities and informational content. Upper secondary school seemingly becomes the place where the learners who did not acquire the grammar which they should have acquired have the possibility of re-acquiring it, mostly as part of individual feedback given by the teachers, but also based on common mistakes made by the majority.

This is not meant as a critique of the schooling system nor its teachers, it is only meant to create awareness of the many factors that in fact influence the acquisition L2 grammar among learners. Creating awareness among teachers and educational organizations may further facilitate an understanding of the difficult situation that teachers are faced with. It may also be important to create awareness among teachers, especially new ones, about the importance of choosing the appropriate approach, method, and technique according to the learner context when teaching grammar. Even though the generalized requirements set by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training may facilitate a focus away from creating new meaning through grammar. However, any specific requirements could also have hindered the linguistic acquisition which may be necessary for the individual learner or class, although the possibility of a generalized aim for grammatical progression as a result of a school year may be suitable. For the learners, such as the vocational learners, progressing grammatically could mean repeating previously not acquired grammatical rules. For the learners with a high level of proficiency progressing grammatically could mean acquiring new grammatical structures in order to be able to create more meaningful and accurate output, but also to understand more complex input, which learners are often met with at a higher level of education.

Further elaboration on the point made earlier about the effect of testing on how the teachers apparently taught towards the learners' exams may be relevant. Naturally, they want their learners to deliver a high as possible a grade and thus they prepare their learners for the test. Rather than perhaps optimizing the learners' linguistic abilities, the teachers seem to deprioritize grammar because its demands are generalized, especially compared to content, which it has such a crucial effect on the grade of the learners. Without the correct content, a learner may fail and they are further introduced to new content repeatedly. However, linguistic and grammatical mistakes are expected and tolerated to a very high degree, and comparably grammar was rarely taught. This was especially the case for the vocational learners who struggled the most with their linguistic abilities, Angelina even said that

grammar was only important for the learners who wished to produce a grade above 3. English as a subject is then perhaps too content-focused as the grades of learners are primarily influenced by the level of content, not by the learners' linguistic abilities. Similarly, Chloe's academic learners felt that grammar influenced their grade too much – emphasizing the point being made that content is seemingly at the center of attention for learners as well, not language skills.

5.3 Learner discussion.

The learner interview questions were aimed at general acquisition of language through input and output but also specifically towards grammar, based on the learners' definition of grammar. Although the learners may give inaccurate descriptions of what they consider 'best' for their education, the learners remained quite serious to the topic throughout the interviews and gave quite clear and honest answers regarding their opinions. Their honesty can be understood based on the vulnerable position that some learners put themselves in, admitting to inadequacies, learning difficulties, and so forth.

A common point among the learners was a low threshold for grammar. This was affirmed by both learner statements and teacher observation, as grammar was widely considered tedious, although many acknowledged its use and felt that it was necessary. The lack of learner interest is one of the problem areas emphasized the most by Philstrøm (2013:46). The majority of the learners reflected that variety in input and output was important for their English acquisition as it kept them interested, but they also clearly indicated that they enjoyed variety as part of their education. This confirms the statements made by Marge and Angelina regarding the importance of creating an educational environment based on learner interest and enjoyment as a foundation for acquisition. Another example may be Lucy's learners who stated that they found that Lucy's class varied a lot in how she taught and would not change anything regarding their teacher's teaching, confirming Swan's (Pihlstrøm, 2013:40) claim that variety is key to acquisition, because variety encouraged learner interest and enjoyment. Due to the variety of input and output of the majority of the teachers, the learners gave positive response in regards of the way they were taught, albeit to different degrees.

Chloe's learners had the most contrasting opinions throughout the study, as they were the only ones who indicated that they might be discontent with how they were taught. They confirmed that variety was an important factor and felt that her classes could become very tedious due to the lack of variety. However, it does not necessarily reflect upon the acquired

grammatical knowledge of the learners because they stated that they had learned ‘some grammar’. They had learned to differentiate between the uses of ‘it is’ and ‘there is’, affixes, and vocabulary, but implicit acquisition should also be considered. Furthermore, acquisition of grammar is only part of the equation that is language acquisition and is therefore difficult to evaluate, especially by the learners themselves. However, considering Chloe’s explicit grammatical presentations every second week it seems as if the learners might not have acquired as much explicit grammatical knowledge as Chloe might have intended.

Furthermore, Chloe’s learners were most dissatisfied with the lack of variety in how she taught, stating that they felt it was very one sided and primarily focused on task work, which they felt had no purpose, and some translational work. Hence, they collectively wished for more diversity in form of reading, writing, and oral activities and they felt that especially reading could help them with their grammar, better than task work.

Furthermore, Chloe’s learners were slightly unsatisfied with the manner in which feedback was given, specifically in regards of the oral feedback given on oral performances because Chloe did not emphasize what they did well and what mistakes they made. Although some might consider this an appropriate practice in oral situations, Ur (1991:85-87) emphasized that making the learners aware of their mistakes in a positive manner is an important part of the learning process. Furthermore, this is supported by Nassaji and Fotos’ (2011:71) claim that learners need to be made aware of their erroneous output as well as given correct examples of output as part of interactional feedback, if L2 learners are to achieve native-like accuracy. They also felt that the written feedback they received was ‘ok’, but that it might not have been as helpful for those learners who either struggled or had a higher level of proficiency. This statement was targeted at other individuals in the class and not among the learners present for the interviews, reflecting either other learners’ comments made to the interviewees or a hypothetical situation.

