

To teach, or not to teach grammar?

*Teachers' approaches to grammar teaching in
lower secondary school*

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Abstract

This MA study combines a descriptive analysis of 32 videotaped English lessons taught by seven teachers in seven classrooms at different lower secondary schools (Year 9), with interviews with two of these teachers. The data were collected as part of the Linking Instruction and Student Experiences (LISE) project, led by Professor Kirsti Klette and with Associate Professor Lisbeth M. Brevik as coordinator. The data were analyzed to identify grammar instruction in the English classroom, to characterize the students' oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms and the teacher's correction of these. Studying natural instruction (i.e., not interventions) in English classrooms is valuable in identifying grammar instruction practices on the one hand, and students' grammar proficiency on the other. Integrating these analyses with teacher interviews provides an opportunity to examine English grammar instruction from different perspectives.

I found that the students in the observed lessons seldom made oral grammar mistakes and that the teachers' corrections of these were rare. The students' oral grammar mistakes constituted a total of 374 mistakes (27%) out of 1382 clear student utterances in English, with the majority relating to verbs and determiners. When the infrequent correction of these grammar mistakes did occur, they were implicit and focused on the development of the students' communicative competence, rather than correctness. This is in line with the notion that the English teachers' error correction occurs to help students avoid being misunderstood.

Moreover, while explicit grammar teaching occurred in two of the classrooms only, in these instructions, the teachers taught grammar rules based on students' needs drawing upon a deductive teaching model. However, the teachers taught grammar out of context, rather than linking grammar instruction to either student texts or their oral communication. The teacher interviews suggest that as the LK06/13 English subject curriculum is vague when it comes to defining what areas of grammar to teach and how to teach it, teachers are left to decide how to approach grammar. Therefore, grammar instruction is often neglected. Nevertheless, the students' infrequent grammar mistakes indicate that developing their ability to communicate successfully instead of focusing on producing grammatically correct utterances may be more important with regard to avoiding misunderstandings.

These findings suggest that an integration of grammar instruction in the English instruction may be warranted, instead of teaching grammar out of context; bearing the students' strengths and needs in mind to develop their communicative competence.

Sammendrag

Denne studien presenterer en deskriptiv analyse av 32 videoinnspilte undervisningstimer i engelsk, med fokus på syv lærere i syv ulike klasserom i Osloskolen (9. klasse), med intervjuer av to av lærerne. Data ble samlet inn i forbindelse med prosjektet Linking Instruction and Student Experiences (LISE), ledet av professor Kirsti Klette og med førsteamanuensis Lisbeth M. Brevik som koordinator. Data ble analysert med å tanke på å avdekke hvordan engelsk grammatikk blir undervist i norske klasserom, for å identifisere hvilke typer muntlige grammatiske feil elevene gjør i de observerte klasserommene og hvordan lærerne korrigerer disse feilene. Studier av ordinær undervisning (dvs. ikke intervensjoner) i engelskundervisningen er verdifulle for å identifisere undervisningskvalitet og få innsikt i elevers grammatiske engelskferdigheter. Å kombinere disse analysene med lærerintervjuer gir oss muligheten til å se på engelsk grammatikkundervisning fra forskjellige perspektiver.

I analysene ble det avdekket at elevene gjorde få muntlige grammatiske feil, og at lærerne sjelden korrigerer disse feilene. Det var tilsammen 374 feil (27%) blant de 1382 observerte og forståelige utsagnene. Når korreksjon av elevenes få muntlig feil faktisk forekom, så var korreksjonene implisitte og fokuserte på utvikling av elevenes muntlige kompetanse i stedet for korrekt grammatikk, noe som er i samsvar med forståelsen av at lærernes korreksjoner skal bidra til at elevene ikke blir (muntlig) misforstått.

I klasserommene hvor det forekom eksplisitt grammatikkundervisning baserte lærerne undervisning av grammatikkreglene ut fra elevenes behov og brukte en deduktiv tilnærming. Lærerne underviste stort sett i grammatikk uten å sette det i kontekst, dvs. de knyttet ikke grammatikken til elevenes lesestoff eller deres muntlige kommunikasjon. I lærerintervjuene ble det antydning at siden LK06/13 læreplan i engelsk er tvetydig når det kommer til å definere hvilke grammatikkområder som skal undervises, og hvordan disse skal undervises, så er det opp til lærerne selv hvordan de vil undervise i grammatikk. Derfor blir ofte grammatikkundervisning forsømt. Elevenes få grammatiske feil indikerer imidlertid at det er viktigere å utvikle elevenes kommunikasjonsevne for å unngå at de blir misforstått i stedet for å fokusere på at de skal produsere grammatisk korrekte muntlige utsagn.

Disse funnene antyder at en kombinasjon mellom grammatikkundervisning og engelskundervisning kan være nyttig, i stedet for å undervise grammatikk uten å sette det i kontekst; samtidig som man tar hensyn til styrke og behov blant elevene for å utvikle deres kommunikasjonskompetanse.

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1 Introduction

The present Master's thesis (MA) arose out of my personal interest in language teaching. At the beginning of my teaching career, I was a strong advocate of grammar teaching for two reasons:

- (1) what I had been taught at the University of Agder and the University of Oslo, where they stressed the teaching of grammar, and
- (2) what I had observed during my first year as an English teacher, where the teachers taught grammar in a traditional way; relying on whatever the textbook offered.

However, my views about how much time and effort I spend on grammar in my English lessons have now changed. I now find myself spending less time on it, as I have seen that teaching grammar does not have much impact on my students' written or oral skills. In addition, and despite less time being devoted to grammar, my students still improve in both written and oral skills. As they develop their English competence in general, it seems that they acquire, and learn grammar competence as well, and learn the structures of the English language by using it.

My impression is that a common frustration among English teachers is that no matter how much time they spend on teaching grammar, the students do not seem to utilize the rules and the structures when communicating, whether orally or in writing, which is referred to as the inert knowledge problem (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). This is of utmost importance, considering that the English teacher's primary aim is, according to the English subject curriculum in the *Knowledge Promotion* (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research [KD], hereafter LK06/13), to teach their students to communicate. Some relevant solutions would be to introduce them to useful words and grammatical patterns that are necessary for communication in English. As the students mature, they might recognize patterns they know and be able to use these communicatively, if exposed to meaningful, engaging and relevant tasks that encourage them to use these patterns. Only then will the students get the chance to automatize their English skills and knowledge (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016).

Teachers face a number of challenges when it comes to teaching grammar; including my above-mentioned dilemma with regard to how much exposure to grammar is necessary, what

to teach and when to teach it. The complexity of the competence aims in the English subject curriculum (LK06/13) does not help. Teachers often interpret them differently, as they are vague when it comes to defining what areas of grammar to teach and how to teach it. Furthermore, as the curriculum does not specify teaching methods (Mikkelsen & Fladmoe, 2009), or explicitly specify what language to use during English lessons in general, teachers have to decide themselves what methods and language to use during English lessons or how to approach grammar. Moreover, teachers might rely on the textbook, and on teaching grammar in isolation, which in turn might conflict with the curriculum's focus on developing communicative competence. Instead, teaching grammar should ideally be based on the students' needs (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). In view of these challenges, the aim of my MA study is to take a closer look at how teachers teach grammar, their personal views on grammar teaching, and their students' needs for grammar teaching.

1.1 Why is this important?

There seem to be disagreements among theorists about how to perceive grammar. One discussion revolves around whether grammar is the underlying knowledge of rules, a skill which people use to communicate, or if it is about meaning and clarity (Burns & Richards, 2012); which is even debated in the media (Brown, 2014¹). Among researchers, there has been an ongoing debate for years about whether grammar should be taught, and whether students benefit from grammar instruction at all. The main debate focuses on whether grammar should be taught explicitly; as a deliberate study of grammar rules (deductively or inductively) where they deduce the rules from examples, or implicitly where students are exposed to grammatical structures through meaning-focused communication (Ellis, 2014; Scott, 1990). 35 years ago, Krashen (1982) argued that an explicit approach to teaching grammar is of limited value and that instead, learners should be exposed to comprehensible input.

Ellis (2001) on the other hand, claims that learners should be exposed to explicit grammar instruction in order to achieve higher levels of grammatical competence. Swain (2000) argues against Krashen, contending that the learners need to produce language themselves to improve their grammatical competence in a language, and suggests that a combination of input and output is beneficial. In line with this view, Myhill (2004) argues in favor of teaching

¹ Why grammar lessons should be renamed 'understanding language' by J. Brown. The Guardian, 11 July 2014.

grammar on the basis that it will help the learners develop specific skills, such as writing, in the target language. In a Norwegian context, Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) seem to support Swain's view; arguing that both input and output will lead to learning if the language activities are meaningful and relevant to the learners.

Furthermore, Ellis (2006) proposes that grammar can be taught through corrective feedback, which he defines as "teacher responses to learner errors" (p. 99). There are, however, different views on whether or not the correction of oral errors is beneficial (Terrell, 1982), or whether students need feedback at all (Ur, 1996). With regard to corrective feedback in written production, there is a comprehensive debate between Truscott (1996) who goes against corrective feedback, and Ferris (1999), who supports it as long as it is effective.

There also seem to be disagreements about whether grammar instruction is best taught in the students' first language (L1) or in the target language, or if a combination of languages should be used, also known as code-switching (Ellis, 1994). Although output and input are important, Cook (2001) argues that the use of the students' L1 does not harm their ability to learn the target language if one encourages the use of the target language. Dahl (2015) however, stresses the importance of extensive exposure to the target language.

Although we have knowledge about what theorists believe is important when it comes to grammar teaching, we have little knowledge about what actually happens in the Norwegian classroom when it comes to English teaching in general, and especially English grammar teaching (e.g., Aasen et al., 2012). Acknowledging that there is more to grammar than meets the eye, and that there are different views about what role grammar should be given in the English classroom in Norway, it is important to investigate how Norwegian teachers actually approach grammar in their English classrooms. This is what I intended to do in this MA study, using classroom observations in lower secondary school.

1.2 Prior research on grammar teaching in Norway

To the best of my knowledge, no prior studies have been conducted on the teaching of English grammar using classroom observations in either lower- or upper secondary school in Norway. Although a majority of teachers report working with oral skills on a daily basis (Aasen et al., 2012), teachers in lower secondary school (74%) do so more frequently than teachers in upper secondary school (58%). However, we do not know whether focusing on

oral skills includes grammar instruction, or whether they do so in the English subject (Aasen et al., 2012). Fortunately, a small number of MA studies have been conducted that are of relevance to the teaching of grammar. Austad (2009) Burner (2005), and Reinholdt (2014) have all analyzed English textbooks to reveal the presentation and handling of grammar in these textbooks, and also the teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching. In addition, Hoff (2013), has investigated to what extent L1 was used in the English classroom.

In his MA study, Burner (2005) investigated teachers' attitudes to English grammar teaching in upper secondary school, and how grammar was treated in textbooks during the R94 curriculum. He found that the type of grammar exercises and their quantity varied greatly, and that the treatment of grammar in the textbooks was unsystematic. He also found that based on the teachers' reported practices, grammar books were rarely used in the teaching, that the practice of teaching grammar varied extensively, both quantitatively and qualitatively, between classes, and that the attitudes and teaching practices varied according to the teacher's formal education.

In Austad's (2009) MA study, she examined how grammar was presented in textbooks launched after the introduction of LK06/13 in lower secondary school compared with the textbooks used in the former lower secondary curriculum (L97). Similar to Burner (2005), she also investigated the teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching, but while he used interviews, she used a survey. Her findings revealed that the LK06/13 textbooks approached grammar in a better way, in terms of a larger variety of grammar exercises. The findings also showed that most of the textbooks contained more inductive grammar exercises, compared to the L97 books, which included more deductive exercises. She defined inductive exercises as the discovery of principles, and deductive ones as the study of grammar rules (Austad, 2009). Her survey showed that the teachers had experienced a decline in their students' grammar skills and that they believed grammar instruction is important to help them to write and speak English better. In her concluding remarks, she states that grammar teaching should be included in the English classroom, but that teachers still have a long way to go when it comes to improving their grammar lessons to maintain the students' interest. Interestingly, when Reinholdt (2014) in her MA study compared grammar tasks in textbooks for teaching English in upper secondary schools in R94 with textbooks related to the present curriculum (LK06/13), she found that grammar has gained a stronger position in the current curriculum

then it had in the previous one. However, her study was purely theoretical and does not offer information about classroom practices.

Another MA study of relevance, due to the debate about language use in grammar instruction, was Hoff (2013), who conducted a qualitative study using both observations and interviews to find out how L1 (Norwegian) is used in L2 (English) instruction in both lower and upper secondary school. The study showed that L1 is used inconsistently due to teacher proficiency and competence, their ability to adjust their use of English, their attitudes towards L1/L2, their perception of their students' comprehension level, and also in relation to the students' maturity. She also found more widespread use of L1 in lower secondary school than in upper secondary school, and suggested that teachers should use the concept of comprehensible input as a foundation in facilitative language learning. Hoff (2013) also argued that since LK06/13 provides vague guidelines as what language to use in the classroom, this might contribute to the overuse of L1 in English instruction.

Together, these MA studies confirm a change in focus of grammar in textbooks, and among English teachers concerning their grammar teaching and their use of L1 in their English classrooms. However, none of these studies have studied grammar teaching in situ in classroom situations, which I intended to do in my MA study. In order to study classroom instruction in English, I was invited by my main supervisor, Lisbeth M. Brevik, to participate in the Linking Instruction and Student Engagement (LISE) study at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research (ILS) at the University of Oslo, led by Professor Kirsti Klette, with Associate Professor Lisbeth M. Brevik as project coordinator. The LISE study has filmed English lessons in seven lower secondary school classroom. I will describe the LISE study in more detail in Chapter 3 (Methods).

1.3 Objectives and research questions

In light of the above status of knowledge and my participation in the LISE study, the main research question of this MA study is:

How do English teachers approach grammar instruction in lower secondary school, and which grammar mistakes are observed in English among the students in their oral communication?

