Attitudes towards Grammar Teaching

According to One Czech and Five Swedish Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

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Abstract

The principal aim of this study was to investigate what grammar is taught by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in both Swedish compulsory school (years 6-9) and upper secondary school (gymnasiet), how it is taught and why. Further questions investigated what research TESOL base their teaching on, what their attitudes are in relation to the relevant curriculum, and what research into grammar teaching (e.g. approaches and methods) has revealed. The study also examined the Swedish National Agency of Education’s views on grammar teaching.

Six interviews were conducted with five teachers of English to speakers of other languages working in Swedish schools, and one Czech teacher of English to speakers of other languages working at an international school. The findings were evaluated against research into grammar teaching.

Although the Swedish National Agency of Education recommends that school years 6-9 should include an explicit focus on grammar, it does not specify exactly what should be taught. At upper secondary level, teaching grammar is not mentioned at all in the main syllabus. As the only reference to it is buried in the accompanying detailed explanatory notes, teachers tend to interpret the English syllabus differently. Consequently, the syllabus does not encourage equal educational opportunities.

Despite the Agency’s vague recommendations, five out of the six teachers in this study do teach grammar and believe it to be a key to language learning. However, the methods used by the five Swedish teachers in this study do not appear to be research informed, and three of them rely heavily on the textbook producers’ choice of grammatical items to focus on. On the other hand, the teacher in the international school clearly uses methods that are research informed. One of the problems appears to be that the teachers in Sweden do not have easy access to current research findings that are comprehensive and non-conflicting, neither during their time at university nor in their working life.

Keywords: Grammar Teaching, Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language, TESOL, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, Common Errors among Swedish Learners of English, Form-focused Instruction, Explicit and Implicit Grammar Instruction, Communicative Approach, Grammar-Translational Approach, Educational Research.

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1 Introduction

In the past few years, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Sweden has been criticised since achievement levels differ a lot between schools and even between teachers at the same school (Skolinspektionen, 2011). Furthermore, teaching methods used by Swedish teachers do not appear to be research informed (Arnell and Lidström, 2011). In the light of this information, as well as the new curriculum in Sweden (Gy 11), this study focuses on English teaching in general and grammar teaching in particular. Given that different communicative approaches are gaining ground, the hypothesis of this study is that teachers may minimise grammar teaching as a result of the communicative approach in combination with non-research-based teaching. Since the English syllabus of 2011 does not spell out exactly what to include in the English course classroom, the question to teach or not teach grammar is of high interest.

1.1. Aim and Research Questions
The principal aims of this study are to investigate:
- what grammar the six educators in this study teach as well as how and why,
- what research these six English teachers base their teaching on
Further aims include what the Swedish National Agency of Education’s views are on grammar teaching as well as a discussion of teachers’ attitudes in relation to the relevant curriculum and what research has revealed concerning grammar teaching, e.g. approaches and methods.

The scope of this study is restricted to five teachers of English teaching in Swedish schools and one Czech teacher of English teaching at an international school and their attitude towards English grammar teaching. Of the Swedish teachers, two teach in compulsory school (around ages 13-16) and three in upper secondary school (16-19) whereas the Czech teacher teaches students of ages 14-16 who are in grade 9 (international upper secondary school).
2 Literature Review

Research on Second Language Acquisition is discussed firstly in this section, followed by approaches to TESOL, Grammar Teaching and different forms of instructional methods. Then sections on the 2011 English Syllabus, common errors among Swedish learners of English, and teacher interventions (e.g. feedback) are reviewed.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition

According to Ellis (1997), SLA (Second Language Acquisition) can be defined as the study of how people learn a language other than their mother tongue. SLA research is increasingly important due to global communication. This essay defines “second” in SLA as a foreign as well as second, third, fourth or fifth language. Second language may also be referred to as L2 (ibid, p.3). One area of SLA research looks at how learners develop over time, i.e. pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and the ability to communicate. Furthermore, SLA researchers try to identify the external and internal factors that influence the learner. Two typical external factors examined are social conditions and teaching input, while the learner’s mother tongue, previous knowledge and natural disposition for learning a second language are regarded as internal factors (ibid).

2.1.1 Acquisition Stages

Some research has shown that learners progress through a series of acquisition stages of linguistic forms (e.g. first the/a, followed by progressive –ing and plural –s (Dulay and Burt, 1973)). Hence, grammatical structure sequencing may be useful. However, no definitive order has been established and teachers are left to judge how to proceed (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 263). Ellis (2006) suggests that teachers should base their selection of grammar on the known errors produced by learners and their stage of development. Even if some researchers maintain the idea of a definitive order, a difficulty lies within the setting of a multi-student classroom since students are hardly at the same acquisition stage. Köhlmyr (2003) brings up
this problem and proposes a balance between communication practice and exercises more related to grammatical accuracy and appropriateness when teaching English as a second language in a multi-student classroom. She proposes that if the teacher were able to use individual instructional strategies to meet each learner’s needs, “some kind of levelling according to developmental stages and learner-centered teaching” may help (ibid, p.348).

Similarly, Ellis (2006) argues that in many classrooms, learners come from various language backgrounds and, therefore, it would be difficult to modify grammar teaching to the entire group depending on the different L1s. Therefore, Ellis argues that even if learners are not ready to learn a certain structure, intensive grammar teaching can help them progress.

According to Larsen-Freeman (1995), the acquisition of some structures may depend on the acquisition of others. A simple accumulation of structures, one at time, can lead to backsliding i.e. certain elements become omitted to facilitate for new elements (ibid). According to Andrews (2007), structures do not have to match proficiency levels or to be sequenced for considerable learning to occur. More on instruction and pedagogical aspects will follow in section 2.7.

2.2 Approaches to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

In this section, common approaches to TESOL are discussed. In this essay, an approach to language teaching refers to a certain teaching model or research theory (Celce-Murcia, 2001). The Grammar-Translation Approach, the Direct Approach, and Audio-Lingualism are common approaches that derived from the 1970s and earlier. At present, the Communicative Approach is gaining ground.

2.2.1 The Grammar-Translation Approach

In the Grammar-Translation Approach, instruction is given in the native language of the students. Hence, there is little use of the target language (in this essay the target language (TL) refers to English). Furthermore, there is focus on grammar, and a common classroom
activity is to translate in and out of the target language. The teacher does not necessary have to be able to speak the TL and students are usually unable to use the language for communication (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

2.2.2 The Direct Approach
The Direct Approach came as a reaction to the Grammar-Translation Approach and in contrast, use of L1 is not allowed in the classroom. The teacher must have native-like proficiency in the TL and lessons focus on the use of dialogues and stories in conversational style. Grammar, as well as the target culture, is taught inductively and literary texts are not analysed grammatically, but read for pleasure (Celce-Murcia, 2001).

2.2.3 Audio-Lingualism
Audio-Lingualism draws on the Direct Approach, but adds features from structural linguistics and behavioural psychology. Similar to the Direct Approach, Audio-Lingualism focuses on dialogues, and grammar is taught inductively. The teacher must be proficient only in the structures and vocabulary that are focused on since learning activities are controlled. There is emphasis on pronunciation, memorisation and prevention of learner errors; vocabulary learning is limited (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Furthermore, the teacher is in control of the lesson, and students can often participate without any understanding of meaning. The audio-lingual method focuses on the comprehension of language at a mechanical level. Mechanically structured activities might include repetition or substitution (Davidson, 1978).