The majority of the learners reflected a general opinion that grammar was not as important beyond the point of being able to create understandable output, feeling that the content of a text should be more important for a grade. In addition, some learners emphasized that grammar would be more important if they were in a situation in which they focused more often on writing (longer) texts. This perpetuates the issue that the English subject is or appears to be too focused on content and not on language skills, as the majority of the learners do not find grammar important. This is a matter which Pihlstrøm (2013:42) found prevent the learners’ acquisition, because if learners were convinced that grammar was of either little importance or if they thought they knew enough grammar already they would be less likely to

remember and apply it. Thus, Pihlstrøm suggested that making the learners cognitively aware about the importance of grammar would assist the acquisition and application of grammar, which especially Chloe's learners needed because she had a much larger focus on teaching explicit grammar.

The learners varied in regards of whether they approached grammar implicitly or explicitly when producing output. The majority reflected that they did not think much about grammar when they spoke English or wrote texts. However, to varying degrees, one third of the learners thought explicitly about grammatical rules when they wrote, most of them as part of revising their texts after it had been written and a few who consciously monitored their grammar throughout any writing exercise. Nassaji and Fotos (2011:80) emphasized the importance of prioritizing feedback on erroneous writing based on the influence to meaning, frequency of appearance, and types of errors. However, because the teachers primarily did not distinguish between learner mistakes and errors in their feedback, it could be appropriate for the teachers to create grammatical awareness among their learners by giving them additional time to revise their text post task or test completion. This may make the identification between mistakes and errors easier for the teacher by reducing the amount of mistakes made. Subsequently, this could mean that the learners would be given more appropriate feedback as to their erroneous writing, and not mistakes. Furthermore, the learners' revision of their text may save both the learner and teacher time in regards of the correctional feedback given, especially for the interactional feedback given by some of the teachers, by reducing the corrective work needed. Thus, by revising a text as the minority of learners did, revision may ideally assist further learning, save time, and assist the learners in creating texts with more accurate meaning.

Throughout the interviews there were usually divided opinions regarding the activities that the learners considered beneficial or wanted more of. The learner's collaborative opinions could suggest what they might have found neglected in their classes and the conflicting opinions could reveal the individual preferences of the learners. This supports Swan's (Pihlstrøm, 2013:40) statement about learners 'varying greatly in their response to grammar, and how generalizing in regards of grammatical teaching may be extremely difficult'. For example, within Chloe's class there were some learners who wanted to read more, another who wanted more individual writing and oral activities, indicating that reading might be slightly neglected in Chloe's class, but also that the individual preference of one of the learners were to write and speak more. Similarly, in Marge's class most of the learners emphasized that they thought they would learn more from speaking than writing exercises, a

component to Marge's teaching which was deliberately neglected as they primarily talked Norwegian in her class. However, in regards of Marge's learners it is also important to note that Marge emphasized that her learners hated to read and write, which may have influenced their opinion. Thus, an important part of teacher cognition is to take into consideration the learner context, understanding what the learners prefer, while making an educated decision on the best possible method, approach, or technique evaluating the preferences of their learners with what is necessary for them to learn. For example, Marge, who had noticed that her 'typical learner' preferred to be taught through a lot of variation and computer-related work used this in order to create an educational context based on learner interest.

Some of the learners, spread throughout the various classes, expressed the desire to acquire more explicit grammatical knowledge regarding specific rules but also generic rules as a tool to progress. However, all the teachers had emphasized this quite early that the needs of the many outweighed the few and that grammar was generally given an implicit position. Hence, in order to assist learners in general but also those who were particularly interested in acquiring grammatical forms, it may be appropriate to create awareness among the learners regarding the possibility of identifying grammatical structures while reading. Pihlstrøm (2013:41-42) suggested that teachers could provide their learners with an authentic texts and ask the class to identify specific grammar points that they felt could be important, and try to explain their effects on the meaning and structuring of the text. Thus, Pihlstrøm's assumption seems to be that by creating awareness of grammar and its effect on meaning, the learners would be more likely to acquire implicit grammatical rules (Ibid:42).

Throughout the interview process the majority of learners and teachers reflected each others' cognition as the learners were pleased with how they were taught and the teachers believed in the value of their own methodology, reflecting that the teachers had been quite accurate in their evaluation of their learner context in general, but also in their evaluation as to the individual differences that further affected learner acquisition, such as the learner's aptitude, personality characteristics, language proficiency, motivation, attitudes towards learning, and cultural background (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011:137). Thus, repetitive confirmative statements regarding the learners' and teachers' cognition may be considered unnecessarily circular. The most distinctive case was Chloe and her learners, as her learners were unsatisfied and wanted primarily more variation in how they were taught, especially by introducing more reading, writing longer texts, and oral presentations. However, contrary to Chloe's methodology, she did agree with her learners that it would be more optimal to

introduce more reading and writing activities, but indicated that she did not know how to introduce it due to insufficient time available.

5.4 Further research

Further research on teacher cognition and grammatical teaching methodologies in Norway may increase the validity of this study by incorporating more complete data. This may be done through expanding the number of participants through quantitative research, qualitative research in other counties in Norway, or expanding on the subject by researching academic VG2 and VG3.