I only focus on oral production, as classroom observations do not provide students' written production, and it also gives me the opportunity to observe spontaneous classroom talk. To investigate the main research question in greater detail, I developed three sub-questions:

- (1) To what extent and how is grammar taught in English in seven lower secondary school classrooms in 9th grade?
- (2) How do two of the teachers in the observed classrooms explain their teaching of English grammar?
- (3) What characterizes the students' oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms?

Sub-questions (1) and (2) are teacher-oriented and provide a detailed overview of the teaching of grammar in the seven observed classrooms. In addition, I was provided the opportunity to interview two of the teachers for my MA study to identify how these teachers explain their choice of teaching or not teaching English grammar. Sub-question (3) is student-oriented, in which I present the students' grammatical mistakes in oral communication.

As the objective of this MA study is to explore how Norwegian teachers approach grammar in their English classrooms, I will be looking at the seven different LISE classrooms at seven different schools, in three different counties, and interview the teachers in two of these classrooms. By combining these two approaches, I will not only get an insight into how these teachers approach grammar but, also a deeper understanding of the teachers' perspectives, in addition to identifying the students' needs for grammar teaching.

1.4 Context: Teaching of English grammar in Norway

It is interesting to see how the different English curricula have altered in step with the changing landscape of teaching approaches, currently focusing on communicative competence (CC) and communicative language teaching (CLT) in the present curriculum (LK06/13).

The English subject curriculum of 1974 (hereafter M74) stressed the learning of grammatical elements through systematic exercises based on dialogues and texts, and creating natural speech conversations was emphasized using the target language (Drew & Sørheim, 2006).

This was followed by the English subject curriculum of 1987 (hereafter M87) which was strongly influenced by CLT. M87 stressed that the students needed to practice using the target language to be able to express themselves as clearly as possible. The view was that grammar elements would be learned through concrete examples and the use of English in the classroom, and that instead of being afraid of making errors the students must learn from their errors. The subsequent English curriculum (hereafter L97) was not revolutionary in itself, but it introduced English at the 1st grade level and encouraged varied language input. Elements of the expanding role of English as a world language was also found in L97 since it highlighted the fact that good language skills were essential for international communication. Students were encouraged to discover and examine the language and test their knowledge of it by using it. In addition, the students were to learn the language through a practical and theoretical approach, in which a variety of activities and organization forms were highlighted (Drew & Sørheim, 2006).

The present curriculum, LK06/13, is clearly inspired by CC and CLT. It focuses on the learner's ability to use the language to communicate through meaning-focused tasks. Instead of focusing on separate elements of the language, e.g., grammar, the focus is put on the language as a whole (Drew & Sørheim, 2006; Simensen, 1998). LK06/13 highlights the need for English for communication purposes, and students should gain experience in using it. When reading the current LK06/13 English subject curriculum, communication is mentioned as the main goal for students, and it specifies the need to develop communication skills by focusing on different aspects of the English language, where grammar skills have equal status with other skills (LK06/13):

We need to develop a vocabulary and skills in using the systems of the English language, its phonology, orthography, grammar, and principles for sentence and text construction and to be able to adapt the language to different topics and communication situations.

In other words, communication skills are based on, and a result of different competences; knowing different words (vocabulary), knowing the sounds of the language (phonology), mastering spelling and punctuation (orthography), and grammar, as well as being able to form good sentences and text (oral and written), while adapting their language use to different contexts. This also means that students should be able to distinguish between spoken and written language (LK06/13).

Only a few competence aims in LK06/13 describe how the students should be able to use grammar after year 10, with only one of these relating oral communication to grammar (LK06/13):

Main area: Oral communication. The students should use the central patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and different types of sentences in communication.

As the main aim of the LK06/13 is to teach students how to use English to communicate, teachers bear the responsibility to help the students develop their communicative competence. Since the LK06/13 identifies English as a global language used for communication, students should not only have knowledge of how the English language is used in different situations but also gain experience in using it. Until recently, English has been considered a foreign language in Norway due to “a dichotomous notions of the English language as either foreign or second” (Brevik, 2015, p. 4). Considering the exposure to English outside of school and English language proficiency, Rindal (2013) argues that English no longer feels foreign to Norwegians (p. 4). Instead, English in Norway can be considered a second language (L2) which Ellis (1997) defines as “the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom” (p. 3).

As pointed out by Chvala and Graedler (2010), “literacy in English develops alongside the pupils’ first language literacy. Other foreign languages, by contrast, are not introduced until after the foundation for literacy has been established” (p. 75). The notion of English as a second language in Norway can explain why English is described as a subject curriculum separate from the foreign languages in LK06/13, and why students are introduced to English as early as 1st grade in Norway, unlike other foreign languages which are not introduced before the 5th or 8th grade.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises six chapters. The present chapter is an introductory chapter, which describes the background and purpose of this thesis, introduces the research questions and contextualized English grammar teaching and learning in Norway. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framing of this thesis; exploring different perceptions and types of grammar, and also looks at the debate about grammar teaching and corrective feedback. Chapter 3 contains a

detailed account of the methods chosen for this thesis based on my research questions, and an explanation of the analytical codes and categories used in my video observations. In Chapter 4, I present the main findings which I discuss in Chapter 5 in light of the theoretical framing. Finally, Chapter 6 contains conclusive remarks about my MA study and also outlines suggestions for further research.

2 Theory and prior research

The purpose of this chapter is to explain my use of theory and prior research in my MA study and how these relate to the analyses and discussions of English grammar instruction in later chapters. I have divided the chapter into three parts; What is English grammar? (2.1), The teaching of grammar (2.2), and Corrective feedback (2.3).

2.1 What is English grammar?

Grammar is perceived in different ways, and no globally agreed upon definition of grammar exists (Burns & Richards, 2012). Crystal (2004) defines grammar as “the business of taking a language to pieces, to see how it works” (p. 7). He further explains that we need to be able to put the pieces back together again and see how the pieces are combined to produce meaningful sentences and texts. For this to occur, he argues, one needs to understand the rules of the English language. Crystal’s view of grammar is in line with Thornbury’s (2008) interpretation of grammar, as “the study of what forms or structures are possible in a language” (p. 1). Burns and Richards (2012) mention that many might support this view of grammar as “the underlying knowledge of the system of rules, which speakers apply to form correct sentences in spoken and written production” (p. 258).

However, Burns and Richards (2012) also acknowledge that some might perceive grammar as something more, as “more of a skill which speakers deploy creatively in acts of communication to achieve intended meanings” (p. 258). Richards and Reppen (2014) also underline the ability to use grammar as a communicative resource in spoken and written discourse. Interestingly, Crystal (Brown, 2014) does so as well highlighting the notion that identifying grammar aspects is not enough when aiming for communicative competence: “You have to put the notion of grammar in the background. It’s about meaning and clarity. Clarity unites us”².

² Why grammar lessons should be renamed ‘understanding language’ by J. Brown. *The Guardian*, 11 July 2014.

2.1.1 Pedagogical grammar

Different theories of language result in different types of grammar with varying purposes and assumptions. In an educational context, we usually talk about pedagogical grammar. Newby (2015) defines pedagogical grammar as “a grammar developed for learners of a foreign language” (p. 1), that can be defined as a set of tools, such as a grammar course book with grammar exercises, designed “to facilitate the development of grammatical competence and the skill of using grammar” (p. 2). Pedagogical grammar is, however, the most controversial area of modern language teaching. The reason, according to Newby (2008), is the lack of consensus about how grammar operates as a communication system and about what methodology should be used to facilitate grammar acquisition among learners of the target language (Newby, 2015). Typical issues that are discussed are: How important is grammar? How is grammar acquired? How should grammar be taught? Does a conscious knowledge of grammar rules help learners? (Newby, 2008).

As a result, teachers often teach grammar in a traditional way; teacher-oriented, and based on a presentation-practice-production model, with a focus on form rather than meaning, and with close-ended grammatical exercises (Newby, 2015). Newby (2015) stresses two shortcomings with this approach. One is that traditional grammar methodology separates grammar from other aspects of communication, while it also places too much emphasis on explicit knowledge of rules and deductive learning. Another is that it does not provide sufficient methodological support to develop an awareness of grammatical rules and their use. Instead, Newby (2015) argues that teaching grammar should be integrated into the language teaching in a more holistic approach. In his 2015 study he also suggests that teachers need to draw on three different theories considering what grammar is and how it is acquired (p. 15):

- (1) A theory of grammar – an understanding of what language is and how it functions as a communicative system.
- (2) A theory of learning/acquisition – an understanding of acquisition processes and the learner’s cognitive, affective, and functional needs.
- (3) A theory of methodology – a knowledge of a wide range of methods and classroom techniques, and how, when and whether to apply them

On the basis of the three theories above, Newby (2015) suggests a theoretical model of pedagogical grammar which he refers to as *Cognitive + Communicative Grammar (C+C)*. He defines cognitive grammar as “the storage and processing of concepts, knowledge, and information within the human mind” (p. 5), and argues that learners need to use various strategies to explore for themselves how language works. He adds that teachers should only function as facilitators of the communication process (Newby, 2013). He puts it as follows that Communicative grammar is “the process of communicating messages between human beings in actual contexts, grammar being a means of expressing certain types of meanings through grammatical forms” (Newby, 2013, p. 2).

The overall aim of the C+C model is “to weave Cognitive and Communicative principles of both language description and language learning into a coherent whole” (Newby, 2015, p. 33). He argues that this will enable teachers to explore different aspects of language; the acquisition and use of grammar, and contribute to pedagogical grammar by helping to systematize specific tasks (Newby, 2013). It can help with the evaluation and design of grammar activities, as well as describe language (Newby, 2015). Although theorists have discussed Newby’s perception of grammar in an educational setting for decades, there is still some discussion about whether the teaching of grammar is necessary at all, which I examine in the following section.

2.2 The teaching of grammar

Views on grammar teaching have changed dramatically over the last decades. At the outset, linguists and others sought to develop principles and procedures for the design of teaching methods and material in language teaching, as this field of education became increasingly influential in the educational system (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Since then, different approaches to teaching and learning English have been tested, evaluated and modified to improve the effectiveness of language teaching. The changes that have been brought about also reflect the changes that learners need today (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). These changes have been considered a paradigm shift, in which old concepts and theories have been replaced by new and different ideas (Simensen, 1998).

2.2.1 The grammar-translation method

By the nineteenth century, the prominent approach to teaching English was the grammar-translation method (GTM) which had its roots in the teaching of Latin. The goal was not primarily to develop the ability to communicate, but to learn the grammatical system.

Grammar was taught deductively through the presentation and study of grammar rules, which the students then practiced through translation exercises. It was also taught in a systematic and sequenced way, using the students' L1 for grammar instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Simensen, 1998).

2.2.2 The direct method

From 1925, the direct method or the natural method replaced the GTM. Grammar instruction was to be given in the target language as the attention shifted from teaching writing and reading to focus on listening and speaking. The direct method emphasized pronunciation and accuracy, and grammar was to be taught inductively, in an approach where the students were to infer grammatical rules based on sentences and texts presented to them (Simensen, 1998).

2.2.3 The audio-lingual method

During the 1960s, a new structural approach was introduced, called the audio-lingual method. Good pronunciation and learning the structure of the language were important objectives, while reading and writing, were more or less neglected (Simensen, 1998). The audio-lingual method was teacher centered, and the teacher acted as a stimulus to ensure correct responses from the students and to correct errors immediately. The approach used the principle of presentation-practice-production, with the primary focus on grammatical structures and sentence patterns. New language was to be presented to the students in the forms of dialogues; they were to practice it through repetition and drills and produce the language by putting it to use. The approach was largely based on behaviorist views of learning such as habit formation (repetition), imitation (drills), and reinforcement (production). Therefore, the approach tended to focus on the two first stages (repetition and drills) and neglect the production stage, a requirement in producing language creatively (Drew & Sørheim, 2006; Simensen, 1998).

2.2.4 Communicative competence and communicative language teaching

In the 1970s, Hymes (1972) and other researchers ushered in the new view of language proficiency already mentioned in section 1.4, namely communicative competence (CC), in which the focus moved from focusing solely on vocabulary and grammar and correct utterances to helping students develop the skills needed for effective communication. Hymes (1972) defined CC as knowledge of “when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (p. 277). This concept includes not only linguistic competence and the implicit knowledge of language forms but also the ability to use the language to communicate functionally and interactively, known as pragmatic competence (Brown, 2007). In other words, CC does not only pay attention to what is linguistically correct but also to what is appropriate in the given communication situation. CC became extremely popular among those involved in L2 pedagogy because of its comprehensiveness; it did not only cover one aspect of language learning as so many of the earlier approaches but focused on language as a whole with the aim to make people capable of communicating in appropriate and acceptable ways (Simensen, 1998).

However, CC does not place less focus on the learning of grammar. Grammar is, in fact, part of Canale and Swain’s (1980) theoretical framework for CC, which they developed for L2 teaching. It comprises four different competencies; grammatical (knowledge of lexical items and rules), sociolinguistic (understanding of the social context in which language is used), discourse (cohesion and coherence), and strategic (verbal and nonverbal communication strategies). These competencies are central for students’ language development and use.

With the introduction of CC in the 1970s and 80s, communicative language teaching (CLT) became the dominant approach in English language teaching and still is. A new element in CLT was that being able to use language successfully was more important than using it correctly (Drew & Sørheim, 2006). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014, p. 85), two important aims comprise CLT:

- (1) make CC the goal of language teaching, and
- (2) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.

Another of the key features of CLT was the focus on student-centered learning, and the holistic practice of language, as opposed to focusing more narrowly on grammatical or linguistic competence. Fluency and accuracy are seen as complementary principles when using the language productively and receptively (in unrehearsed contexts). Furthermore, task-based instruction is a central feature in CLT where the teacher's main point is to focus on communication (Drew & Sørheim, 2006). Skehan (1998, in Brown, 2007) describes a task-based instruction in this sense, as "an activity in which meaning is primary, there is a problem to solve and relationship to real-world activities, with an objective that can be assessed in terms of an outcome" (p. 242).

Classroom organization in line with CLT will normally be in pairs or groups, and a basic belief is that errors will only strengthen the development of correct language forms (Drew & Sørheim, 2006). Although CLT is task-based, all communication strategies are encouraged. Nunan (1991, p. 279) summarizes CLT as follows:

- (1) An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
- (2) The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
- (3) The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning process itself.
- (4) An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
- (5) An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside of the classroom.