2.2.4 The Communicative Approach
At present, the Communicative Approach often includes Communicative Language Teaching, Content-based Instruction and Task-Based Instruction. Hence, the Communicative Approach as the umbrella is discussed firstly. The Communicative Approach was introduced in the 1970s and is considered to be the opposite of Grammar-Translation, the Direct Approach, and Audio-Lingualism (Harmer, 2007). The Communicative Approach acknowledges language as a system for communication. Consequently, the goal is that students learn to communicate in
the TL. The teacher has to be fluent in the TL, and lessons include semantic notions and social functions. Classroom activities are often authentic to reflect real-life situations and role play as well as group work are the methods used. The definition of a teaching method used in this essay is a system or a set of procedures that describes how to teach a second or foreign language rather precisely. Compared to an approach, a method is more specific and often combines several approaches (Celce-Murcia, 2001). According to Hinkel and Fotos (2002), it is believed that English Language Learners (ELLs) will acquire the forms of language naturally when the Communicative Approach is used. Language is acquired using meaningful input with no formal grammar instruction (ibid). However, grammar instruction varies between teachers.

2.2.4.1 **Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) embraces the Communicative Approach’s position stated above and puts focus on the learner (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Harmer (2007) argues that in order for CLT to work, students need to have the desire to communicate something as well as focus on the content of what they are saying or writing rather than on a particular language form. Teachers should not intervene in role plays to correct grammar, but given that there are variations between different CLT supporters, approaches to grammar instruction also vary. Some teachers argue that language learning will take care of itself when students are involved in meaning-focused communicative tasks, while other teachers using non-communicative methods might use activities with a communicative purpose, but also ensure students use certain prescribed structures like “Have you ever been...?” and “Have you ever done...?” (Harmer, 2007).
Celce-Murcia (2001, p. 17) argues that through practice and in communicative contexts learners gradually expand their communicative competence, consisting of grammatical competence, discourse competence, socio-cultural competence, and strategic competence as shown in the pyramid model.

Celce-Murcia (2001) argues that grammatical competence does not include the ability to state rules, but to use the rules in the interpretation, expression, or negotiation of meaning which basically means that a learner can communicate with a native speaker without being misunderstood when it comes to grammatical mistakes, spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation etc. Furthermore, the author argues that research findings support the integration of form-focused exercises with meaning-focused experience. Learners seem to focus best on grammar when it relates to their communicative needs and experiences (ibid).

2.2.4.2 Content-Based Instruction
Communicative approaches define content as the communicative purposes for which speakers use the second or foreign language. Content-based instruction is a student-centred approach in which students’ language proficiency as well as content mastery must be taken into consideration. The approach crosses over age groups as well as settings and research supports its achievement according to Celce-Murcia (2001). There are different models of content-
based instruction, but they all share a common point of departure, which is the integration of language teaching aims with subject matter instruction. In the vocational programmes in Sweden, content-based instruction is sometimes oriented towards the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tradition, where the occupational needs of the students are used as the basis for materials (ibid).

2.2.4.3 Task-Based Instruction
Long (1985) defines task as

“a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward. Thus examples of tasks include [...] filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, typing a letter, [...]. making a hotel reservation, [...] In other words, by “task” is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between (p. 89).

Brandl (2008) argues that this description emphasizes the use of real-world activities in which it is necessary to use authentic language e.g. words you use when you are ordering food in a restaurant. Real-world tasks are designed to draw attention to those skills that learners need to act in the real world. In these situations teachers need to present a way to use correct grammar in context to be understood (ibid).

2.3 Grammar Teaching
In this section, different methods of grammar instruction are discussed. As mentioned in 2.2, a teaching method is a system or a set of procedures that describes how to teach. In contrast, a technique is an activity or classroom device, e.g. imitation and repetition (Celce-Murcia, 2001). According to Ellis (2006, p. 84), grammar teaching “involves any instructional technique that draws learners’ attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it.”
2.3.1 Why Teach Grammar?
Celce-Murcia (2001) argues that speaking and writing accurately is part of communicative competence. Furthermore, Köhlmyr (2003) argues that TESOL should strive towards accuracy in order to achieve full comprehensibility. Norris and Ortega’s (2000) meta-analysis of 49 studies, found that the effectiveness of grammar teaching is durable. If it is so, then what, how and when should we teach grammar? Köhlmyr claims that form-focused grammar instruction is important in language teaching and that feedback of “different kinds at different times is vital to help the learner towards language awareness” (2003, p. 355). Celce-Murcia (p. 251-253, 2001) indicates a similar view when arguing that a Focus-on-Form during communicative interactions is more successful than other methods. The author suggests that grammatical form should be introduced within a meaning-based or communicative approach. Furthermore, a three-dimensional grammar framework is introduced, labelled “form” (How is it formed?), “meaning” (What does it mean?) and “use” (When/Why is it used) that should be used for grammar explanation. Ellis (2006) argues that grammar is best taught to learners who have already acquired some ability to use the language rather than to complete beginners. However, the author states that learners are capable of learning a considerable amount of L2 grammar without instruction, but that many course books contain the whole of the grammar. He argues that teachers should try to focus on those grammatical structures that are known to be problematic to their students rather than try to teach the whole of grammar. According to Ellis, grammar teaching should not only Focus-on-Form, but also on the meanings and uses of different grammatical structures. He adds that “there is now a clear conviction that a traditional approach to teaching grammar based on explicit explanations and drill-like practice is unlikely to result in the acquisition of the implicit knowledge needed for fluent and accurate communication” (Ellis, 2006, p. 102).
2.3.2 **Intensive or Extensive Grammar Teaching**

Intensive Grammar Instruction refers to instruction over a sustained period of time (which could be a lesson or a series of lessons covering days or weeks) concerning a single grammatical structure or, perhaps, a pair of contrasted structures (e.g., English past continuous vs. past simple). Extensive grammar teaching refers to instruction concerning a whole range of structures within a short period of time (e.g., a lesson) so that each structure receives only minimal attention in each lesson (Ellis, 2006). When it comes to extensive or intensive grammar teaching, Ellis argues that grammar teaching needs to be conceived of in terms of both approaches. Therefore, he argues that grammar teaching needs to be changed in teacher handbooks and include the kind of extensive treatment of grammar that arises naturally through corrective feedback.

2.3.3 **Massed or Distributed Grammar Instruction**

By massed grammar instruction Ellis (2006) argues that the available grammar teaching time is concentrated into a short period. On the other hand, distributed grammar instruction is grammar teaching spread over a longer period. The author argues that grammar instruction should take the form of separate grammar lessons of massed grammar instruction and a Focus-on-FormS approach. However, grammar should also be integrated into communicative activities through distributed grammar instruction and a focus-on-form approach. Hence, Ellis concludes that a massed approach rather than a distributed approach to teaching grammar is more effective (ibid). More on the subject follows in 2.7.

2.3.4 **Form-Focused Instruction**

Form-Focused instruction can be divided into Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS, implicit and explicit, and inductive and deductive instruction. The table on the following page shows a simplified explanation of the methods mentioned. However, the next few chapters also aim to explain these different ways of grammar instruction further.
Focus-on-Form is sometimes called implicit instruction, which uses more inductive reasoning while Focus-on-FormS sometimes is referred to as explicit instruction using more deductive reasoning (Andrews, 2007). Further definitions are made by DeKeyser (1994) who says that a deductive reasoning argues that rules are given first and examples after, inductive instructions argues that examples are presented first and rules are given after, implicit – no rules are formulated and explicit - rules are formulated (either by student, teacher, before or after examples). Furthermore, he points out that the groups “implicit – inductive” and “explicit – deductive” are independent, but tend to coincide in practice since explicit learning is almost always the result of deductive teaching, i.e. when students formulate explicit rules from examples. However, the latter seldom works well according to his study (ibid).