Furthermore, this research found that some of the learners expected that teaching would be conducted similar to their experience of lower secondary school. Thus, research may be done on the implications of learner cognition on the transition from lower secondary school to upper secondary school and the effect cognition has on acquisition. Similarly, in order to facilitate a better understanding of what is grammatically required of the learner in terms of producing output and comprehending input when entering higher education. Research may also be done on the transition between upper secondary school and higher education and the importance of grammar at higher education in Norway.

One of the biggest factors to teaching at upper secondary school was the learner context. The learner context would often decide which methods, approaches and techniques could be used by the teachers. This meant that some teachers may not have had the opportunity to teach in the manner in which they found most enjoyable, had the most knowledge about, or felt would be the most educational manner to teach. Although much research has been done on the optimized learning situation of second language acquisition, there are not many resources on multi-level classrooms. Thus, research may be done on the application of certain approaches, methods, or techniques in multi-level classrooms and in which way they facilitate such a learner context.

Lastly, this paper found that the teachers seemingly had focused on acquisition of content and test related production of output, in order to prepare their learners for tests and examinations. Thus, further research may be done on the implications of tests and examination on the teaching of linguistic abilities and its effect on the learners' acquisition of language skills.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The study is limited by its sample size of the teachers and its methodology. The small sample size of teachers does not produce a basis for generalizations to be made about all Norwegian upper secondary English teachers. A larger sample may have provided information which could have better reflected a more complex picture and could have made trends appear clearer. Hence, only speculative conclusions and impressions can be drawn regarding what kinds of methods were used by second language teachers in upper secondary school (academic VG1 and vocational VG1 and VG2) in Norway for teaching second language English grammar. However, the sample size of the learners appropriately gave a generalized representation of said class.

The individual semi-structured interview and focus group interview were the only research tools employed to obtain data. Additional methods, such as quantitative research, class observation, and staff interviews could have verified or supplemented data collected from the interviews. However, time limitations hindered the inclusion of other methods of data collection and a larger sample of subjects. Although the study was too small to provide conclusive research evidence, it is still believed that the five teacher interviews provided sufficient insight into the cognition of some teachers and reflected possible trends emphasized in the present discussion.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed at exploring the current teaching methodologies, teacher cognition, and learner response to teaching English grammar among upper secondary academic VG1 and vocational VG1 and VG2 second language teachers and learners in Norway. The study was based on the following three research questions: ‘What methodologies are currently being used by teachers in order to teach English grammar at academic VG1, vocational VG1, and VG2 in Norway?’, ‘What is the teacher cognition behind their choice of methodology?’, and ‘How do learners respond to these methodologies?’

Interviews with five upper secondary L2 teachers and six learners from each teacher, from both convenience and randomly selected schools within the county of Rogaland provided data for the thesis. One-hour interviews with each teacher and 20 minute long interviews with each learner focus group were conducted, which allowed for an in-depth study of the teachers methodology and cognition, and the learners’ perspective on the teacher methodology.

The teachers approached the teaching of grammar in various ways, and were most noticeable between the academic and vocational upper secondary schools. The most common trait was that the teachers claimed a primarily implicit approach to grammar, primarily through reading, writing, and speaking activities. Furthermore, the teachers gave clear indications that what they considered 'teaching grammar', was in fact explicit teaching of grammar, primarily through presentations of grammatical rules or working on grammar related task work, especially fill-the-gap task work. Because the majority of the teachers considered 'teaching grammar' to be teaching explicit grammatical rules, they initially claimed that they either had no focus or very little focus on grammar. However, the interview process revealed that they had approached grammar through some means, estimating on average an explicit grammatical involvement in their classes at 10-15% throughout a year. This might suggest that the majority of the teachers did not consider the implicit acquisition of grammar as part of their teaching, albeit they knew that their learners would acquire general linguistic proficiency from input and output.

Besides the activities which incorporated implicit acquisition of grammar, the teachers revealed that they primarily taught through the use of feedback, grammatical presentations, and grammatical task work. The teachers felt that grammatical feedback on texts was the most appropriate and effective way to facilitate grammatical acquisition, although it was primarily aimed at implicit acquisition of grammar through positive and negative evidence of target language and subsequent corrective work, without any explicit grammatical rules unless deemed necessary by the teacher. However, feedback also focused on the learners' content and overall composition. Feedback was primarily given in three manners, written or interactional feedback on a learner's written text, or interactional feedback to a learner's oral activities. Each teacher gave written feedback to their learners on every graded test by marking the negative evidence of language in each learner's text, not distinguishing between errors and mistakes, while also providing some positive evidence. Only one interviewer claimed that she distinguished between errors and mistakes, and never gave explicit grammatical evidence on mistakes, although she corrected them. The learner interviews revealed that they were generally positive towards the written feedback which they were given, only one class indicated that the feedback might not have been helpful enough for learners who were either below or above average proficiency.

Interactional feedback was also given by three of the teachers, which in regards of grammar, involved teacher-learner conversations that indicated negative evidence in the learner's text, giving positive evidence, and advice on what to do in order to correct their

mistakes. Similarly to the written feedback, the learners indicate primarily positive opinions on the interactional feedback to both their oral performances and written texts. The interactional feedback was given in combination with the written feedback by both vocational teachers, as they felt that despite it taking approximately five minutes with each learner, which usually surmounted to a whole week of teaching, the time required was without a doubt the most beneficial technique to teaching grammar. Both felt that their learners would not respond as well to any other technique. One academic teacher also had interactional feedback with her learners every three months, which revolved around her having noted down the individual learner's common mistakes, not focusing on a single written text, and giving an overall feedback of the mistakes and problem areas that the individual learner had shown.