According to Drew and Sørheim (2006), lower secondary school students will benefit from a mix of the approaches mentioned above. They argue that students need to understand the grammatical system; practicing the language using it in both oral and written communication. Thus, within CLT, an eclectic approach to learning grammar, which includes all of the above, is what researchers seem to recommend.

2.2.5 Current views on grammar teaching

In addition to the changing views on how to teach grammar, there has been an ongoing debate about whether grammar should be taught at all, and about whether students benefit from grammar instruction at all. As mentioned above, for decades grammar held the most important position in the curricula but was challenged by the introduction of the CLT approach (Ellis, 2002).

Corder (1967) and Krashen (1982) argue that learners appear to follow a natural sequence in their language acquisition, what Krashen (1982) terms the Natural Order Hypothesis, and therefore do not benefit from explicit grammar teaching at the wrong time in the order of acquisition. Instead, they argue that learners learn language and structure from being exposed to as much input as possible. According to Krashen (1982), “we acquire by understanding language that contains structure a little beyond our current level of competence ($i + 1$)” (p. 21), where i refers to the current stage of the learner’s language proficiency. The idea is that when learners use their existing competence to make sense of the input they receive, that is one step beyond the learner’s stage of competence (the $+1$), the learner will improve and progress. On this basis, Krashen (1982) believes that grammar instruction would only play a limited role in developing the ability to use the language, and the key would instead be to offer learners comprehensible input and meaning-focused tasks.

As stated by Krashen (1982), input is crucial to expose learners to the language, especially language that is slightly above the learner’s present competence. Swain (2000) argues that to develop grammatical competence in a language, the combination of input and output is beneficial. According to Swain (2000), “output pushes learners to process language more deeply – with more mental effort – than does input” (p. 99). The learner needs to produce, orally or in writing, to meet communicative goals. In this manner, learners will become aware of what they can and cannot do to create linguistic form and meaning in the target language. This corresponds to Thornbury’s (2001) view that, “learners need to notice features of the input – specifically the way that the choice of form impacts on meaning” (p. 42).

Ellis (2006), on the other hand, claims that this position, which he characterizes as the “zero-position” has been superseded by the recognition that some focus on form is necessary in the language classroom to improve language knowledge and the ability to use the language. By focusing on form, Ellis (2001) refers to, “any planned or incidental instructional activity that

is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form” (p. 2). This focus on form, he states, is supported by several studies made in the 1980s and 1990s, claiming that learners who were exposed to grammar instruction would, by and large, achieve higher levels of grammatical competence than learners only being exposed through natural input (Ellis, 2006).

Research also offers some support for the utility of teaching grammar to develop specific skills in the target language, such as writing skills. In her research, Myhill (2004; Myhill et al., 2012, 2013) focuses on the links between writing and effective grammar instruction. She argues that it is vital “that young writers be shown how understanding grammar gives them greater control over what they communicate to readers” (Myhill, 2004, p. 23). She further highlights the fact that teachers often lack the confidence and knowledge of grammar to teach it well, and argues that this insecurity leads to the inaccurate teaching of grammar (Myhill et al., 2013). Consequently, only teachers who are confident using grammar themselves and who clearly understand the principles of contextualized grammar teaching will be able to realize the full potential of a focus on grammar in the classroom (Myhill et al., 2012). Crystal (Brown, 2014) seems to argue in line with this view, that grammar needs context; stating that he is worried that without understanding language, “teachers are unwittingly teaching incorrect things”³ in the English classroom.

In a Norwegian educational context, Flognfeldt and Lund (2016), argue that both input and output are central in language education. Both input and output should be meaningful since language is a means of communication. Being exposed to meaningful communication activities that are significant and relevant to the learners, will inevitably lead to learning (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016).

Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) propose the teaching of a variety of grammatical aspects in the English classroom on the background that grammar can be useful when one wants to say something meaningful. Taking into account that “learners are supposed to be able to adapt their language, they need to be aware of the options available to them” (p. 93). Based on this, they suggest teaching the following grammatical aspects: the grammar of nouns; which also includes determiners and pronouns, different verb forms such as time, tense and aspect, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. When it comes to the teaching of nouns, they look into

³ Why grammar lessons should be renamed ‘understanding language’ by J. Brown. The Guardian, 11 July 2014.

two different noun forms; one expressing number (singular vs. plural), and one marking possession (the genitive). They stress the importance of being able to know how determiners work in English, since “reference to persons, things and other entities in the world is such an important part of human communication” (p. 122), but also seeing that some determiners are quite different from that of Norwegian. The types of determiners they list as relevant are the definite- and indefinite article, demonstratives, quantifying-, possessive-, *Wh (which or what)*- and the indefinite determiners: some or any. Since pronouns such as personal, demonstrative, possessive, relative, reciprocal, and indefinite pronouns can replace nouns, they function as a way to vary language in oral or written text. It can, therefore, be crucial to teach pronouns. In connection to verbs, “it often matters when events take place, so it is important for language users to be aware of the resources that are available in English for the expression of time” (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016, p. 135).

To make sense, it is also central to know the different word forms, e.g., inflectional morphology. However, a typical mistake made by learners is subject-verbal concord. Although it worries a lot of teachers, it will not necessarily hinder communication between people (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). Prepositions, on the other hand, might, which may be the most demanding part of the English language as distinguishing between the meanings of the different prepositions is challenging. One and the same word can function in a variety of meanings in English. Some might transfer prepositions that look similar in two languages, but this is not always appropriate. It can also be difficult for a learner to distinguish between an adjective and an adverb. In both oral and written communication, students sometimes use an adjective instead of an adverb. Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) also suggest the teaching of the structure of clauses, but considering the information gathered from Table 2.1, found later in section 2.3.4, this will be of limited concern to correct when it comes to spoken language.

2.2.6 Code-switching

When it comes to the teaching of grammar, Dahl (2015) points out that many teachers might feel the need to use their L1 since grammatical terminology is considered difficult to understand for the students. This is also known as code-switching, which Ellis (1994) defines as “one kind of intra-speaker variation. It occurs when speaker changes from one variety of language in accordance with situational or purely personal factors” (p. 696).

Three decades ago, Franklin (1990) found that over 80 percent of teachers used L1 when explaining grammar. This view is in agreement with a recent study conducted by Kumar and Narendra (2012), where they found that teachers more often resorted to code-switching in grammar lessons than in other areas of teaching. They argue that the students understand the grammar points more efficiently when being taught in their L1 (Kumar & Narendra, 2012).

Although code-switching is commonly used during grammar instruction, Dahl (2015) offers three arguments against such a practice. First, she argues the students will not receive enough exposure to the target language. Second, switching between languages in this manner can indicate that the teacher is about to teach something difficult. Third, it can be confusing and lead to interference with their L1. By contrast, Cook (2001) argues that the use of the students' L1 in the classroom does not prevent the students from acquiring the target language. According to Cook (2001), it is more important to encourage the students to use the target language as much as possible instead of preventing them from using their L1. However, the strongest argument against code-switching, as pointed out by Dahl (2015) is that “the main source of language learning is exposure to the language. The more often the students hear the target language, the more often they have the opportunity to learn from this input” (p. 121, my translation).

2.2.7 Explicit vs. implicit grammar teaching

Assuming then, that teachers should teach grammar, the question is how to teach it. According to Ellis (1997), the answer is perceived differently by researchers and teachers. He argues that while researchers are more concerned with testing theory, teachers are more concerned with facilitating efficient language learning; that the learners can use the grammatical features targeted in a lesson accurately and fluently in communication. Ellis (2014) and Thornbury (2001) look at two approaches to teaching grammar that can account for how learners acquire grammar; namely the explicit and implicit approaches. While implicit grammar teaching attempts to engage in meaning-focused communication from which the learning of grammatical forms occurs naturally, the aim of the explicit approach is not to teach grammar for communicative purposes, but to help learners develop a metalinguistic understanding of grammatical structures instead.

A wider definition of the two approaches is that an explicit approach assumes it is the teacher's role to teach what the students do not know, while an implicit approach assumes that

the teacher's role is to help the students use what they already know more effectively (Thornbury, 2001). These definitions echo Ellis's (2014) and Scott's (1990) definitions of the two approaches:

The aim of explicit teaching is "to abandon the aim of teaching grammar for immediate communicative use and replace it with a lesser aim – helping learners to develop metalinguistic understanding of grammatical structures." The aim of implicit grammar teaching is "to embed the teaching of grammar into task-based approach where attention to grammatical form arises naturally out of the attempt to engage in meaning-focused communication" (Ellis, 2014, p. 10).

An explicit approach to teaching grammar insists upon the value of deliberate study of a grammar rule, either by deductive analysis or inductive analogy, in order to organize linguistic elements efficiently and accurately. An implicit approach, by contrast, is one which suggests that students should be exposed to grammatical structures in a meaningful and comprehensible context in order that they may acquire, as naturally as possible, the grammar of the target language (Scott, 1990, p. 779).

According to these definitions, explicit grammar teaching is of value if it assists the development of the implicit knowledge needed for effective communication. Although the implicit approach caters to the learners' incidental rather than intentional language learning, it can help them progress towards it.

However, an example from a study conducted by Scott (1990) suggests a reason why students gain more knowledge about grammatical structures from explicit teaching compared to implicit teaching. In his study, two groups of students were exposed to explicit and implicit grammar teaching through listening to specific grammar structures. The explicit group was exposed to grammar structures through hearing rules and examples, while the implicit group heard stories with the same grammar structures embedded in the text (Scott, 1990). The outcome of this study showed that students benefitted more from explicit than implicit teaching, as the students seemed more occupied with listening to the actual story than recognizing the grammatical structures (Scott, 1990).

Ellis (2014) argues that both approaches are of value in grammar teaching and that learners need both types of knowledge. This distinction lies at the heart of grammar teaching. Implicit

knowledge is fundamental and necessary in that it is effective for communication purposes, while explicit knowledge is helpful in correcting errors. In line with Krashen (1982), Ellis (2014) nevertheless argues that implicit knowledge is primary although it is not teachable. It functions as a subconscious process built up through exposure to and usage of the language where learners need to detect the underlying patterns they have internalized. Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, is teachable, like mathematics, Ellis argues (2014).

2.2.8 Deductive vs. inductive grammar teaching

Dahl (2015) suggests explicit grammar instruction is necessary on the basis that the students will not be exposed to sufficient language input to acquire grammar implicitly, this due to the fragmented time spent on the target language in the classroom. This section will, therefore, cover two contrastive ways to grammar teaching in more detail: rule-driven learning and discovery learning (Thornbury, 2008). Rule-driven learning is known as a deductive approach, where one starts with presenting a rule, which is then followed by examples in which the rule is applied. Discovery learning is known as an inductive approach, which starts with examples from which a rule is then inferred (Thornbury, 2008).

Thornbury (2008) acknowledges that there are advantages and disadvantages with both approaches. Some of the disadvantages of the deductive approach are that some students might not understand the concepts involved. This, in turn, results in a lack of student interaction, and students might assume that learning a language is simply a case of knowing the rules. On the other hand, the advantages might exceed the disadvantages. As a deductive approach goes straight to the point, it can be time-saving and more effective than the inductive approach. Nevertheless, many of the pros and cons hinge on the quality of the actual rule explanation (Thornbury, 2008).

In comparison, some disadvantages of the inductive approach are that it might mislead students into believing that rules are the objective of language learning, rather than a means, it is time-consuming, as it might take time working out a rule, and it might be experienced as frustrating (Thornbury, 2008). Some advantages of the inductive approach, however, might be that it challenges the learners and makes learning more exciting when having to figure out the rules for themselves. This ensures a greater degree of cognitive depth and students being more actively involved in the learning process than they would be in a deductive approach. Also,

collaborative problem-solving in the target language gives the students extra language practice (Thornbury, 2008).

Finally, Ellis (2006) argues that there is not only one approach to teaching grammar. The acquisition of the grammatical system of the target language is a complex process that is best assisted by a variety of approaches. He argues that grammar should emphasize not only form but also the meanings and uses of different grammatical structures. He further states that grammar should not be taught to beginners, but to those who have already acquired some ability in using the language. Next, instead of teaching the whole of grammar, he insists that teachers should focus on the most problematic aspects they notice.

Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) seem to agree with Ellis (2006), that grammar instruction needs to focus on both form and meaning. They suggest exposing the students to the language through a mixture of listening and reading tasks, by speaking and writing the language, and explore the structure and system of it as well. In addition, learners need to practice using the language to develop their fluency. Instead of focusing on grammar as a separate unit, grammar is taught more effectively if based on the students' needs where the focus is on engaging and meaningful tasks.

2.3 Corrective feedback

As mentioned in the introduction, Ellis (2006) suggests that grammar can also be taught through corrective feedback, which he defines as, “teacher responses to learner errors” (p. 99). He argues that there are two types of corrective feedback; a positive one which provides support and motivates the learner, and a negative one in which the teacher signals linguistically deviation in the learners' utterances. Further, he suggests that it is important to focus on a mixture of implicit feedback (indicating an error) and explicit feedback types (direct correction) in oral communication that are both input based (means of recast) and output based (a request for clarification). As Myhill (2004) argues, grammar teaching must enable the learners to use the target language accurately and correctly to communicate successfully.

2.3.1 Mistakes vs. errors

The role of feedback varies according to the view one has of language learning. Some view feedback as contributing to language learning, while others believe it functions to foster learner motivation and ensure accuracy (Ellis, 2009). Nevertheless, the disagreement concerns “whether to correct errors, what errors to correct, how to correct them, and when to correct them” (Ellis, 2009, p. 3). What is even more important is that we need to be aware of the distinction between error and mistake. Brown (2007) highlights the importance of distinguishing between what he argues to be two very different phenomena (pp. 257-258):

Error: The result of one’s systematic competence (the learner’s system is incorrect).

Mistake: A performance error that is either a random guess or a “slip”, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly.