2.3.4.1 Focus-on-Form versus Focus-on-FormS
Focus-on-Form refers to drawing students’ attention to linguistic feature as they come about incidentally in lessons with a main focus on meaning or communication. It derives from the assumption that there is a similarity between first and second language acquisition. Focus-on-FormS is the traditional teaching of discrete points of grammar in separate lessons and is seen as a skills-learning approach (Sheen, 2002). Ellis (2006) argues that a Focus-on-FormS approach is valid as long as it includes an opportunity for learners to practise the form in communicative tasks. However, Ellis also suggests that an incidental focus-on-form approach is important since it gives an opportunity for extensive treatment of grammatical problems (in contrast to the intensive treatment afforded by a focus on-forms approach). Ellis’ final statement on this matter will be found in the next section since it goes hand in hand with when

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus on Form</th>
<th>incidental grammar teaching</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on FormS</td>
<td>separate grammar lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit instruction</td>
<td>no rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explicit instruction</td>
<td>rules formulated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deductive grammar instruction</td>
<td>first rule → example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inductive grammar instruction</td>
<td>first example → rule</td>
</tr>
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one should teach grammar. However, Norris and Ortega’s (2000) studies showed no difference in the effectiveness between Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS instruction, but both result in large effects.

2.3.4.2 Implicit and Explicit Grammar Instruction

According to Ellis et al. (2009) implicit teaching makes students apply the grammatical rules or structures correctly without being aware. Explicit teaching, on the other hand, is based on grammar rules and aims at raising awareness of rules. Explicit teaching can be both deductive and inductive. A teacher using a deductive approach to instruction explains a new rule and then the students may practice by applying the rule, while a teacher using an inductive approach to instruction introduces new grammatical concepts through examples. Implicit learning might happen without forming rules. Andrews (2007, p. 3) argues that “students often need metalinguistic explanations as feedback to confirm their hypotheses when they question if their answers are correct […] no rule formation discussion or activity was overtly encouraged or done.” The author adds that her findings demonstrate that beginners have the ability to learn complex forms implicitly without explicit instruction. Ellis argues that the implicit and explicit teaching should be considered from the external perspective, while the implicit and explicit learning should be based on individual. Norris and Ortega (2000) found explicit teaching to be slightly better than implicit teaching, but it appears that combining both an explicit and an implicit focus may achieve the best results. Andrews (2007) distinguishes between simple and complex rules and according to her study explicit instruction is significantly better than implicit for the complex rule, but both methods are equally effective for the simple rule. Ellis (2006, p. 102) adds that it may be beneficial to teach explicit grammatical knowledge to help “subsequent acquisition of implicit knowledge”. Teaching explicit knowledge can be integrated into both a Focus-on-FormS and a focus-on-
form approach. In a Focus-on-FormS approach, a combination of sometimes deductive and sometimes inductive instruction may work best (ibid).

2.3.5 Inductive and Deductive Grammar Instruction
The inductive method argues that students receive knowledge of linguistic rules without it being explicitly presented. A deductive grammar method implies that the grammatical rule is introduced initially and after that, examples of its applications are given out. If we combine inductive/deductive with e.g. explicit teaching methods from the previous section, Andrews (2007, p. 3) argues that in explicit instruction, “a proactively selected form is intensely taught—either by the presentation of the rules and then the giving of examples (deductive reasoning) or by giving examples and then eliciting the rules (inductive reasoning) from the students”. It is argued that inductive learning is suitable for individuals with right-brain dominance and deductive learning for those with left brain dominance and therefore teachers may use both methods in the classroom (Larsen-Freeman, 1979, p. 219).

2.4 English Course Syllabus of 2011
In the Swedish school’s English syllabus there is no specific list of grammar that needs to be taught. Regarding compulsory school (grades 6-9) “students should […] be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language in speech and writing, and also the ability to express themselves with variation and complexity.” Furthermore, students should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge of grammatical structures (Skolverket, 2012). The National Agency for Education (2011) also comments on the new syllabus for grades 6-9 by stating that communicative competence implies that students gradually control the structure of English where structure stands for pronunciation, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Furthermore, the National Agency for Education argues that, according to research, language students learn more effectively by communicating, not by studying separate building
blocks of language. In addition, they claim that the syllabus stands for functional and communicative language (Skolverket, 2011).

Nevertheless, how and what to focus on with regards to language structure is not spelled out in the syllabus of English courses 5, 6, and 7 (grades 10-12). Teachers may continue to freely interpret how much grammar is to be taught to Swedish students leading to big differences between schools, classes and students. To receive grade A in courses 5, 6, and 7 students need to reach the following goal. “In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts, students can express themselves clearly, freely and with fluency, and with adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation.” (Skolverket, 2012). Hence, language structure is not specified in the syllabus. However, according to the additional comments by the National Agency (Skolverket, 2011,2) on the English syllabus for upper secondary school (courses 5,6, 7)

“the overall communication ability also includes an increasing degree of correctness or language assurance. This argues that as far as possible master language structure, i.e., vocabulary, phraseology, pronunciation, prosody, grammar and spelling. With knowledge of the language's form, students can develop the ability to express themselves and communicate in more sophisticated and demanding contexts. They can also understand, express themselves and interact with complexity, variety and precision.” (Author’s translation.)

As an overall aim, “the subject of English should give students the opportunities to develop the following […] The ability to express oneself and communicate in English in speech and writing” (Skolverket, 2012). This leads us to the next section on common errors among Swedish learners of English and how grammatical inaccuracy affects communication.

2.5 Common Errors among Swedish Learners of English
A study made by Köhlmyr (2003) shows that Swedish 16-year-old learners of English made a large numbers of errors, several of which would impair communication or make the learner appear less competent and reliable. The great majority of errors in her study are related to verbs (25%), nouns and articles (22%), concord (18%) and prepositions (12%). To be more
specific, the errors involve tense and verb complementation, articles and number distinction, subject-verb concord and the choice of preposition. Furthermore, the study shows that 40% of the errors occur because of transfer from Swedish to English e.g. cases where Swedish and English have different grammatical rules. The latter are errors, which impair communication and are considered serious by native speakers. Additionally, Köhlmyr argues that students who do not get the chance to practice a lot of free writing could possibly have more difficulties with some verb tense issues (Köhlmyr, 2003).

Köhlmyr’s study reveals that most error prone areas are covered in the textbooks and workbooks used. She points out that insufficient focus-on-form teaching could possibly explain many errors. The author questions why teaching in these error areas is not more successful and calls for “monitoring the individual development of the learners”. Furthermore, she points out that failure to learn in spite of formal instruction may require a different kind of formal instruction (2003, p. 347). This leads us into the next section of teacher interventions.

2.6 Teacher Interventions
Hattie’s meta-analysis looked at school interventions and their affect on student achievement. Interventions were judged in relation to benchmarks and high performing interventions were feedback, students’ prior ability, instructional quality and direct instruction (Hattie, 2008).

Andrew (2007) argues that teaching makes a significant difference in learning, and that intervention in the form of grammar instruction is beneficial. Ellis (2006) has found that the acquisitional processes of instructed and naturalistic learning were the same but that instructed learners progressed more rapidly and achieved higher levels of proficiency. Similarly, Köhlmyr (2003) argues that instruction and feedback make a difference mainly in the speed of acquisition.
2.6.1 Correction of Errors and Feedback

Köhlmyr (2003) argues that correction of errors (which many prefer to call “feedback”) is necessary since learners need to be aware of errors to be able to learn from them. Hence, awareness and competence are closely linked where awareness needs to come first and then changes can be made. Language awareness aims at making learners aware of how language is used and to “extend their competence using it” (ibid, 2003, p.345). Furthermore, she claims that it is necessary to Focus-on-Form from a contrastive perspective and with regards to intralingual errors, i.e. feedback focusing on grammatical differences between English and Swedish as well as areas where errors can lead to communicative failure. The author also argues in favour of consciousness-raising through Focus-on-Form, e.g. through task-based learning, error correction, or grammar lessons and feedback. Referring to six other studies, Köhlmyr argues that these activities “may lead to noticing of grammatical structures and their use in context” and can convert input to intake and long-term effects (2003, p.346).