Interactional feedback during oral activities was rarely used by teachers because their learners either made few grammatical mistakes or the teachers did not prioritize grammar in any oral activities. Only, one teacher gave interactional feedback based on the erroneous evidence of his learners, suggesting positive evidence of target language during class conversations. Additionally, one class had reported oral feedback, but not with positive or negative evidence as to erroneous output of the learners, something which they were unsatisfied with.

Explicit grammatical presentations were given with slightly different purposes, but based on quite similar criteria. The majority of the teachers indicated negative opinions about grammatical presentations, and would therefore only present according to two purposes. Firstly, to give proactive preparatory grammatical presentations aimed at creating awareness among the learners about common mistakes prior to a test and were used primarily by the vocational teachers. Secondly, to reactively give grammatical presentations as a result of common grammatical mistakes that had been made in any activity or test (used primarily by two academic teachers). The majority of the teachers would only give a grammatical presentation to address common grammatical mistakes which the majority of their learners made. Furthermore, it would rarely be given, approximately 1-3 times a semester for the majority of the teachers. There were only one teacher, who would give a grammatical presentation every two weeks, even though she had her doubts about its value. The grammatical presentation would be primarily based on her previous experience of common mistakes among her learners, but also reactionary, based on her current learners' common mistakes. Her presentations could be classified as both proactive and reactive as they were regular and responded to the learners.

Only two teachers used grammar related task work, although they approached it in different manners. Chloe's grammar related task work included traditional tasks, such as fill-the-gap and translational work. However, Chloe's learners had a negative impression on the grammatical task work, and task work in general, as they felt it was too repetitive, without purpose, and felt they would perhaps acquire more from implicit activities such as reading or writing longer texts. Marge also used grammar related task work, especially fill-the-gap tasks, but used it independently of any grammatical presentation because she had tried the combination before and it did not work with her learner context. Furthermore, she used primarily grammatical task work which she had available online, either through her textbook or independent online pages. She used computer-related task work in order to transfer her learners' interest in computers to interest or tolerance for task work and grammar. Her learners primarily responded positively towards her computer related task work as they confirmed her notion that they enjoyed or preferred it through the use of computers.

The study showed that the implicit approaches to the acquisition of grammar revolved around reading, writing, and oral activities, but each teacher had varying focuses (as to the production of output and receiving input), and grammar was never a primary aim to any of these activities. However, the teachers considered the implicit acquisition of grammar as the most influential factor in order for the learners to progress grammatically, reflecting that the teachers' methodology primarily relied on the learners' implicit acquisition of grammar.

Separating the vocational and academic schools' learner contexts may be necessary in order to look at trends in reading writing and oral activities. The reason is that the vocational learners were not as proficient and were therefore not exposed to the same level of input and were not expected to produce similar output. The academic teachers emphasized that reading was very important for the implicit acquisition of grammar, but also for the acquisition of language skills. Therefore, they had a reading project each semester with their learners, which primarily involved the learner selecting a novel, short story, or poem, although one teacher selected one novel which the whole class read. In regards of oral and written activities the learners varied quite distinctly, as each teacher focused on writing in different manners, but also included some of the similar techniques. Most prominently were one teacher's writing projects which lasted one to two weeks, although they may have been related to similar topics as the written work of the other teachers, the teacher emphasized the importance of writing as a tool for developing the learners' cognitive abilities. Comparably, the other two teachers focused predominantly on providing small task work or writing analysis of poems, short stories, and lyrics. Furthermore, oral activity in class varied to some degree, as each teacher

would always speak English and two of them expected their learners to also speak English, while one teacher allowed her learners to choose themselves. Although the teachers put similar emphasis on reading, listening, and partly spoken, they were most distinct in the techniques used for writing, which may have had implications for the acquisition of grammar.

In regards of the vocational teachers, the two teachers varied slightly in regards to their implicit approaches to grammar, but they were both faced with a difficult learning context. Angelina quite strictly stated that she had no particular grammatical aim to her teaching, as she did not primarily consider grammar as part of most activities, because her learners hated reading and writing, and found it difficult to include such activities. She focused on creating a class environment based on enjoyment, in order to create interest and hoped to encourage development and willingness to try in her learners. Thus, her classes primarily revolved around presenting her learners with spoken input through the use of educational short-videos or reading, while prioritizing acquisition of content, and preparing her learners for tests by making them as proficient writers as possible through content related task work. Similarly, Marge emphasized the learning context as the foundation of the way she taught, she recognized her learners' interest in computers and utilized it in order to do content- and grammar-related task work. Furthermore, she also used learner enjoyment as a tool to keep the learners interested, and would thus incorporate educational games – stating that 'grammar is in everything'. Furthermore, both vocational teachers encouraged reading as part of class, and usually used an audio recording of the textbook texts, especially related to informational content.