When producing speech, everyone will at times make mistakes. The difference lies in whether one is capable of recognizing it and able to correct the mistake. Brown (2007) states that native speakers and second language learners alike should be able to make this distinction as it has nothing to do with deficiency, but rather with imperfections in the process of producing speech. When a speaker does notice a mistake, it can be self-corrected. An error, on the other hand, cannot be self-corrected (Brown, 2007), since it reflects the current competence of the speaker. If the speaker repeatedly utters the same incorrect grammatical form, the teacher can assume that this is indeed an error and that the speaker is not capable of distinguishing between what is correct or incorrect. However, if no self-correction occurs, teachers are left with no means of knowing whether the learner made a mistake or an error (Brown, 2007).

In the grammar teaching approaches mentioned above, one of the major changes involves the focus on errors. Teachers would focus on explicit error correction up until the introduction of CLT. In CLT, however, errors are not considered a threat and that they can contribute in a positive way to obtain successful communication. How then can improved accuracy and fluency be achieved if no errors are to be corrected? Several researchers have looked into this issue.

2.3.2 Written vs. oral errors

It seems that most research has been concerned with corrective feedback for written production, as can be seen in the debate between Truscott (1996) and Ferris (1999). Truscott (1996) believes that correcting written errors can be harmful, ineffective, and even damaging for the students' accuracy; claiming that students seem to become demotivated and stressed by error correction. He argues that instead of correcting grammatical errors, teachers should devote more time and effort to questioning the errors, as "questions regarding grammar can be very difficult, even for experts" (Truscott, 1996, p. 350). Some teachers may not be able to explain the error well, and some students might not even understand the attempted explanation. Instead, accuracy is best obtained through extensive experience with the target language to develop language skills (Truscott, 1996).

Ferris (1999) also questions whether grammatical correction is effective or even appropriate. Her concern is that Truscott's (1996) arguments are based on "limited, dated, incomplete, and inconclusive evidence" (Ferris, 1999, p. 9). She argues that although error correction takes on many forms, when "selective, prioritized, and clear – [it] can and does help at least some students" (p. 4). Nevertheless, Ferris (1999) supports Truscott (1996) in his argument that no single form of correction can be effective.

Written language can be rehearsed and redrafted many times, and while it communicates across time, space and distance and contains complete sentences, spoken language is produced spontaneously. Grammatically incomplete utterances that are woven together to maintain talk are found in spoken language instead of complete sentences. The difference is that utterances sometimes involve overlap, fillers, hesitations, false starts, self-corrections, interruptions, or pauses while the speakers choose their words (Burns & Richards, 2015; Goh, 2016). Compared to written language, spoken language can also be colored by the presence of informal language, slang or non-standard grammar and vocabulary, as well as incomplete sentences which are joined by coordinators and are considered unacceptable in writing (Goh, 2016). Furthermore, spoken language production depends on the situation in which it takes place, who the speaker is and whether the speech is prepared in advance (Goh, 2016).

When it comes to correcting oral errors, Ur (1996) states that "feedback is information that is given to the learner about his or her performance of a learning task, usually with the objective of improving this performance" (p. 243). In contrast, Terrell (1982) states that "there is no

evidence which shows that the correction of speech errors is necessary or even helpful in language acquisition” (p. 126). Krashen and Terrell (1983) elaborated their view “that overt error correction of speech even in the best of circumstances is likely to have a negative effect on the student’s willingness to try to express themselves” (p. 177). According to Ellis (2009), teachers, nevertheless, face the choice of whether to delay the correction or to correct the incorrect utterance immediately, which might influence the speaker’s accuracy and fluency.

2.3.3 Accuracy vs. fluency in spoken and written language

Over the last 20 years, the prevailing view among researchers seems to have been that the teacher should not interrupt the learners’ oral communication to correct errors. For example, when students are engaged in a communicative activity, the teacher should not intervene by “telling students that they are making mistakes, insisting on accuracy and asking for repetition” (Harmer, 1983 in Ellis, 2009, p. 5). Some would, however, argue that corrective feedback works best when it occurs instantly. As pointed out by Botha (1987), many teachers find it difficult not to interrupt when they hear an error as they feel it is their responsibility to assist and guide the learner to produce almost perfect L2. Brown (2007) however, believes that teachers can become too preoccupied with noticing errors so that the correct utterances go unnoticed. He suggests that teachers should not lose sight of the value of positive reinforcement of clearly expressed language, which is a product of the learner’s progress and development. While decreasing the number of errors is an important criterion for improving language proficiency, the ultimate goal of L2 is the attainment of communicative fluency.

According to Thornbury (2005), “there is a lot more to speaking than the ability to form grammatically correct sentences and then to pronounce them” (p. iv). In this sense, the grammar of spoken language differs in a number of significant ways from the grammar of written language. For example, pauses are allowed in spoken language to maintain fluency, but not in written language as this will hinder communication (Thornbury, 2005).

However, in an educational setting, the focus is somewhat different, as teachers want their students to speak as accurately as possible. When referring to accuracy in this sense, I refer to the correctness of word forms and the correct pronunciation. However, this raises the issue of who is to decide what is correct as English takes on quite different forms in writing and speaking (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). Ellis (2009) distinguishes between “accuracy” and “fluency” in spoken language and argues that “corrective feedback has a place in the former

but not in the latter” (p. 5). He argues that we want our messages to be understood the way they were intended, and that we think about how to convey our messages in a precise and appropriate manner, so our interlocutors will understand the intended meaning. Nevertheless, the utterances do not necessarily have to be accurate or “correct” for that to happen. Even people who do not master the language very well will be able to communicate successfully.

A typical feature of fluent speech is that it contains pauses. Not unduly frequent pauses or unnatural pauses that occur midway between related groups of words, as this is a sign of a struggling speaker, but appropriate placement pauses. These pauses occur at the intersection of clauses or after groups of words that form meaningful units and supports an impression of fluency. One can also give the illusion of being fluent by using different strategies such as pause fillers like *uh* and *um*, or vagueness expressions, like *sort of* and *I mean*. The repetition of a single word is also a common device used in the production of fluency (Thornbury, 2005).

2.3.4 Which errors to correct in spoken language

In this subsection, I will focus on oral English since this comprises the data in the present thesis. According to Burns (2012), it is important that teachers devote time to teach speaking as it is a complex and dynamic skill that involves simultaneous processes. Burns (2012) suggests a model of second language speaking competence that build on the notions of knowledge of language and discourse, core speaking skills and communication strategies. Building on these aspects, students should be able “to produce language in a fluent, accurate and socially appropriate way” (Burns, 2012, p. 167). Nevertheless, spoken language tends to fall back on grammar that is based on written text. The problem is that written grammar does not always work for speaking (Carter & McCarthy 2015). Several researchers have looked into the fact that grammar in spoken language is different from that of written grammar (Burns, 2012; Carter & McCarthy, 2015; McCarthy & Carter, 1995). For example, some words such as *well*, *actually*, *of course*, and conjunctions such as *because* and *and* are more frequent in spoken language than in written language, while there are non-occurrence of subject pronouns and auxiliaries. “For the hearer, nothing is omitted from the utterance, and nothing needs to be retrieved; the utterance is complete in itself” (Warren, 2006, in Carter & McCarthy, 2015, p. 204-206).

Harmer (2001) finds it interesting that some grammatical rules are completely ignored in spoken language, such as the standard sentence structure in English; Subject (S) – Verb (V) – Object (O) – Adverb (A). Since most spoken language takes place face to face, there is less need to be as explicit as one might normally be in writing. Spoken language is characterized by being elliptic, meaning that words, phrases or whole clauses are left out because they are redundant. It takes on different forms depending on the type of genre, for example, interactive speech events (e.g., casual conversation) or non-interactive ones (e.g., lectures), as well as planned speech acts (e.g., presentations) and unplanned ones. All these types of speech acts will affect the language and grammar used (Thornbury 2005).

Burns (2012) has summarized key differences between spoken and written language as shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1. Spoken and written language: Typical features (Burns, 2012, p. 170)

Spoken language	Written language
Basic unit is the clause (utterance)	Basic unit is the sentence
Clauses linked by conjunction (<i>and, but, so</i> etc) to build the text	Clauses linked by subordination (<i>who, which, when</i> etc) to build the text
Frequent use of formulaic chunks (<i>I was lucky enough</i>)	Little use of formulaic language
Informal language preferred (<i>we used to get together</i>)	Formal language preferred (<i>commenced</i>)
Range of noticeable performance effects (hesitations, pauses, repeats, false starts, incompleteness)	Few/no noticeable performance effects
Frequent use of ellipsis (omission of grammatical elements, <i>started at the same time</i>)	Little use of ellipsis
Frequent use of personal pronouns (<i>I, we</i>)	Little use of personal pronouns

Based on these key differences, the uncertainty remains concerning which elements of grammar to correct in spoken language, and not least how to do so.

2.3.5 Using feedback in spoken language

Whether or not teachers choose to correct grammatical errors in oral communication, a good assessment practice should be relevant, motivating and result in a positive learning outcome for the students (Brevik & Blikstad-Balas, 2014). It is, therefore, important that teachers know why, what and how to assess in different situations, and also what types of assessment forms are available. The Assessment Regulations of Norway (2009) states that “the assessment should provide good feedback and guidance to the students” (§3-2) and that the basis for assessment is “the competence aims in the subject curricula as they are defined in the national curriculum” (§3-3). In other words, assessment should be based on the student’s performance on the grounds of the competence aims using formative assessment. This type of assessment provides necessary feedback for the student to be able to progress (Bøhn, 2015), which is in line with how The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (The Assessment Regulations of Norway, 2009) states what teachers should focus on in assessment for learning in Norwegian schools.

Feedback is recognized as crucial for student learning (Hattie, 2009; Wiliam, 2011) and can be defined as information used to modify teaching and learning activities, and to adapt the teachers’ instruction to meet students’ needs (Black & Wiliam, 2009, p. 9):

Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited.

To promote student learning, research has shown the importance of enabling teachers to provide spontaneous and supportive feedback to their students during the learning situations (Brevik & Blikstad-Balas, 2014), instead of *after* these are over (Wiliam, 2011). For feedback to be beneficial for the students in developing their communicative competence in English, it must be useful and effective, informative, and assure that learning has occurred (Chvala & Graedler, 2010). However, oral feedback in the classroom makes huge demands on the teacher (Hawe, Dixon, & Watson, 2008). This is particularly important for corrective feedback, where the teachers must choose between correcting an error immediately after a student has uttered it or wait until later (Ellis, 2009).

Feedback on grammatical errors in oral communication should ideally include comments on the quality of the students' utterances as well as suggestions for how students can avoid errors that lead to misunderstandings or communication breakdown in the future (Brevik & Rindal, in progress). By correcting it immediately, there is a risk of disrupting the flow of communication, while waiting until later means decontextualizing the error, which results in explicit rather than implicit grammar knowledge (Ellis, 2009).

Since I observe oral communication as expressed in English lessons, the above-mentioned aspects of grammar teaching are relevant for my MA study, particularly when considering whether or not to use corrective feedback. In the next chapter, I build on the theoretical framing and prior research presented in this chapter, and explain the methods I have used in this MA study to identify approaches to the teaching of grammar in the English classroom and which grammar mistakes are observed in English among the students in their oral communication.

3 Methods

In this chapter, I present the methods I have chosen for my MA study, in order to examine my main research question – *How do English teachers approach grammar instruction in lower secondary school, and which grammar mistakes are observed in English among the students in their oral communication?* First, I present the context for my study (3.1) and the research design used in this study (3.2), followed by a description of the school sample and the participants (3.3), the data collection (3.4), data analyses (3.5) and procedure (3.6). The last part of the chapter discusses research credibility (3.7).

3.1 The LISE video study

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I was invited to participate in the project Linking Instruction and Student Experience (LISE) for my MA study led by Professor Kirsti Klette and coordinated by Associate Professor Lisbeth M. Brevik. The LISE study has filmed seven classrooms in 9th grade (2015-16) and 10th grade (2016-17), in Norwegian, mathematics, English, French, science, and social studies. Three to five lessons were filmed in each subject, giving approximately 300 video-recorded lessons (Hjeltnes, Brevik & Klette, 2017). The LISE study aims at combining classroom instruction through video recordings, with student's experiences of their teaching through surveys, and the student's scores on national tests.

As my study focuses on how teachers approach grammar and grammar mistakes made in oral communication, it was useful for me to use the LISE study material. I used the filmed material from the seven 9th grade English classrooms, gathered by the LISE research team. In addition, I conducted interviews with two of the English teachers in the video-recorded classrooms about their grammar instruction for this MA study. In the following section, I comment on how the video observations and the interviews affected my choice of research design.

3.2 Research design

For this study, I have used a qualitative approach to analyze video observations across and within each of the seven English classrooms, and interviews with the English teachers in two of the classrooms. Qualitative research aims at “exploring and understanding the meaning

individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Since the purpose of this MA study is to look into how teachers approach grammar, and what type of grammar mistakes the students make in oral communication, interviews and observations seemed appropriate to capture what goes on in the classrooms in addition to the teachers’ own views.

In qualitative research, one is encouraged to use both observations and interviews (Cohen et al., 2011). The advantage of using both methods is that I got two sources of information that could complement each other, by using video observations to check that what the teachers conveyed in the interview corresponded with what they and their students did in the classroom (Maxwell, 2013).

Table 3A. Overview of my research design in three phases

Phase	Data	Research questions
1	Teacher interviews	RQ2: How do two of the teachers in the observed classrooms explain their teaching of English grammar?
2	Video observations	RQ1: To what extent and how is grammar taught in English in seven lower secondary school classrooms in 9 th grade?
3	Video observations	RQ3: What characterizes the students’ oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms?

Table 3A shows that I designed my study in three phases. First, I interviewed teachers to identify how teachers explain their teaching of English grammar. Second, I used the video observations to identify how the teachers approached grammar in their English classrooms and what grammar mistakes were made by the students in oral communication.

3.3 Sample

Considering the limited research in English classrooms in Norway on teachers’ approaches to grammar teaching and grammar mistakes made by students in oral communication, I included all seven schools from the LISE study to answer my main research question. Table 3B displays an overview of the filmed schools along with the teachers’ background information which was collected from the LISE study’s logs.