Correction of errors is controversial, and Köhlmyr (2003) states that an open attitude towards feedback is needed. Hence, if students are used to feedback and it is given at the right moment and not to intimidate him/her, correction helps to prevent fossilization i.e. stagnation in acquisition (Köhlmyr, 2003). As Ellis (2000, p. 584) points out, several linguists argue that errors should not be corrected, since the effect on acquisition is minimal, or even harmful, depending on the method. However, Ellis (2006) argues that grammar can be taught through corrective feedback as soon as students use the language productively. He adds that corrective feedback is best conducted using a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based and output based.
3 Practical Study

3.1 Method
This section begins with a discussion of the qualitative research method chosen, and is followed by a discussion of the interviews and participants, research ethics, and lastly the limitations of the study.

The principal aims of this study are to investigate: what grammar the six educators teach as well as how and why, what research these six English teachers base their teaching on in addition to what the Swedish National Agency of Education’s views are on grammar teaching as well as a discussion of teachers’ attitudes in relation to the relevant curriculum and what research has revealed concerning grammar teaching, e.g. approaches and methods. Five TESOL in Swedish schools and one Czech TESOL teaching at an international school were interviewed regarding their attitudes towards English grammar teaching.

3.1.1 Primary Data
The primary data for this study was collected through interview with a qualitative approach taken to the research. This qualitative approach research was chosen to create understanding of the teachers’ attitudes towards grammar teaching. The purpose of a qualitative research interview is described as obtaining qualitative descriptions of the life world of the subject. The research interview is a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. According to Kvale (1996), knowledge evolves through the dialogue. It is up to the interviewer to create a contact that allows the interaction to get beyond a polite conversation and create an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about his or her experience. The semi-structured interview has suggested questions, but openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given (ibid, p. 124-125).

Regarding structure, a well-organised interview that follows a sequence of standard question formulations was chosen with the intention of drawing connections in an easier way than in
open interviews. However, openness to changes of sequence was kept and it is hard to define if the interviews were semi-structured or not.

The interviewees were provided with a context before the interview and a debriefing afterwards, in which they were given space to add more information if needed. The debriefing might provide a valuable context for the analysis of transcripts (Kvale, 1996, p. 127-129).

Furthermore, the subject and some of the questions chosen are of a sensitive nature and, therefore, it is important to show respect through listening and asking attendant questions that suit the situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In the analysis, the questions used were evaluated thematically with regard to their relevance, and dynamically with regard to the interpersonal relationship in the interview according to Kvale’s recommendations.

3.1.2 Interviews and Participants
During the time questions were constructed, four trial interviews were conducted in Swedish with questions being changed according to the outcome of the interviews. Some questions, which could be perceived as the interviewer being in support of grammar teaching, were consequently changed.

The real interviews were carried out in different ways. Four out of six interviews were conducted via telephone with the loudspeaker on to be able to record via a computer. The interviewee took detailed notes in order to save the answers because of the uncertain quality of the recordings. Two interviews were carried out face-to-face and recorded with computer and phone. No important differences were found between the phone interviews and the face-to-face interviews. The different interview forms did not seem to influence the outcome heavily when the answers were compared. The differences in answer length seem more to be a matter of personality.

Four interviews were conducted in Swedish since it was believed it would allow the teachers to talk more freely and openly about their experiences and attitudes. These four interviews
recordings were transcribed and then translated into English. The other two interviews were
carried out in English and hence transcribed in the original language. No differences were
found between the English and Swedish interviews. Only relevant answers are used in the
essay. The transcribed translations were carefully read to find themes, and the teachers’
approaches and attitudes towards English grammar teaching.

It is relevant to give more detailed information about the teacher named T5 since he/she is the
only one in this study not teaching in Sweden. T5 teaches ESL at an International School in
the Czech Republic. The school offers the International Baccalaureate Diploma and is a non-
profit, private school.

Regarding follow-up questions, one question had to be asked teacher T4 via email since the
interviewer forgot to ask T4 what language is used when teaching and talking about grammar.
The question was clearly answered via email.

3.1.3 Research Ethics

All six interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality and hence, names were omitted and
changed into Teacher 1, Teacher 2 etc and abbreviated to T1, T2 etc. Information on school
names and other personal facts, which could cast hints on the identity of the teachers were
removed when the texts were used.

3.1.4 Limitations

Since most interviews took place in April, many teachers were busy planning and carrying out
the National Tests, which resulted in most teachers refusing to participate. Hence, the number
of interviews carried out is smaller than expected and the study on teacher attitudes cannot
serve to a greater purpose than of interest and a starting-point for another, more profound
study.
### 3.2 Result

#### 3.2.1 Presentation of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>27-35</td>
<td>27-35</td>
<td>27-35</td>
<td>45-53</td>
<td>27-35</td>
<td>36-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Working as a Teacher</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent / state/ private</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>state</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>Non-profit, private, international</td>
<td>state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did your training include any courses on teaching English?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you teach grammar?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What grammar do you teach?</td>
<td>Basically everything, i.e. subject-verb agreement and 3rd person singular –s, apostrophe, prepositions, verb forms, word order, other</td>
<td>subject-verb agreement and verb forms</td>
<td>All of it: i.e. subject-verb agreement and 3rd person singular –s, apostrophe, prepositions, verb forms, word order,</td>
<td>Everything, i.e. subject-verb agreement and 3rd person singular –s, apostrophe, prepositions, verb forms, word order,</td>
<td>morphology (affixes) plural of nouns forms of pronouns parts of speech, conversion nominalization word order verb tenses modality and hedging use of clauses and appositives advanced sentence types (complex, compound) and related features (use of conjunctions, sentence fluency, word order) punctuation, incl. apostrophes</td>
<td>subject-verb agreement, 3rd person singular-s, the apostrophe, prepositions, verb forms, word order, adjectives and adverbs they have to learn. The difference between do and make, some and any. Conditionals, ing-forms. And typical Swedish mistakes such as “used to” and “usually”. Common Swedish mistakes. But even the definite article. [...] capital letters. The list is long [...] expressions and word formations with suffixes and prefixes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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22
### 3.2.2 Participants’ Grammar Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
<th>T5</th>
<th>T6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do You Use a Course Book?</strong></td>
<td>Yes, partly</td>
<td>Yes, partly</td>
<td>Yes, partly</td>
<td>Yes, partly</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, partly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do You Teach grammar?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Both yes and no</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensive/ Extensive</strong></td>
<td>intensive</td>
<td><strong>Not enough evidence (NEE)</strong></td>
<td>intensive</td>
<td>intensive</td>
<td>intensive</td>
<td>intensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Massed/ Distributed</strong></td>
<td>massed</td>
<td>distributed</td>
<td>distributed</td>
<td>distributed</td>
<td>distributed</td>
<td>distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus-on-Form/Focus-on-Form</strong></td>
<td>Focus-on-FormS</td>
<td>Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS</td>
<td>Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS</td>
<td>Focus-on-FormS</td>
<td>Mainly Focus-on-FormS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implicit/ Explicit</strong></td>
<td>explicit</td>
<td>Implicit but NEE</td>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>Explicit and implicit</td>
<td>Mainly Implicit (explicit)</td>
<td>Explicit and implicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inductive/ Deductive</strong></td>
<td>Inductive by pre-tests</td>
<td>NEE</td>
<td>deductive</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>deductive</td>
<td>deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interventions detected</strong></td>
<td>Self-correction. Pre-knowledge tests. Lectures. Use of L1</td>
<td>I want students to communicate and ask questions. Use of TL</td>
<td>“Teaching irregular verb forms using a memory game is usually popular” Use of both TL and L1</td>
<td>formulate the rule together and then they work on exercises individually</td>
<td>joint analysis of authentic texts or student-generated errors in English, but students are encouraged to compare and contrast with their mother tongues. Use of both TL and L1. Analysis, drill, application, reflect. Student involvement</td>
<td>Lecture, handout. As homework, a written, open task In this task you should demonstrate your knowledge in your writing on e.g. “Who Which Whose”. This task was constructed due to the increasing need for individualisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are You Influenced by Any Special Teaching Methods, Authors, Books or Teachers That You Use in Your Teaching?</strong></td>
<td>Pre-knowledge tests</td>
<td>Socio-cultural approach. Learning occurs through interaction</td>
<td>mainly influenced by my senior colleagues</td>
<td>try to vary as much as I can. I like that they find their own rules</td>
<td>Zone of proximal development and scaffolding (Lev Vygotsky). Sheltered immersion, SIOP. Teaching ESL Students in the Mainstream (Brian Dare, John Polias). Functional grammar (Martin Halliday). Discourse analysis (various). Role of mother tongue, cultural diversity (Jim Cummins). Multiple intelligences (Howard Gardner). Cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphors (Mark Johnson, George Lakoff). Language interference (Uriel Weinreich) and comparative linguistics (various). Historical linguistics (various)</td>
<td>Hargevik’s grammar book. Michael Lewis has an interesting approach to English teaching. Lexical Approach. After all... what do we measure? Who is the native that we compare ourselves with? Then he talks a lot about collocations, which is a key I want to give to the students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Discussion