The majority of the teachers gave clear indications as to the teaching context being one of the primary factors as to the way they taught, and emphasized that had their learners been less or more proficient, they would have handle grammar in a different manner. This coincides especially with the theoretical work of Ur (1991), Pihlstrøm (2013) and Nassaji and Fotos (2011), which emphasized the importance of choosing a methodology according to the learner context. This was especially the case with the vocational teachers who had to disregard their conceptions of optimal teaching and adapt to the situation of their learners. Thus, the primary conclusion of this thesis is that the methodology and cognition of the teachers may vary, it is because they were primarily influenced by the individual learner context; the learners' English proficiency, classroom environment, learner interest, and so forth. Furthermore, the teachers' cognition and choice of methodology seemed to be accurate in regards of the majority of the learners' contexts, as the learners gave primarily positive feedback on the teachers' methodologies. Although one teacher was given some negative

feedback by her learners on her methodology, both her and her learners shared similar sentiments in regards of an optimized learning and teaching context, as both had identified some of the weaknesses of her methodology. Thus, although her cognition conflicted slightly with her methodology regarding the optimization of the learning context, it was because she did not believe that it was possible due to limited time.

Finally, it must be noted that grammar, as a tool to produce and understand new meaning, might be in danger of being neglected, as the teachers prioritized other linguistic and non-linguistic content. It is primarily facilitated by the LK06 curriculum's grammatical aim, which allows for a generalized definition of grammatical proficiency. This does not mean that the implicit acquisition of grammar could not provide the learners with the sufficient grammatical tools. However, it may leave learners incapable of producing or comprehending new meaning which might be expected of them at higher educational levels.

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Appendix 1

Teacher Interview Guide

Opening remarks

The purpose of the interview is to provide the necessary information for my MA thesis at the University of Stavanger. The identities of teachers, students and schools will remain confidential. I will only be taking notes and recording the interviews for the purpose of keeping track of the information and it's practicality in writing my thesis.

The only purpose of this research is to look at the variety of approaches to teaching grammar in the EFL classrooms in Norway. My intentions are not to look at what could be the best method or teacher.

Throughout this interview feel free to ask for further explanations if you feel that you have not understood the question completely.

Meningen med dette intervjuet er å samle opp den nødvendige informasjonen jeg trenger for min master oppgave ved Universitet i Stavanger. Identitetene til lærere, studenter og skolene vil holdes konfidensielt. Og jeg vil bare ta notater og føre opptak av intervjuene på grunn av de praktiske egenskapene de har til å registrere informasjonen for min master oppgave.

Det eneste jeg ser etter i min forskning er hvordan du som lærer, lærer vekk engelsk grammatikk til første videregående elever. Jeg er ikke interessert i å vurdere en metode eller lærer som bedre.

I løpet av intervjuet så er det bare å spørre spørsmål om du føler at du trenger mer informasjon eller en bedre forklaring av spørsmålene.

Background

How many years of English teaching experience do you have?

(Hvor mangen år med erfaring har du som engelsk lærer?)

- And how many years experience do you have with VG1 English?
(Og hvor mangen års erfaring har du som lærer ved første videregående?)

If you don't mind me asking, what is your age? If discomforted: How old were you when you started teaching English?

(Hvis du ikke har noe imot det, hva er din alder? Hvis ukomfortabel: Hvor gammel var du da du startet som engelsk lærer?)

What type of English education have you had?

(Hvilken type engelsk utdanning har du hatt?)

- Have you had any education with specific focus on grammar?
- (Har du hatt noen utdanning med spesifikk fokus på grammatikk?)

Subsequently what teaching training education have you had?

(Hvilken type pedagogisk/lærer utdanning har du hatt?)

- Have you had any professional development seminars as well?
- (Har du hatt noen profesjonell utviklings seminar/kurs?)

Student progression and mentality

Have you noticed that the written grammatical accuracy of your students has changed over the years?

(Har du lagt merke til at studentenes grammatiske nøyaktighet har forandret seg i løpet av årene?)

- Why do you feel these changes to written grammar have taken place over the years?
(Hva tror du er årsaken til forandringene i studentenes skriftlig grammatikk?)

Similarly have you noticed any change in their spoken grammar?

(Har du lagt merke til forandringer i den muntlige grammatikken?)

- Why do you feel the changes to spoken grammar have taken place?
(Hva tror du er årsaken til forandringene i studentenes muntlig grammatikk?)

Have you noticed any change in the students' ability to talk about grammatical rules?

(Har du lagt merke til noen forandring i studentenes evne til å snakke om grammatiske regler?)

- Why do you feel that the changes in the student's ability to speak about grammar have taken place?
- (Hva tror du er årsaken til forandringen i studentenes evne til å snakke om grammatiske regler?)

What do you think are the main challenges of teaching English grammar at first year upper secondary school currently?

(Hva føler du er de største utfordringene med å lære vekk engelsk grammatikk på VG1?)

- Has the challenges of teaching English grammar changed over the years?

(Har utfordringene med å lære vekk engelsk grammatikk forandret seg i løpet av årene som du har vært lærer?)

What is your opinion regarding the English expectations set by the school/nation?
Hva er din mening rundt engelsk forventningene som er satt av skolen?

- What is your opinion on the fact that there is no specific grammatical requirements set by the school/nation?
- Hva er din mening om at det ikke er noen spesifikke grammatiske krav satt av staten?

How do you handle the issue of students with different grammatical skill levels?
Hvordan håndterer du forskjellene i studentenes grammatiske nivå?

- Is it common that students are unable to keep up with the level of English being taught? (as a result of either not being able to handle the level of education or being ahead)
Er det vanlig at noen studenter ikke klarer å følge med i timen grunnet nivået av engelsk som blir lært bort?