Table 3B. Background information of the English teachers at the recorded schools

School	Teacher	Age	Education in English	Teaching experience	Interview	County
S02	Female	40-49 years	Master	14 years	No	1
S07	Male	20-29 years	61-90 stp.	6 years	Yes	1
S09	Female	60+	31-60 stp.	25 years	No	2
S13	Female	20-29 years	31-60 stp.	3,5 years	No	1
S17	Male	20-29 years	100 stp.	1,5 years	No	3
S50	Male	40-49 years	31-60 stp.	18 years	Yes	3
S51	Male	20-29 years	Master	3 years	No	1

Note. Stp = study points

The seven teachers illustrated in Table 3B and their students are included as participants in this study. Accordingly, two of the teachers who had participated in the study were selected for the interviews. They were chosen on the background that the LISE team had filmed grammar lessons with one of the teachers (S50), while the other teacher (S07) had not taught grammar in the filmed lessons.

The participants that I have used in this study can be considered a purposeful sample (Creswell, 2014) as they have obtained variation in the samples with regard to gender, age, education in English, teaching experience and county. As selecting the informants that can provide the most accurate information for answering the research question is a fundamental part of a qualitative study, purposive sampling is recommended (Ary et al., 2006). I included all the recorded schools in my study. By doing so, I found I would gain knowledge across all of the available schools, hopefully providing insight into a variation of grammar teaching. Several variations on purposive sampling are possible. In this case, however, typical case sampling was used because the participants were considered typical of the phenomenon to be studied (Ary et al., 2006) in this MA study. This means that the classrooms were chosen to observe naturally occurring teaching and learning situations.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection refers to the methods used to assemble data for the study and explains why the methods were chosen (Ary et al., 2006). As I entered the LISE study after the collection of the

video data, I did not conduct any video recordings myself, nor did I have to find candidates to interview, as I was fortunate to interview two of the participating teachers in the LISE study. On account of this, I have collected data by conducting two interviews (primary data collection) and followed up with watching the tapes of the recorded lessons (secondary data use). Table 3C below gives an overview of the data material.

Table 3C. Overview of the data material (9th grade)

School	Video-recorded lessons available for analysis	Interview
S02	5 lessons	-
S07	4 lessons	10-15 minutes
S09	6 lessons	-
S13	4 lessons	-
S17	4 lessons	-
S50	5 lessons	10-15 minutes
S51	4 lessons	-
Total	32 lessons	2 teachers

3.4.1 Interviews

The purpose of a qualitative interview is, according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), to understand the informants' everyday lives from their own perspectives. In line with Kvale and Brinkman (2015), I have been aware that formal interviews involve a specific method and technique different from that of an everyday conversation. Both interviews were face-to-face and were conducted in Norwegian as this was what the two teachers preferred. They were recruited directly by e-mail after they had been suggested to me by my supervisor and coordinator of the LISE study, Lisbeth M. Brevik. The interviews lasted between 10 and 15 minutes each.

During each interview, I was interested in getting a description of what happens in the classroom concerning grammar, not a generalized description of what the teachers believe happens (Maxwell, 2013). During the interviews, I asked each teacher direct questions, using a semi-structured interview guide, in which the questions are open and flexible allowing the informants to give fuller details of the topic to a greater extent than observations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). I asked the teachers about their teaching of grammar, and whether they

believed grammar to be an important part of the English subject. The full interview guide can be found in Appendix 1, both in the original version and translated into English. One of the interviews took place at a café, and the other at the school the teacher worked at, which may have affected the teachers' answers (Creswell, 2014). It was, therefore, important for me to strive to be as objective and neutral as possible to obtain valid data by keeping a professional distance and following a strict procedure (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015).

3.4.2 Video observations

According to Cohen et al. (2011), an observation means to systematically see or observe people, events, behavior, and setting. Video recordings serve as a rich data source considering all the details it captures (Heath et al., 2010). In the observed classrooms it is possible to see what the teachers and students actually do and say. Such situations allow the researcher to collect "live" data from natural situations, and using video observations even allows the researcher to gain even more insight than only by observing *in situ* (Blikstad-Balas, 2016). It also strengthens the reliability as the researcher can review the same time segments repeatedly, and if needed, focus on different aspects in each segment (Blikstad-Balas, 2016), which in my study allowed me to observe the teachers' instruction in phase 2, and then the students' use of grammar in phase 3 (see Table 3A).

The LISE research team used two fixed cameras in the classrooms to observe the participating teachers and students. One of the cameras was set up in the back of the classroom and the other in the front of the classroom, which allowed me as a researcher to follow what the teacher and the students were doing concurrently. Two microphones were also installed to record sound. One was attached to the teacher, while the other was placed in the middle of the classroom in order to record sound from the students.

3.4.3 Use of secondary data

Since I have used recorded material from the LISE study, the data collected for this research is secondary data. Secondary data is already collected or recorded data where the researcher at hand has not participated in the data gathering (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Re-using qualitative data allows for re-analyzing interesting events that were not of explicit focus during the original research. It also gave me access to a much richer and sufficient material to carry out my research than what I could have managed to collect myself. Considering the

study's extensiveness, and the high quality it serves as it was designed and implemented by experienced researchers, I would have spent a considerably longer time collecting the data myself.

Kleven (2014) and Maxwell (2013) highlight the importance of gaining a close relationship with the participant(s) of your study, which I was able to do in the interviews I conducted. However, using the video recordings, I was an outside observer who only had access to the recordings afterward referred to as a complete covert observer (Cohen et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, Moore (2007, in Dalland, 2011) claims that it is not about reconstructing the original data but constructing already collected material. Utilizing already existing data removed the possibility of me being involved in the planning, organizing and gathering of the data (Dalland, 2011), and I had to rely on the information given to me being adequate. On the positive note, I was able to observe how grammar was approached in classroom situations where grammar instruction had not been pre-defined as an area of interest. Hopefully, this increases the naturalistic context captured.

3.5 Data analysis

For this MA study, I have used two methods of data analysis; deductive and inductive categorization. Considering that I had decided on the categories before watching the videos, my video analysis was deductive and structured (Cohen et al., 2011). The interviews were, however, semi-structured with an agenda at hand but flexible for unplanned questions (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). The theoretical analysis was, therefore, inductive, based on the themes that emerged from the data. When looking for grammar mistakes made by the students an unstructured video analysis was used as I would not know in advance what types of mistakes the students would make, and therefore had to decide on the grammar mistake categories afterward (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.5.1 Categories

To analyze the research questions dealing with approaching grammar (RQ1, RQ2) and grammar mistakes in oral communication (RQ3), I created four categories; (A) classroom situation, (B) language, (C) methods, and (D) grammar categories.

Table 3D. Categories for grammar teaching and mistakes

A	B	C	D
Classroom situation	Language	Teaching methods	Grammar categories
1. Classroom conversation 2. Teacher talking to one or more students 3. Students working together 4. Teacher presentation 5. Individual work	1. English (E) 2. Norwegian (N) 3. Switching between E/N	1. Explicit - Deductive - Inductive 2. Implicit	1. Verbs 2. Determiners 3. Prepositions 4. Nouns 5. Pronouns

The categories in Table 3D were based on the English curriculum and theory, and studies presented in Chapter 2. To prepare for my data analysis, I used the data program *InterAct*, which the LISE study and their researchers use, to create the four categories, including all sub-categories.

A. Classroom situation

I created five sub-categories to capture situations where there was grammar instruction, each focusing on how the teacher and the students interacted with one another in the classroom. These are based on the views on classroom situations pointed out in CLT, where group and pair work were emphasized, but where there was a need, the lessons should be teacher centered and at times focus on individual work. In both M87 and L97, these characteristics were found. I, therefore, considered these categories relevant. Although LK06/13 is based on a freedom of teaching methods, it does not mean that these situations are of lesser importance.

The first sub-category, *classroom conversation*, was when all the students and teachers interacted in a classroom situation, e.g., by having a class discussion about the lesson's topic, the teacher asking questions, etc. The second sub-category, *teacher talking to one or more students*, involved the teacher instructing one or more students in the classroom if they asked for help when working with a given task. When *students are working together* (sub-category 3), they were instructed to work on a given task either in pairs or in groups which they were to

talk about in class after having completed the task(s). *Teacher presentation* (sub-category 4) signifies the teacher giving a presentation about the grammar concept. The final sub-category (5), *individual work*, is when the students were given grammar tasks to work with individually.

B. Language

This category is based on the theory of code-switching (Ellis, 1994). The three sub-categories were used to code situations where the teachers used English (sub-category 1), when they used Norwegian (sub-category 2), and when they used both languages interchangeably (sub-category 3).

C. Teaching methods

Different methods can be used when approaching grammar, for example using an explicit or implicit grammar instruction (Ellis, 2014; Thornbury, 2001). Observing a situation where the teacher taught grammar explicitly (sub-category 1), would be coded as either *deductive or inductive*. It would be deductive when the teacher explicitly taught the grammar rules and inductive when the students were to deduce the grammar rules from examples. The final sub-category (2) identified whether the teachers taught implicitly when the students were exposed to grammatical structures through meaning-focused communication.

D. Grammar categories

I chose the grammatical categories based on what Burns (2012), Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) and Harmer (2001) list as important grammar elements. Seeing that Burns (2012) has made a distinction between spoken and written language, Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) give advice on what to teach, while Harmer (2001) states that the standard sentence structure in English is ignored in spoken language, I chose to merge their suggestions to identify which mistakes to look for in the students' utterances. I coded the mistakes that were verb-related as verbs, determiner-related as determiners, preposition-related as prepositions, noun-related as nouns and pronoun-related as pronouns. After I had coded each mistake, I classified the mistakes in further detail, categorizing them into different sub-categories, i.e., if the mistake related to noun was plural, I coded the mistake as plural.

3.6 Procedure

I analyzed the video recordings from each school separately, from beginning to end, to get a continuance in each classroom. I conducted the following procedural phases:

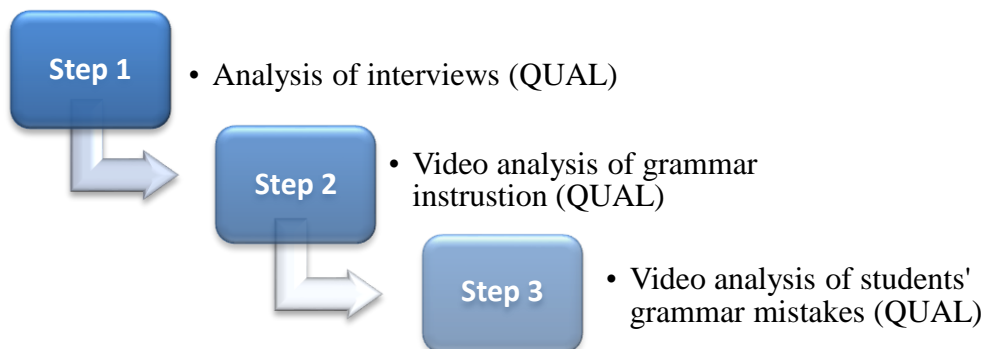


Figure 3A. The three steps of data analysis

Step 1

I started analyzing the interviews by transcribing the whole interview sessions. Next, I read through my transcriptions while listening a second and third time to ensure that I had captured everything that was said. Dalland (2011) believes that it is an advantage to transcribe all the data as it allows the researcher to study the data with “new eyes”.

Step 2

I used the software program *InterAct* to interpret and code the video recordings. The advantage of using *InterAct* was that it was possible to code the data from each school by either marking a single event or a duration of an event. By marking each event in *InterAct*, I could easily categorize the lessons seeing more clearly which of the teachers approached grammar and how, while it also gave me the possibility to compare the classrooms more thoroughly, as “coding enables the researcher to identify similar information” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 559).

Each time I identified grammar instruction, I categorized the events according to the categories: (A) the situation in which the instruction took place, (B) the language used during the grammar instruction, and (C) the teaching methods used. For the sake of capturing most details I also took notes from the most interesting parts and transcribed the content of the

grammar instructions; listening two or three times if necessary, to ensure that I captured all details in the teachers' instruction.

Step 3

Finally, I watched all the filmed lessons again. This time, to get the most accurate transcriptions as possible of what the students uttered to analyze what grammar mistakes the students made in oral communication. I transcribed most of what the students said, but I also transcribed what the teachers said when I found occurrences of implicit grammar instruction. Next, I used the transcriptions to identify and code all the oral grammar mistakes made by the students according to category (D), grammar categories. Third, I summarized all the codes and counted each mistake made by the students and placed them into the different grammatical sub-categories; verbs (subject-verbal concord, verb form, auxiliary, negative, the infinitive to, irregular verb) determiners (the definite and indefinite article), prepositions (incorrect preposition, omission, incorrect use), nouns (plural, irregular, possessive) and pronouns (relative, demonstrative, reflexive). Fourth, to ensure I had as accurate transcriptions as possible, and to ensure that I had captured most of the mistakes, I watched the video recordings again while reading the transcriptions at all the seven schools separately.

Although doing it this way was more time-consuming, it was easier to concentrate on one thing instead of coding how the teachers approached grammar and transcribing what the students said simultaneously.

In this MA study (as mentioned in Chapter 2) I found it was important to distinguish between spoken and written language. Therefore, I used the categories shown in Table 3E below as a guideline for mistakes that are not allowed in written language but allowed in spoken language. Finally, I double checked that these categories and the mistakes that were evident in parts of the unclear utterances were not counted as mistakes. In Chapter 4 (Results), I will mostly provide examples of categories of mistakes that are not allowed in spoken language, but also a few examples of mistakes that are not allowed in written language to show the difference in more detail.