3.2.3 Method
It would have been interesting to conduct a study on Compulsory School teachers and Upper Secondary School teachers separately. Furthermore, even if the study is too small to give reliable evidence, the results from the five Swedish teachers might be an indicator of the attitudes towards grammar teaching among teachers in Sweden. However, the interviewer should have planned, booked and interviewed prior to the teachers’ heavy workload. Furthermore, observations on student achievement in relation to teaching methods could have been carried out in order to achieve a more significant conclusion.

3.2.4 The 2011 English Course Syllabus
The 2011 English course syllabus states that for compulsory school, students should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge of grammatical structures (Skolverket, 2012). Hence, English teaching in compulsory school grades 6-9 needs to include grammar.

To receive grade A in upper secondary school (courses 5, 6, and 7) students should be able to express themselves clearly, freely and with fluency. However, the syllabus does not specify any specific words or language structure to be taught. According to the additional comments by the Swedish National Agency of Education (Skolverket, 2011,2) on the English syllabus of courses 5, 6 and 7, “the overall communication ability also includes an increasing degree of correctness or language assurance. This argues that, as far as possible, students should master language structure, i.e., vocabulary, phraseology, pronunciation, prosody, grammar and spelling. Arguably, upper secondary school teachers may interpret the syllabus differently, and if they do not read the additional comments written by the National Agency of Education it is not clear whether they should teach or not teach grammar. Consequently, the English syllabus for upper secondary school hinders equal educational opportunity.
3.2.5 Interviews
In this section, the six teachers’ attitudes towards grammar teaching are evaluated against research findings. The questions to be answered are: Why teach grammar; What grammar should be taught; and How should grammar be taught?

3.2.5.1 Approaches to Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
T1 gave the impression of mainly using a Grammar-Translation Approach, focusing on grammar and using the L1. However, this was done in combination with “free writing”. T2 uses the Communicative Approach in which the goal is that the student learns to communicate in the target language. T3, T5 and T6 seem to use a combination between a Grammar-Translation approach and a Communicative Approach while T6 is more oriented towards Task-Based Instruction (also a Communicative Approach). Nevertheless, the question of which approach the teachers in this study use may be questioned since further observations and/or questions on the subject are needed. Overall, the teachers’ attitudes seem to be more traditional and more Grammar-Translation oriented than the communicative classroom in ELT in general (See Appendix 3 and 4). Furthermore, it seems to be difficult for them to combine grammar and the Communicative Approach.

3.2.5.2 Why Teach Grammar?
Research findings show that teaching makes a difference in learning, instructed learners progressed more rapidly, and instruction and feedback make a difference mainly in the speed of acquisition (Andrew 2007, Ellis 2006, Köhlmyr 2003). Furthermore, Ellis (2006) argues that instructed learners achieve higher levels of proficiency. Five out of the six teachers in the study teach grammar and this is in line with research findings, which argue that a focus on grammar instruction is beneficial (Köhlmyr 2003, Celce-Murica 2001, Ellis 2006, Andrews 2007, Norris and Ortega’s 2000). The sixth teacher is in her/his first year of English teaching and plans to teach grammar next year since she/he felt the students are in need of it.
3.2.5.3 What Grammar to Teach?
When it comes to what grammar to teach, three teachers answered that they teach “basically everything” (T1), “Everything” (T2) or “all of it” (T3) and T5 and T6 made a list longer than the proposed elements in the interview, meaning that they teach as much or more than the other participants.

With regards to what grammar they teach and if they use a course book to base their teaching on, T6 teaches grammar from the textbook and in addition, she/he uses students’ produced text and the mistakes “once in the autumn and once in the spring […] since most of my grammar teaching is from the book”. T5 uses “joint analysis of authentic texts or student-generated errors” and does not use a course book. T4 “use[s] the book’s grammar sections and highlight certain things. […] Sometimes, when they have written essays I point out the mistakes either in groups or individually. T3 also uses the textbook along with “something that the students want to find out”. T2 has chosen to teach grammar a couple of times, but mostly during non-compulsory individual study time. This argues that T2 does not teach grammar in the mainstream classroom on a regular basis. T1 uses the textbook along with Power Point supported lectures. Thus, four out of six teachers usually follow the textbook, and in addition, they add grammar that students come across and/or have problems with.

Textbook producers, therefore, play an important role in students’ achievement since teachers seem to rely on the material textbooks supply. However, this study is too small to draw any conclusions, but further research on the subject is suggested.

One teacher (T5) only uses her/his own material based on what students have difficulties with in line with Ellis (2006) who argues that teachers should try to focus on those grammatical structures that are known to be problematic to their students rather than try to teach the whole of grammar. This is in conflict with what the other five other teachers teach. However, Köhlmyr’s study (2003) reveals that most error prone areas for Swedish students are covered
in the textbooks and workbooks used. Nevertheless, she points out that insufficient focus-on-
form teaching could possibly explain many errors. Furthermore, she points out that failure to
learn in spite of formal instruction may require a different kind of formal instruction (2003, p.
347). This leads us on to teacher methods.

3.2.5.4 How to teach?
Here follows a discussion on the different ways of teaching grammar, students’ prior ability
and teacher interventions e.g. Corrective Feedback.

3.2.5.4.1 Intensive or Extensive Grammar Instruction
Five out of six teachers mainly use intensive grammar teaching where they concentrate on a
single or a pair of grammatical structures at the time. As mentioned before, Ellis (2006)
argues in favour for a combination of intensive and extensive grammar teaching through
corrective feedback and that textbooks should help teachers in this process. Therefore, he
argues that grammar teaching needs to be changed in teacher handbooks and include the kind
of extensive treatment of grammar that arises naturally through corrective feedback.

3.2.5.4.2 Corrective Feedback
Four of the teachers generally believe English teaching to have a heavy workload and hence,
three of them more or less seldom use corrective feedback. As T6 states, “we have so much to
do marking and so on [...] I would not say that I only base my grammar teaching on student
production since it might just be a couple of times a year.” In contrast, T5 bases her teaching
on common errors among his/her ESL students and, hence, corrective feedback. T4 uses the
grammar from the textbook, but he/she also bases his/her grammar teaching on what mistakes
his/her students make. Correction helps to prevent fossilization i.e. stagnation in acquisition,
but students need to be used to feedback and teachers need to know when and how to give in
order not to intimidate (Köhlmyr, 2003). Ellis argues that corrective feedback is best
conducted using a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based
and output based. This is in line with what T4 and T5 are doing. These two as well as T6
focus on grammatical differences between English and Swedish (intralingual errors), which Köhlmyr recommends. Furthermore, the author is an advocate for consciousness-raising through Focus-on-Form, e.g. through task-based learning, error correction, or grammar lessons and feedback since they can convert input to intake and long-term effects (2003, p.346). In relation to this, all teachers, apart from T5, need to focus more on error correction and feedback.