Have you experienced that there are any grammatical items in which students regularly struggle with?
Har du erfart at det er noen grammatiske elementer som studenter vanligvis sliter med?

- Could you mention specifically the grammatical items that they struggle the most with?
Kan du nevne spesifikt hvilke grammatiske elementer de sliter mest med?

Do your students request grammatical explanations?
Spør studentene dine noen gang om grammatiske forklaring?

- if so, how many times per month/week?
Hvor mangen ganger til måneden/ukene pleier de å spør om grammatiske forklaringer?
- and in what kind of activities does this usually happen? (for example reading tasks, writing tasks etc.)
Hva pleier dere å gjøre når disse spørsmålene kommer opp?

What written grammatical rules do you expect your students to know?
Hvilke skriftlige grammatiske regler forventer du at studentene dine skal kunne?

What spoken grammatical rules do you expect your students to know?
Hvilke muntlige grammatiske regler forventer du at studentene dine skal kunne?

(DEPENDENT ON THE PREVIOUS TWO)

Do you have any expectations to your students when it comes to specific grammatical rules?

Har du noen forventninger av studentene dine når det kommer til spesifikke grammatiske regler?

Teacher cognition and methodology

Are you as a teacher allowed by the school to control your teaching methods freely?
(Som lærer er du tillatt å bestemme hvordan du ønsker å lære vekk det relevante stoffet?)

- Are you bound to follow certain teaching rules?
Er du nødt til å følge visse læreregler?

Do you speak English in class?
(Snakker dere engelsk i timen?)

- Why have you chosen to do it this way? (To speak or not to speak English)
- Hvorfor har du valgt det på denne måten?

Do you think it is important to teach certain grammatical rules?
(Føler du det er viktig å lære vekk noen spesifikke grammatiske regler?)

- If so, why do you feel that it is important to teach these certain rules?
(Hvorfor føler du at disse grammatiske reglene er viktige å lære vekk?)

Do you present grammatical rules in class?
(Presenterer du noen gang grammatiske regler i klassen?)

Do you use any task-work in order to teach grammar?
(Bruker du noen gang oppgaver for å lære vekk grammatikk?)

Although it could be difficult to explain, could you try to explain how you teach grammar?
(Selv om det involverer mye, kan du prøve å forklare hvordan du lærer vekk grammatikk?)

- Why have you chosen to teach grammar the way you do?
(Hvorfor har du valgt denne metoden til å lære vekk grammatikk?)

What is your opinion on conscious learning of grammatical rules?
(Hva er din mening rundt bevist læring av grammatiske regler?)

What is your opinion on subconscious learning of grammar without grammatical rules?
(Hva er din mening rundt ubevist læring av grammatikk uten grammatiske regler?)

- o Depending on whether the answer is:
(EXPLICIT) Would that mean that you believe that you students benefit more from learning explicit/conscious grammatical rules?

(Eksplisitt læring av grammatikk) (Betyr det at du tror at studentene får mere nytte av å lære grammatiske regler?)

- Do you feel that there is any negative sides to teaching grammatical rules?
- (Ser du noen negative sider med å lære grammatiske regler?)

(IMPLICIT) Would that mean that you believe that your students benefit more from learning grammar without explicit rules?

(Betyr det at du tror at studentene får mer nytte av å ha en ubevist følelse av hva som er grammatisk korrekt?)

- And do you see any negative sides to this?
- (Ser du noen negative sider ved at studentene lærer ubevist grammatikk?)

(MIXED METHOD) Would that mean that you believe that students benefit from both learning grammar without specific rules as well as learning grammatical rules?

(Betyr det at du tror at elever får mer nytte av en kombinert læring av både ubevist læring av grammatikk og bevist læring av grammatiske regler?)

- Why do you believe that the students benefit more from a mixed approach where the students learn both grammatical rules as well as subconscious grammar?
- Hvorfor tror du at studentene får mer nytte av en kombinasjon av både ubevist læring av grammatikk, samt spesifikk læring av grammatiske regler?

- Are there any specific points that you teach only explicitly?

(Er det noen spesifikke grammatiske regler som du kun lærer bort som regler?)

- Are there any specific points that you teach only implicitly?

(Er det noen grammatikk som du kun lærer vekk uten ett fokus på grammatiske regler?)

- Do you believe that the student's age is an important factor regarding your method of teaching?

(Er elevenes alder en viktig faktor til hvorfor du lærer vekk grammatikk på denne måten?)

How do you prepare for classes involving grammatical teachings? [Optional]

(Hvordan forbereder du deg til timer som involverer grammatikk?)

How much importance do you personally put on grammar as part of second language teaching?

(Hvor viktig synes du at grammatikk er som del av det å lære engelsk som ett sekundær språk?)

- Has your view on grammar changed during your experience as a teacher?
(Har ditt syn på hvor viktig grammatikk er forandret seg i løpet av din lærer karriere?)

- And are there any particular changes that have made more of an impact?
(Er det noen forandringer som har hatt en store inflytelse på ditt syn på grammatikk?)

How much time do you estimate being used on grammar? feel free to use percentages.
(Sånn cirka, hvor mye tid tror du blir brukt på å lære vekk grammatikk?)

- Specifically what do you spend the most time on?
(Spesifikt, hva bruker du mest tid på?)