Table 3E. Acceptable mistakes in spoken language but not in written language

Acceptable oral utterances
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Avoidance of standard sentence structure (S-V-O-(A))- Basic unit the clause (utterance)- Clauses linked by conjunctions- Frequent use of formulaic chunks- Informal language preferred- Performance effects (hesitations, pauses, repeats, false starts, incompleteness)- Frequent use of ellipses (omission of grammatical elements)- Frequent use of personal pronouns

I chose to label the students' mistakes as a mistake and not an error. Since I was only able to hear what the students produced orally, it was impossible for me to know what might have been just a slip of the tongue (mistake), or if they actually did not know the rule (error). I also counted all student utterances or turns, which means every time a student said something in class; in an oral presentation, when answering teacher questions, or when talking to peers. Every utterance or turn was counted as one, except when one utterance or turn contained more than one sentence (i.e., compound sentences), in which case I counted sentences. I did this to get the overall frequency of the mistakes, i.e., find the overall mistake percentage (per utterance) for the different grammar categories. Some of the utterances were difficult to transcribe due to challenges with the audio-taped sound. I marked these utterances as unclear.

3.7 Research credibility

In this section, I discuss the validity and reliability aspects of my research, in addition to generalizability and ethical concerns. Cohen et al. (2011) emphasize the use of various methods to strengthen validity and reliability. One of these is that interviews and observation complement each other's strengths and weaknesses and thus provide a more accurate and broader picture than what the methods would have done separately (see also Maxwell, 2013). In the following, I explain how my combination of these data sources have increased the credibility of my MA study.

3.7.1 Validity

According to Kleven (2014), validity looks at whether there is a link between theory and what is being measured. It is, therefore, essential for me as a researcher to examine if the results are trustworthy. There are especially two factors that may threaten validity in qualitative research: *researcher bias* and *reactivity* (Maxwell, 2013). In addition to these, I also address *internal validity* and *external validity*.

Researcher bias involves the subjectivity of the researcher (Maxwell, 2013); specifically, whether the results consist with what the researcher wanted to reveal, and which data “stand” out. As qualitative research tends to be exploratory, open-minded and less structured researcher bias will always be a problem. However, by engaging in critical self-reflection also known as *reflexivity*, the researcher will become more self-aware of how their expectations may influence the outcome of the study, and help reduce the effect of researcher bias (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Considering my own experience as a teacher, I might have had some perceptions on how teachers approach grammar and what possible mistakes would be made by the students beforehand. Nevertheless, as I conducted my study, I found that I had few assumptions and was more interested in learning new ways of approaching grammar than being critical. I, therefore, consider researcher bias a limited threat to my study.

Reactivity deals with how the researcher might influence the situation (Maxwell, 2013). For me, this was relevant to bear in mind when conducting the interviews. However, according to Maxwell (2013), it will be impossible to eliminate the researcher’s influence in such a situation, thus being aware of its potential threat is crucial. During the interviews, I was, therefore, conscious of asking open questions, which would, hopefully, engage the participants to share personal experiences (Cohen et al., 2011) and to go deeper into the issue at hand (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). In section 3.4.1 about the interviews, I mentioned that my role as an interviewer needed to be objective and neutral, and I strived to keep a professional distance in order not to cause unnecessary bias.

When it came to my role as an observer, reactivity was not a threat to validity as I was not a part of the data collection with the LISE study. Nevertheless, some factors might have had an impact on the participants’ behavior, such as the use of camera, the presence of the researcher who recorded the lessons, and the fact that the participants knew that they were being observed (Cohen et al., 2011). The LISE study tried to eliminate these threats by acquainting

the participants with the cameras and the microphones, and their placements in the classroom, and also informing them about the LISE study. Since the teachers knew that the purpose of the research would be used for educational research, might have triggered them to put more effort into the filmed lessons. Nevertheless, they cannot “act out a repertoire of social interaction they do not have access to in their everyday life, just because someone shows up with a camera” (Blikstad-Balas, 2016, p. 4). Considering that the teachers did not know that I or anyone else would use the video recordings to look into how they approach grammar, and the limited grammar instruction that occurs indicates that they have not put more effort into the filmed lessons. By encouraging both the teachers and the students to behave as naturally as possible and considering the fact that they were filmed during 4-5 consecutive lessons, the participants might forget about the cameras, as mentioned in section 3.4.2.

Blikstad-Balas (2016) considers the issue of reactivity to be somewhat exaggerated when it comes to video research: “Most, if not all, research methods will have some effect on the situations they are attempting to portray” (p. 3). She further states that often, the participants will forget about the cameras, which then will decrease the camera effect. This is in line with what Klette (2009) claims as well. Since both teenagers and adults have become more used to cameras as they have become more accessible than before, this will reduce the camera effect. In addition, the cameras have also become smaller which makes them less visible, and the observers might then forget about them while being filmed. After having observed 32 lessons I did not notice that the students and the teachers behaved unnaturally, and therefore reactivity was not a threat.

Internal validity refers to the degree to which I as a researcher is justified in making valid and reasonable interpretations of the material. To improve internal validity, triangulation was used in this study; two methods to study the same phenomenon at the same time (Maxwell, 2013). A good reason for this is that the weakness in one method will tend to be different from those of a different method, which means that when you combine two or more methods, you will have better evidence. By using both video observations and interviews in finding out how teachers approach grammar, the methods overlap their weaknesses and strengths making this research more reliable. A strength with the video observations was that I could see the teachers’ instruction. However, by using interviews, I could delve into the teachers’ thinking and reasoning, something I could not do using only video observational data (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). To strengthen my findings even more, it was beneficial that more MA

students were at the video lab at ILS at the University of Oslo simultaneously. We could then discuss and look through sequences with each other where we were in doubt (Derry et al., 2010). A weakness, however, with video observations is the potential of blowing things out of proportion (Blikstad-Balas, 2016). As stated in section 3.4.2, I could view the same time segments repeatedly. Although this is considered a strength, it can also be considered a weakness since I could hear the students' utterances repeatedly. In a typical classroom situation, this is not possible. By listening to the time segments several times, I will notice more mistakes than I would have done by only hearing the utterances once. Considering that my study investigates what mistakes are made by the students in oral communication, it is, nevertheless, important to identify as many as possible of the mistakes they make which makes video observations particularly trustworthy.

External validity refers to the degree to which the results can be generalized to the wider population, often interpreted as comparability and transferability (Cohen et al., 2011). However, the purpose of a qualitative study is not to generalize according to Johnson and Christensen (2012). Therefore external validity tends to be a weakness of a qualitative study. There are two distinct reasons for this. First, random selection of participants and setting is the best way to generalize a study, but the participants and settings researched in a qualitative study are rarely randomly selected. In this study, the recruited participants can be considered a purposeful sample, which does not allow the researcher to generalize to wider a population (Bryman, 2012). Second, the overall goal of most researchers in a qualitative study is to describe in more detail “a certain group of people or a certain event than to generate findings that are broadly applicable” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 270). Seeing that this study merely looks at grammar teaching and grammar mistakes in seven classrooms, instead of generalizing I see this as an important and timely study, although it should not be generalized outside of the participating classes. For that, I open up to further research in the area.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability concerns to what extent the methods that are used are consistent and credible. It further refers to whether the results are reproducible if the research was to be carried out again by other researchers using the same methods. Using two data collection methods at the same time like this, is as mentioned, also referred to as triangulation (Cohen et al., 2011), strengthens the validity and reliability, as using both interviews and video observations

complement each other's strengths and weaknesses, and thus provides a more accurate and comprehensive picture of grammar approaches than what the methods would have done separately (Maxwell, 2013). In addition, the dual focus on teachers' and students' grammar instruction and use strengthens research credibility.

To check if the chosen approaches are reliable, it is important to document one's procedure, which I have attempted to do in section 3.6 concerning procedure. Also, when transcribing it is important to check if the transcriptions contain any obvious mistakes.

During the observation process, some elements proved to be more challenging for me than others. The challenge that stood out the most was the quality of the sound. At times, it was hard to hear what the students uttered. This may have been because the students did not wear their own microphones, as opposed to the teachers, whose sound was clear most of the times. Other reasons could be explained as technical failures in a few classrooms, and noise either from students walking around in the classrooms or from other disruptions that are difficult to point out. At times, the students sat in groups discussing. It then became especially challenging to pick up what each student uttered since the students talked simultaneously. Sound was imperative for me to be able to take as precise transcriptions as possible, but since it was not possible to hear everything, not all transcriptions are complete. I marked the unheard utterances "unclear". To get as accurate results as possible, I listened several times to double check the words being uttered.

Another significant challenge was the placement of the cameras in the classrooms. It was not always easy to see what the teachers wrote on the board. This proved to be an inconvenience at S50 only, as the teacher took notes on the board during his grammar instructions. However, this turned out not to be a threat because fortunately, pictures of the board were added to the video material.

A third challenge was the use of Norwegian as L1 in the classrooms, which reduced the amount of student communication available for my analysis. Finally, long teacher presentations, and presentations from audio files that did not concern grammar, also reduced the amount of student communication available for my analysis. An overview of these challenges is provided in Table 3F.

Table 3F. Overview of instrumental challenges across schools

School	Challenge	Explanation
S02	Sound Camera Angle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A great deal of group and pair work in group lessons made it challenging to hear what the students uttered. - The classroom layout made it, at times, difficult to see and hear who was speaking. - For the first 20 minutes in the first lesson, the students spoke in Norwegian.
S07	Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The sound was of poor quality, making it challenging to hear when the students uttered something either individually or when working in groups or pairs. - At times the students would answer in Norwegian when asked questions. - There was a great deal of teacher presentation.
S09	Sound Camera angle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were many student presentations without a microphone on them making it challenging to hear what the students uttered. - At times the students and teacher spoke in Norwegian. - There were red students⁴ in the classroom that the camera did not show. It was, therefore, not always possible to know who was talking.
S13	Sound Camera angle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A great deal of group work and student presentations without a microphone on them made it challenging to hear what the students uttered. - During one of the lessons, the rain outside was making tapping noises on the window interfering with the sound. - There were red⁴ students in the classroom that the camera did not show. It was, therefore, not always possible to know who was talking.
S17		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students spoke mostly in Norwegian when asked questions and discussing in groups or pairs. - There was mostly teacher presentation where the teacher alternated between using Norwegian and English.
S50	Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There was low volume on the microphone placed in the classroom, making it difficult to hear what the students uttered. - Teacher and students alternated using Norwegian and English.
S51	Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As there was mostly group work, it was challenging to hear what the students uttered as they would talk simultaneously. - During one of the lessons, there were 20 minutes of technical issues which resulted in no sound on the teacher's microphone. - Some of the students would utter things in Norwegian. - 16 minutes of presentation using an audio file.

⁴ Red students have not agreed to be part of the LISE study. They are therefore not filmed by the researcher.

When it comes to using codes, it is important to make the codes I have used usable for other researchers so they can use these codes when analyzing the same segments. I have addressed this transparency by presenting all my codes in section 3.5.1.

3.7.3 Ethical considerations

In research, ethics are a guiding set of principles to assist researchers in conducting ethical studies. It is, therefore, important to identify the ethical issues that are of importance in my study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Norway has established its own committee for securing ethical studies in education called The Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics (NESH) which has designed detailed ethical guidelines. It is, therefore, vital that the informants receive all necessary information before taking part in the research, and that their participation is confidential. NESH lists 14 principals that must be considered when conducting research. Bryman (2012) has broken down these considerations into four main areas:

- (1) Whether there is harm to participants
- (2) Whether there is a lack of informed consent
- (3) Whether there is an invasion of privacy
- (4) Whether deception is involved

According to Bryman (2012), the first principle can be related to that of confidentiality. This means that the participants' identities should at all times be confidential to ensure that no one will be recognized when findings are being published. This is in accordance with what NESH addresses as well:

As a general principle, those who are made the subjects of research are entitled to have their personal information treated confidentially. The researcher must prevent any use and communication of information that might inflict damage on individuals who are the subjects of research.

Although most of the data material for this study is based on video observations, the LISE research team and I were only given relevant information for the study. Also, the video recordings were only available on certain computers in the video lab at ILS, accessed through a personal username and password. All schools were marked by a given code as to ensure

their anonymity. To obtain access to the interviewees and the LISE videos, I signed a consent form in advance of my MA study, agreeing not to share any confidentiality records if this was given to me (Appendix 2).

The second principle addressed is what NESH refers to as voluntary informed consent. The two teachers I interviewed had volunteered for the study themselves and could withdraw their participation at any time. When dealing with children between the age of 14 and 15, as were the age of the student participants in the LISE study, it is even more important and necessary to take into consideration the importance of voluntary consent (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The students who wanted to take part in the LISE study had obtained written consent from their parents or guardians, and also signed a consent form themselves.

The third principle addressed is invasion of privacy. It is again necessary to bear in mind the importance of confidentiality and anonymity. This study falls under the approval of the LISE study where teachers, students, and parents or guardians have given voluntary consent to be a part of the LISE study, and where their anonymity is preserved. To ensure the anonymity of those who did not want to take part in the study, the LISE research team made sure that the cameras were not targeted towards them, while pseudonyms were given to the two teachers I interviewed.

The fourth principle addressed the involvement of deception. To ensure this, the participants were given information about the purpose of the LISE study, and what the material would be used to analyze naturally occurring teaching in the subjects. As the coordinator professor in LISE is supervising this MA study, she also helped make sure that I followed the study's protocol for usage of its material.

4 Results

As stated in the Introduction (Chapter 1) and Methods (Chapter 3), the main aim of this study is to identify how grammar is taught in lower secondary classrooms, and what oral mistakes are observed among the students in oral communication. To fulfill this aim, I have analyzed the data to answer three research questions:

- (1) To what extent and how is grammar taught in English in seven lower secondary school classrooms in 9th grade?
- (2) How do two of the teachers in the observed classrooms explain their teaching of English grammar?
- (3) What characterizes the students' oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms?

In this chapter, I present the findings in three sections. First, I provide an overview of the identified grammar instruction based on video observations of 32 English lessons in all seven English classrooms at the seven different schools (4.1). Second, I present findings from the interviews with the two teachers; one who in the video-observed lessons gave grammar instruction, and one who did not (4.2). Third, I present the students' grammatical mistakes identified in oral communication during the observed English lessons (4.3).

4.1 To what extent and how is grammar taught in English in seven lower secondary school classrooms in 9th grade?

One of the challenges of analyzing video observations of naturally occurring English lessons is that grammar instruction might not have been taught in the recorded lessons at all. Fortunately, however, in two of the seven video-filmed classrooms, grammar instruction did indeed occur. During the 32 English lessons, I found both explicit and implicit grammar instruction in six of the lessons at S09 and S50.