3.2.5.4.3 Students’ Prior Ability
In general, Hattie (2008) argues that high performing innovations are feedback, the instructional quality and direct instruction. Students’ prior ability is also among the top four innovations in Hattie’s study (2008). During the interviews, the interviewee became aware of teachers’ attitudes towards students’ achievement levels and that T1, T4, T5, and T6 gave a more positive view of learners’ motivation. Those teachers mentioned did not have problems with grammar instruction as opposed to T2 and T3 who believed students think of grammar as difficult and/or boring. It is argued that teachers who generally regard grammar as difficult and/or boring affect students’ attitudes in a similar way. As mentioned in section 2.1.1, levelling according to developmental stages may help teachers to use individual instructional strategies (Köhlmyr, 2003, p.348). In most schools, this is a financial and organisational question that needs to be improved.

3.2.5.4.4 Massed or Distributed Grammar Instruction
Four out of six teachers use distributed grammar instruction and T3 argues that students would find massed instruction too boring. T1 uses massed instruction, but argues that he/she has motivated students. Nevertheless, too few studies are being done systematically in this area to quantify the impact of the different methods, but Ellis (2006) argues that massed instruction and more intensive courses seem to be more efficient according to studies done.
3.2.5.4.5 Explicit or Implicit Grammar Instruction
For this and the next two chapters the following table may be of use for you as a reader

| Focus on Form = incidentally grammar teaching |
| Focus on FormS = separate grammar lessons |
| Implicit instruction = no rules |
| Explicit instruction = rules formulated |
| Deductive grammar instruction = first rule → example |
| Inductive grammar instruction = first example → rule |

T1 and T3 use explicit grammar teaching, while T4, T5 and T6 use both methods. Norris and Ortega (2000) and Andrews (2007) have found explicit teaching to be slightly better, but also, the authors have found that combining both may achieve the best results. Hence, T4, T5 and T6 correspond with these studies. Ellis (2006, p. 102) argues that it may be beneficial to teach explicit grammatical knowledge to help “subsequent acquisition of implicit knowledge”.

Teaching explicit knowledge can be integrated into both a Focus-on-FormS and a focus-on-form approach. He adds that “there is now a clear conviction that a traditional approach to teaching grammar based on explicit explanations and drill-like practice is unlikely to result in the acquisition of the implicit knowledge needed for fluent and accurate communication” (Ellis, 2006, p. 102). With regards to the finding of this study, it would seem that only T2’s students are able to apply their knowledge gained from explicit teaching (input) and change it into implicit knowledge and usage (intake). DeKeyser (1994) says that explicit learning is almost always the result of deductive teaching, i.e. when students formulate explicit rules from examples. However, the author argues that this seldom works well. T3 and T6 mainly follow this model, but since they also combine it with a Focus-on-Form and implicit teaching, no conclusion can be drawn. Thus, a recommendation would be a combination of the methods together with a communicative approach.
3.2.5.4.6 Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS
T1 and T5 use the traditional teaching of discrete points of grammar in separate lessons which is called Focus-on-FormS and this is seen as a skills-learning approach (Sheen, 2002). Ellis (2006) argues that a Focus-on-FormS approach is valid as long as it includes an opportunity for learners to practise in communicative tasks. T3, T4, and T6 use this approach together with what Ellis suggests: an incidental focus-on-form approach since it gives an opportunity for extensive treatment of grammatical problems. However, T1 and T5 only use the incidental approach to some extent and are mainly focused on Focus-on-FormS. Norris and Ortega’s (2000) studies showed no difference in the effectiveness between Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS instruction, but both result in significant effects. This leaves us with the conclusion that a combination between Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS together with communicative practise may be best for the learner.

3.2.5.4.7 Deductive and Inductive Grammar Instruction
T3 and T6 mainly use deductive methods while T4 and T5 use inductive ones. T1 explains his/her method by saying that students are in need of his/her lecture by using pre-knowledge tests, which can somehow be seen as inductive. It is argued that inductive learning is suitable for individuals with right-brain dominance and deductive learning for those with left brain dominance and, therefore, teachers may use both methods in the classroom (Larsen-Freeman, 1979, p. 219). Ellis (2006, p. 102) argues that in a Focus-on-FormS approach, a combination of sometimes deductive and sometimes inductive instruction may work best. Since the teachers who teach grammar mainly use a Focus-on-FormS method they should, according to the study mentioned, combine both inductive and deductive methods instead of concentrating on one specific method.

4 Conclusion
Five out of the six teachers in the study teach grammar and this corresponds with research findings, which argue that grammar instruction is beneficial (Köhlmyr 2003, Celce-Murica
2001, Ellis 2006, Andrews 2007, Norris and Ortega’s 2000). The sixth teacher is in her/his first year of English teaching and plans to teach grammar next year since she/he felt students are in need of it. Therefore, the hypothesis that many teachers have left out grammar teaching since the introduction of the Communicative Approach is to be questioned since five out of six teachers teach grammar on a regular basis. The discussion on the Communicative Approach continues below.

T1 gave the impression of mainly using the Grammar-Translation Approach, focusing on grammar and using L1. However, he also uses this in combination with “free writing”. T2 uses the Communicative Approach in which the goal is that the student learns to communicate in the target language. T3, T5 and T6 seem to use a combination of the Grammar-Translation approach and the Communicative Approach while T4 is more oriented towards Task-Based Instruction (also Communicative Approach). However, the question of which approach the teachers in this study use may be questioned since further observations and/or questions on the subject are needed. Nevertheless, teachers’ attitudes seem to be more traditional and more oriented towards Grammar-Translation than the communicative classroom in general. In addition, four out of six teachers seem to have difficulties with combining the Communicative Approach with grammar teaching.

T4 and T5 both base their teaching more on common student errors than the other teachers in the study. They have 10 or more years of teaching experience, and may have learned what grammar teaching is most effective through their practice and, hence, have chosen more to focus on corrective feedback. Moreover, they are both in line with Ellis’ recommendations of a mixture between implicit and explicit feedback (2006). However, they also have well-motivated students which might influence their approach and how much effort they need to put in. T1, T3 and T6 mostly use the grammar sections from the textbook while Ellis argues that teachers should try to focus on those grammatical structures that are known to be
problematic to their students. Hence, these three teachers rely heavily on textbook producers’ choice, structure and maybe even methods. Furthermore, T1, T3 and T6 mostly teach grammar based on explicit explanations and drill-like practice which is unlikely to result in the acquisition of the implicit knowledge needed for fluent and accurate communication (Ellis, 2006, p. 102). Furthermore, according to research as well as this study, students’ prior ability may influence achievement and also teachers’ attitude toward grammar teaching. Levelling according to developmental stages may help teachers to use individual instructional strategies.

Ellis (2006) argues in favour of a combination of intensive and extensive grammar teaching through corrective feedback, and that textbooks should help teachers in this process. The four teachers in the study who teach grammar mainly based on textbooks (T1, T3, T4, T6), therefore, need to include the kind of extensive treatment of grammar that arises naturally through corrective feedback.