How do you decide on the grammatical rules that you teach your students?
(Hvordan bestemmer du hvilke grammatiske regler som du vil lære til studentene?)

- Is it due to your previous experience as a teacher, knowing what students have been struggling with?
- (Bestemmer du hvilke grammatiske regler du lærer vekk grunnet din tidligere erfaring med studenters grammatiske problemer?)

- Or is it a reaction to grammatical problems you see/hear with your current students at the time? (Through for example classroom activities or tests)
- (Baserer du det noen gang på observasjoner av hva elevene i klassen sliter med?)

Do you modify the grammatical rules in any manner? (meaning do you simplify or give it as detailed as straight from a book?)
(Modifiserer du noen gang de grammatiske reglene?)

- If so, why?
- (Hvorfor?)

Is there anything which prevents you from teaching the amount of grammar that you want?
(for example time spent preparing, your opinion on the importance of a grammatical item).
(Er det noen som du føler forhindrer deg i å lære vekk den grammatikken som du ønsker?)

Are there any grammatical items which you choose not to teach?
(Er det noe grammatikk som du velger å ikke undervise?)

- Why these grammatical items?
- (Hvorfor akkurat disse grammatiske reglene?)

Do you do any reading as part of your classes? (Implicit learning)
(Leser klassen noe som en del av engelsk faget?)

- If so, what kinds of texts?
(Hvilke typer tekster?)
- How much time do you usually spend reading?
(Hvor mye tid bruker dere som regel på å lese i løpet av en måned?)
- Why have you chosen to do it this way?

In class, do you do any activities that focus on improving students orally?
(Har dere noen muntlige aktiviteter i engelsk timen?)

- What kind of activities?
(Hvilke typer muntlige aktiviteter?)
- How much time do you usually spend per month on the oral activities?
(Hvor mye tid bruker dere på muntlige aktiviteter i løpet av en måned?)
- Why have you chose to have these oral activities?
(Hvorfor har du valgt å ha disse muntlige aktivitetene?)

Do you do any written activities as part of the English subject?
(Har dere noen skriftlige aktiviteter i engelsk timen?)

- What kinds of writing activities?
(Hvilke typer skriftlige aktiviteter?)
- How much time do you spend on writing activities per month?
(Hvor mye tid bruker dere på skriftlige aktiviteter i løpet av en måned?)
- Why have you chosen to have these written activities?
(Hvorfor har du valgt å ha disse skriftlige aktivitetene?)

Assessment

Do you usually test the student's grammar? (Multiple choice, fill in the gaps, cloze tests?)
(Hvordan tester du som regel studentenes grammatikk?)

Is grammar important to you when you grade your students?
(Er grammatikk viktig for deg når du setter karakterer på studentene?)

- if so, in what situations particularly?
(spesifikt, i hvilke situasjoner påvirker grammatikken mest?)
- If not, why?
(Hvis ikke, hvorfor føler du at det ikke er viktig?)

Is grammar important for written homework?
(Er grammatikk viktig for hjemmeleksene?)

Is grammar important when speaking in class?
(Er grammatikk viktig når dere snakker i timene?)

- if so, in what situations particularly?
(I hvilke situasjoner er det da viktig?)
- If not, why?
(Hvorfor anser du det som ikke viktig?)

Have changes in examination influenced your grammar teaching?
(Har forandringer i eksamineringer påvirket hvordan du lærer vekk grammatikk?)

Feedback

Do you give feedback to your learners?
(Gir du tilbakemelding til dine elever?)

What is your method of feedback on grammar?
(Hvordan gir du tilbakemelding på grammatikk?)

Do you take different action between one time mistakes and errors that are a result of wrong learning?
(Gjør du forskjell på forskjellige feil innen grammatikk?)

Do you ask your students to try and explain if they are struggling with any grammar?
(Spør du elevene dine om å prøve å forklare hva de sliter med innen grammatikk?)

Final comment

Finally, is there anything you felt we did not touch upon, that you would like to comment?
(Til slutt, er det noen du følte vi ikke fikk gått nok innpå som du ønsker å kommentere noe på?)

Appendix 2

Student Focus group Interview Guide

Opening remarks

The purpose of the interviews is to provide the necessary information for my MA thesis at the University of Stavanger. The identities of teachers, students and schools will remain confidential. I will only be taking notes and recording the interviews for the purpose of keeping track of the information and it's practicality in writing my thesis.

This is not a study on how much you know about grammar. It's just important that you participate as much as possible.

(Meningen med dette intervjuet er å samle opp den nødvendige informasjonen jeg trenger for min master oppgave ved Universitet i Stavanger. Identitetene til lærere, studenter og skolene vil holdes konfidensielt. Og jeg vil bare ta notater og føre opptak av intervjuene på grunn av de praktiske egenskapen de har til å registrere informasjonen for min master oppgave.)

(Om du føler deg usikker på noen spørsmål så må dere bare spør, det viktigste er at dere alle deltar så mye som mulig. Dette er ikke forskning om hvor mye dere vet om grammatikk)

Individual Background

Although this interview will be confidential, can I ask what your name is? (In order to keep track of voice)

(Selv om intervjuet vil være anonymt/konfidensielt, så vil jeg gjerne vite hva dere heter.)[slik at jeg kan følge stemmene i opptakene senere.]

And how old are you?
(Og hvor gammel er du?)