In this section, I will, therefore, provide a detailed overview of how grammar is taught in these English lessons.

The teacher at S09, Anne (pseudonym), taught grammar during three out of six observed lessons, all in sessions with half the class present each time (lessons 1a, 1b, and 4a). The teacher at S50, Jim (pseudonym), taught grammar during three out of five observed lessons, one with the whole class present (lesson 1) and two lessons where half the class was present in each lesson (lessons 4a and 4b). Table 4A gives an overview.

Table 4A. Overview of the observed grammar lessons

School	Lesson	Grammar Topic	Minutes
S09	1a and 1b (lessons with half the class)	Sentence connectors	8 minutes in 1a 6 minutes in 1b
S09	4a (lessons with half the class)	Sentence connectors	7.5 minutes
S50	1 (whole class)	Verbs	23 minutes
S50	4a and 4b (lessons with half the class)	Relative pronouns	9 minutes in 4a 12 minutes in 4b
Total	6 lessons		65.5 minutes

Note: The LISE research team has numbered each lesson; lesson one as 1, lesson two as 2, etc. If e.g., lesson 1 was lessons with half the class, they labeled the lessons 1a and 1b.

Table 4A shows that the two teachers taught grammar for 65.5 minutes out of 475 minutes of video observations in the two classes. In Table 4B, I have illustrated how I have identified each lesson that contained grammar instruction to be organized in recurring sequences of grammar topics and non-grammar topics. It was interesting to find that across the two schools, which lie in two different counties, they worked with grammar for a different amount of time and with different grammar topics, but nevertheless in similar sequences.

Table 4B. Recurring sequences of grammar and non-grammar topics

S09	Minutes	S50	Minutes
Lesson 1a		Lesson 1	
Non-grammar	32	Non-grammar	22
Grammar	8	Grammar	23
		Non-grammar	26
		Grammar	24
Lesson 1b		Lesson 4a	
Non-grammar	36	Non-grammar	20
Grammar	6	Grammar	9
		Non-grammar	22
Lesson 4a		Lesson 4b	
Non-grammar	7.5	Non-grammar	23
Grammar	7.5	Grammar	12
Non-grammar	30	Non-grammar	5
Total:	127		186

None of the two teachers focused on grammar during whole lessons. Instead, they varied their instructions; working first with one topic, before moving on to short sequences of 3-24 minutes of grammar teaching, and in some lessons, turning the lesson to working with another new topic. These recurring sequences occurred in all these lessons, as shown in Table 4B.

Moreover, the grammar topics in both classrooms seemed to be linked to students' needs. For example, in S09 Anne connected her grammar teaching to what the students were currently working on; oral presentations. In S50, Jim built his grammar teaching on the students' needs when telling them what he noticed they had struggled with on a previous grammar test.

4.1.1 Grammar instruction procedure

Although the grammar topics differed in the two classrooms, the grammar instruction seemed to follow the same 6-step grammar instruction procedure as shown in Figure 4A below.

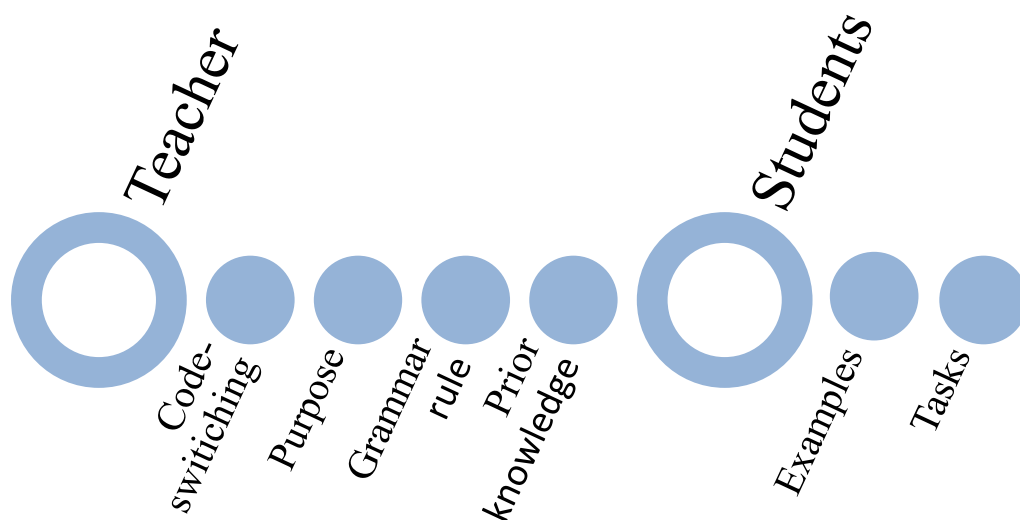


Figure 4A. The 6-step deductive grammar instruction procedure

Figure 4A shows how the first four steps relate mainly to the teacher (code-switching, purpose, grammar rule, and prior knowledge), while the students are active in the two final steps (examples and tasks). The steps are explained in more detail below.

Step 1 – Code-switching: As soon as the lesson turned to grammar, the teachers’ use of language changed from English to Norwegian, or alternated between the two languages.

Step 2 – Purpose: The teachers explained the purpose of the grammar lesson by referring to why it was important to learn this particular grammatical aspect. In this case, so that the students would either vary their sentences (S09) or avoid using the wrong vocabulary (S50).

Step 3 – Grammar rule: Further, the instruction followed a sequence of deductive instruction, which is an approach found in explicit grammar teaching known as a rule-driven approach (see Chapter 2). Both teachers either used the board or the textbook extensively when explaining the grammar rule(s).

Step 4 – Prior knowledge: The teachers connected the grammar topics or rules to what the students already knew, their prior knowledge.

Step 5 – Examples: To engage the students and make them aware of the grammar rule(s), both teachers engaged in dialogues with the students providing examples of the grammar rules and asking them what was correct and what was not, what sounded right, and not, asking them to explain and give reasons.

Step 6 – Tasks: Finally, the teachers let the students work with grammar tasks in the textbook.

Although not much time was spent on grammar instruction, it is, however, interesting to look more closely at how they taught deductive grammar. In the next section, I, therefore, present my findings on how the grammar instructions were constructed in each lesson in the two classrooms.

4.1.2 Deductive grammar instruction in S09

In all lessons where grammar instructions occurred in S09, the lessons alternated between working with texts, vocabulary, student presentations, and grammar. When grammar occurred the teacher, Anne, mainly followed the 6-step deductive grammar instruction procedure, using the two first lessons to go through the first five steps, and continuing with step 6 in the last session.

Code-switching: When turning to sentence connectors, Anne alternated between using Norwegian and English. *Purpose:* In lesson 1a, Anne started by explaining that they would spend most of the lesson repeating sentence connectors and working with tasks. Since the students were currently giving oral presentations, Anne explained that she wanted her students to avoid repeating themselves by starting sentences with the same word, and instead focusing more on varying their language to make it flow better. *Grammar rule:* Anne actively used the textbook while teaching sentence connectors by referring to pages in the book and explaining the grammar rules. *Prior knowledge:* She continued explaining the rule by connecting it to something the students could relate to pointing at a typical habit they had formed, namely starting many of their sentences with *but*. Further, she told the students to open their books to a specific page containing a section called *Focus on language*. *Example:* She continued the lesson by giving an example where no sentence connectors occurred:

Anne: “The Native American met some white people. The Native American tried to keep a hold against the white man. The Native American...” Is that a good way of telling a story? What was funny about saying it like that? Starting all the sentences like that? What was I repeating?

Student: A bit more variation. Started with the same word. (My translation)

Anne: So you can use different words when you want to continue a thought in English.

As can be seen in this dialogue, the student noticed that there was little variation in the example and that all three sentences started with the same word, “The Native American.” Anne continued by explaining the layout for the next lesson, where some students would have presentations in front of her, while the other students would work on tasks about sentence connectors. Anne further explained how important it is that the students vary their language when speaking English, before asking one of the students to read aloud a section about sentence connectors in the textbook. She also made the students aware of one sentence connector that was more common among the students than any other word in their written and oral communication, namely *but*:

Anne: I know there is one word you use a lot, and that is but. But, but, but, but. We don’t want you to use but all the time. We want you to vary them. Ok?”

Anne ended the lessons by asking the students to become more orally active.

Lesson 1b was quite similar to 1a. The only difference was the examples Anne used when explaining sentence connectors. In lesson 1b, she offered the following example instead of the one about Native Americans:

Anne: After Columbus had discovered America in 1492, he inspired adventurous Europeans from the old world to sail to America, the new world.

Here the students were asked to find out which word was the sentence connector. One of the students answered, “had”, and Anne explained that it was “after”, but did not give any explanation as to why. As there was no time left, Anne ended the lesson, starting the next lesson with step 6 in the 6-step deductive grammar instruction procedure explained in section 4.1.

Tasks: In lesson 4a, Anne began by noting that almost all the students that had not given their presentations yet were going to give them individually for her only. She engaged the other students in working with grammar tasks concerning sentence connectors. Before they started working with these grammar tasks in the textbook, Anne briefly repeated what sentence connectors were, and the different tasks that they were going to work with. As can be seen,

Anne actively followed the 6-step deductive grammar instruction procedure, although not necessarily during one lesson, but by combining each grammar lesson starting where the last lesson ended.

4.1.3 Deductive grammar instruction in S50

The teacher in S50, Jim, also varied all three lessons where grammar instruction occurred, alternating between oral tasks, learning new vocabulary, individual work, and group work. In the lessons where I found grammar instructions, Jim focused on different aspects of grammar. *Code-switching*: Just as Anne did, Jim also alternated between using Norwegian and English during his lessons; Norwegian when talking about grammar, and English for everything else. *Purpose*: Jim explained that lesson 1 would concentrate on the grammar test the students had currently had about different parts of speech, where verbs were the most important grammatical aspect. While at the start of the grammar sequences in the remaining two lessons, he explained that they would focus on the relative pronouns *who*, *which*, and *that*. *Grammar rule*: The lesson continued with Jim explaining the contents of the grammar test. The first task was about plural nouns which he said that everybody seemed to grasp quite well. He suggested that those who did not grasp these rules had to read up on them and memorize them. He then pointed to the most challenging tasks where the students were to translate from Norwegian to English. Most of these tasks either focused on common English expressions, subject-verbal concord or the present continuous. *Prior knowledge*: While going through the tasks from the test, he tried to refresh the students' memory with what they had talked about previous to the actual test about each verb form. He then asked the students for the correct answer before moving on to explaining the rules orally or writing them on the board. *Examples*: Jim ended the lessons by going back to talking about the relative pronouns *who* and *which*, briefly explaining when to use which relative pronoun. *Tasks*: Finally, the students worked individually with different grammar tasks in the textbook.

In the two final lessons, which took part in group sessions, Jim followed the same procedure. *Code-switching*: Again, as soon as turning to grammar, Jim switched to speaking Norwegian. *Purpose*: First, Jim explained that they were going to talk about the relative pronouns *who*, *which*, and *that*. *Grammar rule, prior knowledge and example*: He explained a rule on the board using the example below, in which he engaged the students. He also connected the rule to the students' prior knowledge, referring to what they had done the previous week:

Jim: “James Bond is an agent who fights international terrorism.” Has anyone seen the latest released Bond movie, or? Yes, some of you. Now we are talking about grammar. In English, we have three different words that mean *some*. We can use *who*, we can use *which*, and we can use *that*. I talked about this last week if you remember. When we are going to decide to use *who* or *which*, one can always use *who* or *which*, we must look at what or who is doing something. In this sentence, a word stands out, *who*: “James Bond is an agent *who* fights international terrorism”. What or who does something? There is a word that *who* refers to. (My translation)

Tasks: After having talked about the rule some more, the students worked with tasks in the textbook. Similar to Anne, Jim also seemed to follow the 6-step deductive grammar instruction procedure by combining grammar sequences with non-grammar ones.

4.1.4 Implicit grammar instruction in S09 and S50

I found one occurrence of implicit grammar instruction each in Anne’s and Jim’s grammar sequences. This happened as both teachers corrected one of their students implicitly when the student made a grammatical mistake. In Anne’s class, one of her students said: “...because he use face paint.” Anne corrected him discretely by answering, “Yeah, he uses.” A similar situation appeared in one of Jim’s grammar sessions when one of his students said: “in the night”. Jim also corrected him in a discreet manner, saying “at night”, but the student did not pick up on the correction as he continued saying “in the night”.

4.1.5 Summary of grammar instruction

In this section, I have aimed to answer RQ1: *To what extent and how is grammar taught in English in seven lower secondary school classrooms in the 9th grade?* The most interesting finding was the many similarities in how the two teachers instructed grammar, regarding the recurring sequences of grammar and non-grammar topics in these lessons, and also the 6-step deductive grammar instruction procedure both teachers seemed to follow. However, the question of the extent to which grammar instruction was taught is more challenging. On the one hand, finding grammar instruction in two of the seven English video-observed classrooms only, might not seem a lot. Since grammar instruction was identified in 65.5 minutes out of 1.646 filmed minutes across the seven classrooms, it accounts for 4% of the time in the

observed English lessons. On the other hand, since such instruction was found in six out of 32 lessons, this means that grammar instruction occurs in 19% of the video-filmed English lessons. In addition, in the two classrooms, grammar instruction occurred in 55% of the lessons, i.e., six out of 11 lessons. In addition to finding out to what extent and how grammar instruction was taught, I found it most relevant also to examine *why* teachers choose to teach grammar, or not do so. I, therefore, chose to interview two of the teachers in the observed classrooms; one of the teachers where grammar instruction occurred and one where no grammar instruction had occurred.

4.2 How do two of the teachers in the observed classrooms explain their teaching of English grammar?

In this section, I present my findings from the interviews with two of the teachers from the seven observed schools, to see how they explained their choice of teaching, or reason for not teaching, English grammar. One interview is with Jim from S50, who taught grammar, and the other is with Paul (pseudonym) from S07, who did not teach grammar in the observed English lessons. I specifically interviewed these two, as it is interesting to hear what a teacher that I have observed teaching grammar has to say about his grammar instruction, and similarly interesting to listen to what a teacher who did not teach grammar has to say about grammar instruction. Was it for example only a coincidence that Jim focused on grammar and Paul did not in the observed lessons?