When it comes to Massed or Distributed Grammar Instruction, too few studies are being done systematically in this area to quantify the impact of the different methods, but Ellis (2006) argues that massed instruction and more intensive courses seem to be more efficient according to studies done. Four teachers (T3, T4, T5, and T6) use more distributed than massed while T1 uses a more massed grammar instruction. Arguably, teachers need to find a balance between student motivation and how intense grammar instruction can be given.

A traditional approach to teaching grammar based on explicit explanations and drill-like practice is unlikely to result in the acquisition of the implicit knowledge needed for fluent and accurate communication” (Ellis, 2006, p. 102). With regards to the finding of this study, it would seem that only T2’s students are able to apply their knowledge gained from explicit teaching (input) and change it into implicit knowledge and usage (intake).
The conclusion that a combination between Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS together with communicative practise may be best for the learner argues against the teachers in this study since T1, T3, T5, and T6 all lack the combination of all three methods. The exception may be T4 who uses Task-based instruction and both Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS.

Five out of the six teachers in this study do teach grammar and believe grammar to be a key to language learning. However, the methods used by the five Swedish teachers in this study are not research informed, and three of them rely heavily on the textbook producers’ choice of grammar. To be noted is that five out of six teachers answered that they had had courses on the theory or practice of teaching English grammar included in their teacher training, but that they all said that they do not use any methods from that training worth mentioning. On the other hand, the teacher in the international school clearly used methods that were research informed. All teachers but one believe that grammar is a key to language learning and the one who does not agree argues that students should already know grammar when they are in upper secondary school (English A or 5). However, he/she also wants to start teaching grammar next year. One of the problems appears to be that teachers are not able to easily access current comprehensive and non-conflicting research findings either in the university or their working life.

According to the Swedish National Agency of Education, school years 6-9 should include a focus on grammar. However, they do not specify exactly what should be taught. At upper secondary level, teaching grammar is not mentioned at all in the syllabus. The only reference is in the detailed notes commenting on the syllabus. As a result, teachers tend to interpret the English syllabus differently. Consequently, the syllabus does not encourage equal educational opportunity.
5 Suggestions for Further Research

One of the conclusions in this study was that teachers need to have more research-based methods to support their practice. However, more research on grammar teaching and English teaching in general need to be conducted. Is Massed or Distributed Instruction the best? Is a combination of Focus-on-Form and Focus-on-FormS mainly the best? How should teachers combine those methods in relation to Inductive versus Deductive and Implicit versus Explicit Grammar Instruction? What is the best method when it comes to a multi-level classroom in upper secondary school (theoretical programme as well as practical programme students)? What is the result of levelling according to developmental stages when it comes to achievement as well as social consequences? Furthermore, how can universities improve the courses on the theory of teaching English? At the very least, teacher training programmes need to be more practice focused so future teachers can apply the knowledge in their profession.
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VanPatten, B. From input to output: A teacher’s guide to second language acquisition,
Appendix 1: Intervjufrågor på svenska

1. Hur många år har du arbetat som lärare? 1-3 4-6 7-9 10>
2. Hur gammal är du? < 26 27-35 36-44 45-53 54- >
3. Kvinna/man
4. Vad är ditt modersmål?
5. Vilken typ av skola arbetar du på för tillfället? (kommunal/fri/privat etc?)
6. Vilken årskurs(er) undervisar du i för tillfället? (7-9, 1 2 3)
7. Har du en lärarexamen? Ja/nej
   A. Om ja:
   i. Vilket år fick du din examen?
   ii. Ingick didaktik i engelska i din utbildning? Ja/nej
   B. Om nej:
      Har du någon annan relevant utbildning? Vad för någon?
8. Använder du någon kursbok i din undervisning?
   A. Om ja, vilken?
   B. Om nej, vad använder du istället?

Grammatikundervisning

9. Undervisar du i grammatik?
   A. Om nej, Vad har din undervisning för innehåll? (litteratur, fritt skrivande etc.
      Sedan fråga 11,13B, 14,15)
   i. Varför undervisar du inte i grammatik?
   B. Om ja, varför?
10. A. Beskriv senaste gången du undervisade i grammatik eller ett tillfälle som du
     upplever framgångsrikt.
    B. Vilken grammatik undervisar du? subject-verb agreement, 3e person singular -s,
      apostrof, prepositioner, verb former, ordfölj, annat.
    C. Hur undervisar du i grammatik? Implicit (I kontext) eller explicit (regler), på
       svenska/engelska, intensivt under en lection eller spritt över tid
11. Är du inspirerad av någon speciell forskare, bok, metod eller lärare som du använder i
    din undervisning?
12. Vilka strategier använder du för att göra grammatik meningsfullt och hur motiverar du
    studenter som tycker att grammatik är svårt och/eller tråkigt?
13. A. Följer du upp om dina elever har lärt sig och kommer ihåg grammatiken du har lärt
    dem efter en viss tid? Om ja, hur?
    B. Använder du några prov, formella eller informella, vid slutet av terminen för att se
       elevernas utveckling?
14. Anser du att man måste undervisa i grammatik enligt den nya kursplanen? (Engelska
    5,6,7)
15. Beskriv din lärarstil och strategier. (Om det underlättar, säg fyra ord hur dina elever skulle
    beskriva din lärarstil.)
Appendix 2: Interview Questions

1. Number of Years Working as a Teacher 1-3 4-6 7-9 10+ (Circle or mark)
2. Age < 26 27-35 36-44 45-53 54+ (Circle or mark)
3. Male/Female (Circle or mark)
4. What is your mother tongue?
5. What kind of school are you working in at present (free/ state/ private etc? (Circle or mark))
6. At which grade level(s) do you teach English? (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 or 1 2 3)
7. Do you have a Teaching Degree (Swe: Lärarexamen)? Yes/No
   C. If yes:
      iv. Since this interview has to do with English teaching in general and grammar teaching specifically, did your teacher training programme include any specific courses on the theory or practice of teaching English grammar? (Swe: didaktik) Yes/No
   D. If no:
      Do you have any other teacher training qualifications, or have you been on any other teacher training courses? Please name course/qualification
8. Do you use a course book in your teaching?
   C. If yes, which one?
   D. If no, what do you use instead?

Grammar Teaching

9. Do you teach grammar?
   A. No ⇒ How come?
      i. What do you teach? i.e. literature, free writing. (Then question 13, 21 and 22)
   B. Yes ⇒ How come?
10. A. Please describe the last time you remember you were teaching grammar OR a grammar teaching moment that you consider successful.
    B. What specific grammar do you teach? Multiple Choice, i.e. subject-verb agreement and 3rd person singular –s, apostrophe, prepositions, verb forms, word order, other
    C. How do you teach grammar? (Circle, mark or answer freely) i.e. Implicitly (in context) or explicitly (study rules), in students’ mother tongue/Swedish/in English, Do you use massed (intensive during one class) or distributed (spread over time) approach to teaching grammar?
11. Are you influenced by any special teaching methods, authors, books or teachers that you use in your teaching?
12. What strategies do you use to make grammar meaningful and how do you motivate students who believe grammar to be difficult and/or boring?
13. A. Do you follow up to see if your students have learned and remembered the grammar you have taught after a period of time? How?
    B. Do you use any tests, formal or informal, at the end of the term to check student progress again?
14. A. Do you believe that one must teach grammar according to the new curriculum?
    B. What do you think about the new curriculum?
15. Describe your teaching style and strategies./What four words would students use to describe your teaching strategies?
Appendix 3: Participants Answers to Question A and B

Question A (10C): “How Do You Teach Grammar?”

Question B (10A): “Please Describe the Last Time You Remember You Were Teaching Grammar or a Grammar Teaching Moment that You Consider Successful.”

[Emphasis added: Bold explanations within brackets made by the author. Bold markings are there to put emphasis on the answer of the question.]