Have you always lived in Norway?
(Har du alltid bodd I Norge?)

And has anything hindered/prevented your English education?
(Samt, er det noe som har hindret din Engelsk utdannelse på noen som helst måte?)

Learner context

Does everyone speak English in your classes?
(Snakker dere engelsk I timene?)

Do you feel that the English classes are educational?
(Opplever du engelsk timene som lærerike?)

- Is there anything that you would like to change about your English classes?
(Er det noe du ville ha hatt mer av i engelsk timene?)
- Is there anything that you feel is being taught the most in class?
(Er det noe som du føler dere lærer mest om/har størst focus på I klassen?)

How do you feel about learning grammar?
(Hva er din mening om å lære grammatikk?)

- Has this changed?
(Har dette forandret seg iløpet av utdannelsen din?)
- If so, why?
(Hvorfor?)

Do you feel that it is more important to focus on being understood than focusing on grammar?
(Føler du at det er viktigere med flyt og forståelse enn å være grammatisk korrekt?)

Do you feel that you have learned any grammar so far this year?
(Føler noen av dere at dere har lært noe grammatikk I år?)

Do you do any oral activities?
Har dere noen muntlige aktiviteter i timen?
- Could you explain these activities?
kan du forklare aktivitetene?

- Do you feel there is a purpose to the oral activities?
(Føler du det er ett formål ved disse aktivitetene?)

Do you do any reading in English as part of English class?

(Leser dere mye på engelsk som en del av engelsk timene?) [Has to do with implicit learning of grammar – whether the teacher encourages implicit learning through assigning reading as part of the curriculum]

- What type of texts?
(Hvilke type tekster leser dere?)
- What do you feel is the purpose of reading?
(Hva føler du nytten/formålet av å lese?)

Does your teacher help you with grammar?

(Hjelper læreren din deg noen gang med grammatikk?)

- How does the teacher help you with grammar?
(Hvordan hjelper læreren din deg?)

Do you feel that your teacher should help you (more) with grammar?

(Føler du trenger mer hjelp med grammatikk?)

Is there any grammar that you feel you need more help with?

(Er det noen grammatikk som du føler at du trenger hjelp med?) (Vis gjerne norske eksempler.)

Could you try to describe a typical English lesson for me?

(Kan dere prøve å forklare en typisk engelsk time for meg?)

- What do you do the first 20 minutes of your English class?
(Hva gjør dere de første 20 minuttene av engelsk timene deres?)
 - o Has this changed during this school year?
(Har starten av timen noen gang forandret seg i løpet av skoleåret?)
 - o Has your teacher started with any grammar explanations?
(Har læreren din noen gang startet med grammatiske forklaringer?)
- After the first 20 minutes, what do you usually do in class?
(Etter de første 20 minuttene, hva gjør dere normalt i engelsk timen?)
 - o Has this changed during this school year?
(Har dere opplevd at midten av timen har forandret seg i løpet av året?)
 - o Have you been given any grammar explanations halfway through class?
(Har dere noen gang fått grammatiske forklaring midtveis i en time?)
- What do you usually do at the end of class, approximately the last 20 minutes?
(Hva gjør dere dere vanligvis i de siste 20 minuttene av engelsk timen?)
 - o Have you experienced changes at the end of class this school year?
(Har dere opplevd forandringer i slutten av timen?)
 - o Have you been given grammatical explanations at the end of class?
(Har dere noen gang fått grammatiske forklaringer i slutten av timen?)
- Do you do any writing in your classes?

(Skriver dere noen gang I timene?) [has to do with implicit learning and practical usage of written grammar]

- If so, what kinds of writing comes to mind?
(I hvilke type skriving er det dere pleier å gjøre?)
- How much time do you spend on this?
(Hvor mye tid bruker dere på dette sann cirka?)
- Do you feel that there's any specific purposes for your writing?
(Føler du det er noe spesielt formål i å skrive?)

Has the whole class ever been given grammatical explanations?

(Har hele klassen noen gang blitt gitt grammatisk undervisning?)

- If he/she introduces grammar, when?
(I så fall når i timen har dere typisk blitt gitt dette?)
- Do you think there is a specific reason to why you got this explanation?
(Tror dere at det er noen spesiell grunn til at dere fikk grammatikk undervisningen?)

Have you experienced anything else in class where grammar has been mentioned?

(Har dere opplevd noe annet i timen hvor grammatikk har blitt nevnt?)

Assessment

Do you feel that your oral grammar affects your grade in any way?

(Føler du at din muntlige grammatikk påvirker karakterene dine på noen måte så langt i år?)

Do you think about grammar when you write?

(Tenker du på grammatikk når du skriver?)

Do you think about grammar when you speak?

(Do you think about grammar when you speak?)

Have you experienced this year that your written grades have been affected by grammar?

(Har dere opplevd dette året at din skriftlige grammatikk har påvirket karakteren deres?)

- if so, in what situations particularly?
(I hvilke situasjoner?)

Does your teacher give you feedback/corrections?

(Blir dere gitt tilbakemeldinger på grammatikk?)

- In what situations?
(I hvilke situasjoner?)

Final comment

Would you wish to add any final comments?

(Er det noe mer som dere vil kommentere?)

Thank you for your participation, it is most appreciated.

(Tusen takk for at dere stilte til dette intervjuet, det setter jeg virkelig pris på.)