A - T1: First, I give them a test and then a show them a rigorous Power Point. [...] Lately, I have been teaching grammar explicitly for the most part (study rules). It is in Swedish since the book is in Swedish and I don’t want to translate it all since students who find English hard – it would be too much for them. But I mix a little so they get used to it. [...] I tell them that this lesson it will only be about nouns until you are ready to through up... (Massed approach, Focus-on-FormS, inductive)

B – T1: Today. I lectured on nouns. I made a test on what I wanted to go through. The lesson started with them filling out the test to see what they do know and don’t know. I have noticed that when you start with a test and see oh, I don’t know what to do here and then you go through the unit so they get the answers and then they take one more look at the test. Oh, now I know what to do and why. Inductive I think... I proceed from... or I create the need of my own lecture. The tests are not something I collect. It’s for themselves. I just ask openly about their results and today they said it went well, but maybe they didn’t know exactly why...

A - T2: Not enough evidence. But, when teaching grammar T2 would say implicitly (in context) in English and distributed (spread over time) approach to teaching grammar.

B – T2: ...hmm.. when did we do it.... as I want it to look like... when I went through something during study hall, there were not that many students there, but... I want it to be a dialogue. I try not to stand and just talk. On the contrary I want them to ask questions. Sometimes I write sentences and then they can tell if they are right or wrong. In the autumn, I created an exercise where I had written a letter with many mistakes and they had to correct it. I work very communicatively in general. I don’t lecture that much, but I can have a briefing where I write on the board and like that. I ask questions and want them to ask questions back. I get frustrated if I have a group who is quiet. I am satisfied when they push forward
and ask me questions so I can elaborate on where they are. Because it is very difficult and of course it has to do with that I am not that experienced as well, especially when it comes to grammar. I know how it is when I am writing I don’t make congruence errors, but I haven’t always been thinking through how to explain things. Hopefully, I am going to learn how, and then it will work out better. [...] I have noticed when I have taught grade 1 phonetics that it is great when you are able to talk about it from a perspective. And if one does it more often one will give them instrument to think about language in a different way.

A – T3: Sometimes in context (when it is something that we come across in the course book or something that the students want to find out), never massed (the students find that too boring), usually distributed over time. I usually explain the rules in Swedish, and then the students practise in English. (Explicit, deductive, Focus-on-FormS and Focus-on-Form)

B – T3: Teaching irregular verb forms using a memory game is usually popular

A – T4: Sometimes, Implicitly (in context) and sometimes explicitly (study rules). All lessons are in English. I use distributed (spread over time) approach to teaching grammar.

B – T4: I use the book’s grammar sections and highlight certain things. First, we practice together. I give them ideas on the white board and ask them - why is it so or what is wrong? In this way we formulate the rule together and then they work on exercises individually. Sometimes, when they have written essays I point out the mistakes either in groups or individually. (Inductive, Focus-on-FormS and Focus-on-Form)

A – T5: Implicitly (in context); joint analysis of authentic texts or student-generated errors in English, but students are encouraged to compare and contrast with their mother tongues (e.g. parts of speech, verb tenses, word order. Spread over time, 0-30% of each lesson. (distributed, inductive, Focus-on-FormS)

B – T5: Approach to the given grammar feature: analysis or inquiry which argues to discover what grammar features is used and why, drill which argues to practice the form, application which argues to apply the grammar feature to new situations, reflect which argues to think about the feature from a meta-linguistic point of view: why do English speakers use this feature? How does it fit the system of English? How does it compare to other language systems? What grammar features do individual languages contain / lack; what does it say about the language and its speakers?) Furthermore, I believe in student involvement based on
“The Teaching and Learning Cycle,” by Dare & Polias: background building which argues making connection to context, students’ prior knowledge, mother tongue, etc., guidance to discovery which argues that the teacher prompts students as they analyze the feature, modelling and joint application which argues that the teacher demonstrates application with student input, independent application which argues that students apply new knowledge independently.

A – T6: Sometimes, Implicitly (in context) and sometimes explicitly (study rules). All lessons are in English, I use distributed (spread over time) approach to teaching grammar.

B – T6: I start by writing e.g. “Which who whose” on the white board and then I go through the basic principles and explain the rules. Then they receive a handout to practice the rule. As homework they get a written, open task in which they can choose from three scenarios. I think this is a great sample task. “Describe the event …” In this task you should demonstrate your knowledge in your writing on e.g.” Who Which Whose”. This task was constructed due to the increasing need for Individualisation. Sometimes I have had interactive computer exercises with one word gap. All this knowledge is supposed to show when they write their articles or summaries. I count the points and provide information on teacher parent student conferences. If a student has 0/20, maybe you should not be in the programme. Deductive

First, I look at what grammar I will bring up from the textbook. If I have NV-class on Hersby... they are incredibly talented and want more, more and more, they are starving for information and want a lot to do - you have to be ahead of them- they must have extra information. If I Have an IV-class, maybe you should take out a lot when all they need is the basic, basic things and then I start from the basics. But when I read their texts I reconnect and tell them what mistakes I've seen. I may tell them that I have seen and this and this and I never want to see it. [...]“we have so much to do marking and so on [...] I would not say that I only base my grammar teaching on student production since it might just be a couple of times a year. Once in the autumn and once in the spring since most of my grammar teaching is from the book. (mainly Focus-on-FormS)
Appendix 4: Participants’ Answers to Question C

Question C: “Are You Influenced by Any Special Teaching Methods, Authors, Books or Teachers that You Use in Your Teaching?”

C – T1: No, I use pre-knowledge tests to identify needs and shortcomings

C – T2: In general, it’s the socio cultural that I carry with me and I am thinking about that learning occurs through interaction. I try to give them the opportunity to talk through things on beforehand. One always has a bad conscience about that one never has time to do it all. They get to use log writing a little and they get to write and see what someone else has answered. I believe that one should help each other and when one can explain something for someone else then one knows it. I want them to cooperate! [...] then one read about that you become the teacher you had in upper secondary school. [...] I get very upset when there are so many things they don’t know in upper secondary school because we don’t have time to do it all. I had a long talk with an upset student who argued that her friends didn’t study literature and that “we haven’t studied any grammar” and that grammar was the right thing to do, and then I tried to explain that the B-course is a continuation course and told her that you should already know this. You are not going to have 8 weeks of grammar.

C – T3: I am mainly influenced by my senior colleagues!

C – T4: Not a guru like that, because I try to vary as much as I can. I like that they find their own rules and not just work on gap-filling exercises.

C – T5:

- Zone of proximal development and scaffolding (Lev Vygotsky)
- Sheltered immersion, SIOP
- Teaching ESL Students in the Mainstream (Brian Dare, John Polias)
- Functional grammar (Martin Halliday)
- Discourse analysis (various)
- Role of mother tongue, cultural diversity (Jim Cummins)
- Multiple intelligences (Howard Gardner)
- Cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphors (Mark Johnson, George Lakoff)
- Language interference (Uriel Weinreich) and comparative linguistics (various)
- Historical linguistics (various)
C – T6: I like .. Now let's see... where's my book. First, I like Hargevik’s grammar book which I recommend to my students. But then in terms of my own ...... Michael Lewis has an interesting approach to English teaching. Lexical Approach. After all... what do we measure? Who is the native that we compare ourselves with? Then he talks a lot about collocations, which is a key I want to give to the students.
Appendix 5: Abbreviations Used

Abbreviations taken from the article *Språkundervisningens förkortningar* (2012).

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language

SLA – Second Language Acquisition

TL – Target Language (English in this case)

EFL – English as a Foreign Language (outside English-speaking countries)

ELT – English Language Training (The US) / Teaching (Great Britain)

ESL – English as a Second Language (within English-speaking countries)

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages (umbrella term for ESL and EFL)

TESOL – Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language

TESL – Teaching English as a Second Language (usually for immigrants in an English speaking country)