In the interviews, both teachers stated that they find grammar to be an important part of the English subject, but nevertheless, found it hard to include into their teaching. Both teachers reported that English was taught for two lessons a week, which they found to be quite limited. Therefore, they revealed that something had to yield, and for both teachers, grammar came in second place. They both gave the same reasons for this:

- (1) The English Subject Curriculum is vague when it comes to what grammar topics to teach and how to teach grammar.
- (2) Teaching grammar is time-consuming.

In response to the first point; as there are no methodological guidelines concerning what to teach, they both stated that they had found their own strategies that affected how and when they taught grammar. Paul explained how he had created a grammar booklet with tasks, while Jim based his grammar teaching on what the textbook had to offer. Consequently, Paul explained that he only taught grammar when he found it is necessary, which is interesting based on the lack of grammar instruction found in S07. Jim, on the other hand, said that he taught grammar after each completed chapter in the textbook, which is also interesting because this is what I found during the video observations from S50.

Although they differed in their views on how often grammar instruction was needed, both teachers had a great deal in common concerning their thoughts on why grammar instruction is necessary. On the one hand, they both found it necessary to teach grammar as they believed the students would benefit from grammar teaching, especially when it comes to enhancing their writing skills. On the other hand, they seemed to disagree on the importance of communicating, more or less, precisely when speaking, although they knew that this is an important part of the English Subject Curriculum.

Paul argued that he disliked it when people were not concerned with expressing themselves more or less correctly. By correctly he referred to “bad” grammar, which to him was when students were not able to distinguish between the 2nd and 3rd person singular verb form: “When to use which form is something everyone should master” (my translation). Jim was not as concerned with mixing the two verb forms as Paul was, as Jim found it to be okay for students to make mistakes as long as it did not interfere with communication in any way. Although they differed slightly in their views on oral communication in English, they both explicitly expressed the goal that their students should be able to master English grammar.

4.2.1 Reported grammar teaching methods

Both teachers revealed that they used deductive grammar instruction, while Paul also used inductive instruction (see Chapter 2). Jim explained that he mainly used deductive grammar instruction when the textbook touched on, what he believed, to be important grammar topics. For example, when to use *it/there* and *who/which*, which coincided with what I had observed in the videos:

Jim: I will go through the rule on the whiteboard first, before moving on to the tasks provided in the textbook. (My translation)

Paul also stated that he would at times base his grammar instruction on what he called “classical white board teaching”:

Paul: ...going through the rules and showing the students some examples of how to use the rules, following gap tasks, before moving on to writing shorter texts where new grammatical structures are tested. (My translation)

Both also acknowledged that teaching grammar deductively might at times be demotivating as there is minimal student interaction, which is in accordance with the disadvantages of teaching deductively expressed in Chapter 2. Paul was clear about wanting his students to be engaged when learning grammar. He, therefore argued that when he chose to teach grammar, he used more diverse teaching methods; altering between teaching inductively and deductively:

Paul: Sometimes I will start off by either introducing sentences that contain bad grammar so that the students can feel how one can be misunderstood if using incorrect grammar. The students then have to guess the correct form, which they usually guess quite quickly, as I use texts that are familiar to the students: song lyrics, what is known in the youth environment, etc. After having introduced these examples, I usually present the grammar rule by either informing them or making them write the rule in their notebook using their own words. After that, the students do gap tasks, before I move on to making the students use the rules in written production where I give feedback on their use of the rule. (My translation)

4.2.2 Reported code-switching during grammar instruction

In the interviews, both teachers commented on their use of language during their grammar instructions. Although they both acknowledged using Norwegian to ensure that their students understood the terminology, they differed in their views on the extent to which the languages should be used. Paul stated that he used mostly English but supplemented with Norwegian

when necessary to ensure the students' understanding. Jim, however, expressed a different view:

Jim: I will use Norwegian as I usually compare the English grammar with Norwegian grammar. It is, of course, smart to do it this way, I believe. (My translation)

This is in accordance with what I observed from Jim's grammar lessons at S50. He would switch to Norwegian as soon as he started talking about grammar, and he compared Norwegian and English grammar rules by providing examples in both language usages.

4.2.3 Do the teachers believe their grammar instruction methods work?

When I asked them whether they found their choices related to grammar instruction to work well, they both responded positively, confirming that they felt their methods of teaching grammar worked, based on their assessment of their students' text production. Both explained how a majority of their students had improved their writing skills from the 8th to the 9th grade. Jim argued that "this is because the students' understanding of the English language has improved" (my translation).

Both teachers found it necessary to teach grammar in relation to the students' written production. When working with written texts, both teachers would walk around in the classroom and give feedback to their students; pointing out what they did well and grammatical mistakes they needed to correct. The teachers believed such grammar instruction had a positive and motivating effect on most students' and their written production. Paul stated: "This type of feedback/interaction can seem motivating for the students" (my translation), while Jim argued that, "some students are proficient, and for these students, working only with gap tasks will be demotivating as they do not see the purpose with these tasks" (my translation). This comment is particularly interesting since gap tasks were the only grammar tasks I observed in Jim's grammar lessons at S50.

Although both teachers revealed to have identified improvement in their students' grammar use in written work, they also expressed some challenges of grammar instruction:

Paul: For some students, it can be demotivating to have a constant feeling of not grasping the rules. Nevertheless, it is my responsibility to make sure that everyone understands the rules, but this can be a challenge with 30 students. (My translation)

Jim: I find it challenging to motivate the most proficient students. I, therefore, try to find alternative things for them to do. (My translation)

4.2.4 Summary of the teacher interviews

In this section, I have aimed to answer RQ2: *How do two of the teachers in the observed classrooms explain their teaching of English grammar?* Since both teachers seemed to find grammar instruction necessary but challenging, and since both acknowledged mainly using deductive grammar instruction, it is of particular relevance for RQ2 that their expressed reasons for doing so differed.

While Jim (S50) said he taught grammar based on the topics in the textbook and the frequency these were presented in, Paul (S07) argued that he to a certain extent did not teach grammar as he based his grammar instruction on students' needs. However, in the first observed grammar lesson in S50, students' needs were precisely what Jim presented as the purpose of teaching verb rules, based on a previous grammar test. Based on these teachers' view on grammar teaching, and their explicit focus on students' needs, the question that remains is whether there seemed to be a need to teach grammar in not only these two classrooms but all seven observed classrooms.

4.3 What characterizes the students' oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms?

In this section, I present my findings related to the students' grammatical mistakes in oral communication. If students' needs is a reason both to teach and not teach grammar, it is interesting to see whether there are any differences between the students' grammatical mistakes across the seven classrooms. I will present the types of grammatical mistakes made by the students and show the mistakes that occurred most frequently.

4.3.1 Student mistakes in each school

After having observed all 32 lessons, I have found that the students make a number of grammatical mistakes in their oral communication. Table 4C gives an overview of all oral grammar mistakes per school compared to the total number of student utterances. It further includes the number of unclear utterances and utterances made in Norwegian to show how the number of mistakes relates to the amount of English used, and to give a complete picture of the identified mistakes.

Table 4C. Overview of the students' oral mistakes (per school)

School	Student utterances in English	Students' grammatical mistakes in English	Unclear utterances	Use of Norwegian
S02	179	59	107	99
S07	290	54	63	9
S09	527	164	79	19
S13	215	67	29	0
S17	22	10	16	0
S50	109	12	22	48
S51	40	8	18	0
Total	1382	374	334	175

Table 4C shows that there were 374 grammatical mistakes among 1382 student utterances in English. Table 4D gives an overview of the total number of grammatical mistakes in each classroom classified into grammatical categories as explained in Chapter 3. It further shows the percentages of grammatical mistakes made in each category per classroom.

Table 4D. Students' grammatical mistakes across the seven schools

	Grammar instruction		No grammar instruction				
	S09	S50	S02	S07	S13	S17	S51
Verbs	66 (40%)	4 (33%)	38 (64%)	23 (43%)	37 (55%)	6 (60%)	5 (63%)
Determiners	37 (23%)	4 (33%)	11 (19%)	21 (39%)	16 (24%)	2 (20%)	1 (13%)
Nouns	30 (18%)	0	4 (7%)	7 (13%)	5 (7%)	0	0
Prepositions	23 (14%)	3 (25%)	5 (8%)	3 (6%)	9 (13%)	1 (10%)	1 (13%)
Pronouns	8 (5%)	1 (8%)	1 (2%)	0	0	1 (10%)	1 (13%)
Total number of mistakes	164 (100%)	12 (100%)	59 (100%)	54 (100%)	67 (100%)	10 (100%)	8 (100%)

Table 4D indicates three patterns across and within the classrooms; (1) students' needs, (2) link between students' needs and grammar instruction, and (3) student interaction. First, the same grammatical mistakes were identified in many of the classrooms, although to different extents. Since the students made grammatical mistakes in all the classrooms, this finding suggests a particular need for grammar instruction.

Second, there are no distinct differences in students' needs between the classrooms that offered grammar instruction (S50 and S09), and those who did not (S07, S02, S13, S17, and S51). For example, while S09 is the classroom with the highest number of grammatical mistakes, S50 is one of the classrooms with fewest mistakes. Looking at the grammatical categories in Table 4D, the percentages per category are quite similar when comparing the schools. A different approach is to compare the number of mistakes with the total number of utterances per class as shown in Table 4C. In S50 roughly 10% of the utterances contain a

grammatical mistake while in S09 the number is 32%. In S07 and S51, about 20% of the utterances contain a grammatical mistake, while S13 and S02 are similar to S09 with 31% and 33%. In S17, there are ten mistakes among the 22 utterances, which corresponds to a 45% mistake rate. Note that the two extreme values (highest and lowest mistake rates) are in two of the three schools with the fewest utterances. For the classrooms with more than 150 utterances, the mistake rates per classroom are around 20-30%. Interestingly, when I compared the mistakes with the grammar instructions (see Table 4A), I found that the topics covered in S50 (verbs and pronouns) meet these students' needs, which suggests a positive impact of the grammar instruction.

Third, it should come as no surprise that there seems to be a link between the number of mistakes and the students' opportunities to talk. In other words, the classroom situation determines the number of grammatical mistakes. For example, in S09 and S13, where the highest number of mistakes occurred, several students held presentations, indicating that the students participated in much more oral communication than in S07, S17, S50, and S51 where there was little student participation as the teachers stood for most of the talking. In S02, on the other hand, which has the third highest number of mistakes, some of the students read aloud, followed up by questions for discussion. This means that it is more relevant to consider the types of mistakes and the distribution of each mistake (in %) than counting the number of mistakes. Table 4D then shows that verb mistakes are in the majority both across the seven schools (45%) and also in each of the classrooms (33–64%), suggesting that this type of mistake needs specific focus.

In oral communication irregularities related to grammatical structure, morphology, syntax, and semantics occur in the students' spoken language. Since, oral production differs from that of written production when it comes to incomplete sentences, for example concerning pauses, stops, and introduction of new elements without breaking down communication, I did not count these as a mistake (see Chapter 2). I will, however, as a category, give some examples of what kind of sentences would represent such a fault as to make my distinction clearer.

As a last category, I will comment on the use of sentence connectors. The reason being that Anne at S09 made it clear that the students had to consider using sentence connectors when giving their oral presentation to vary their sentences more. It is, therefore, interesting to see if this is something the students used in their oral production. I present the students'

grammatical mistakes related to each category separately (verbs, determiners, prepositions, nouns and pronouns).

In this section, schools are compared to each other, which is one interesting point of view. However, another interesting aspect is to pool all schools together and see what types of grammatical mistakes are most frequent among all seven classrooms.

4.3.2 Student mistakes across all seven classrooms

Despite the variation in types of grammar mistakes within each of the classrooms, there are clear similarities across all seven classrooms as well. For example, verb mistakes comprise the majority of grammatical mistakes in each of the classrooms, and also across all seven classrooms. Figure 4B shows that the majority of the mistakes across all seven schools are connected to verbs (48%), followed by determiners (25%), nouns (12%), prepositions (12%) and pronouns (3%).

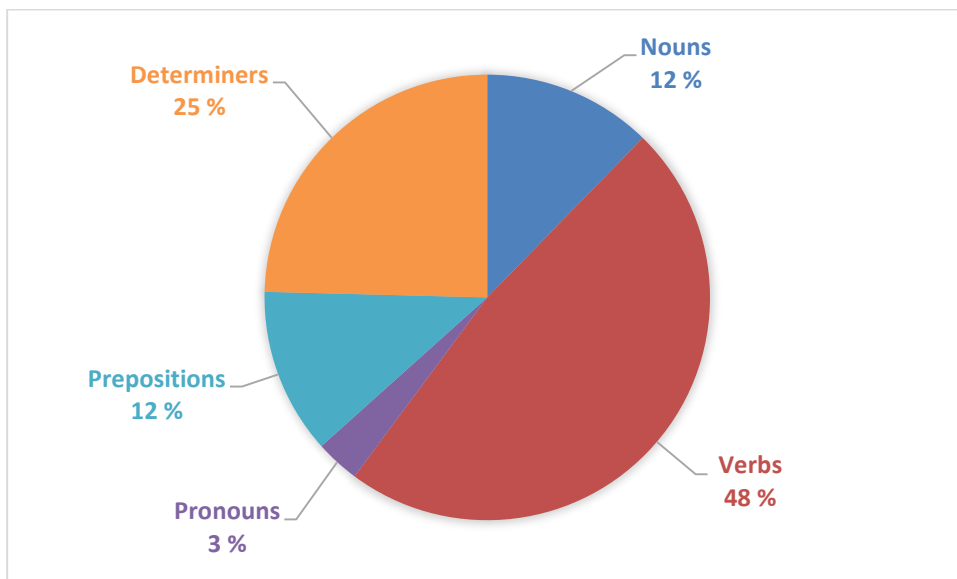


Figure 4B. Overview of the students' specific grammatical mistakes across all seven schools

In the next sections, I will analyze each grammatical category in more detail showing how many grammar mistakes relate to each sub-category.

4.3.3 Mistakes related to verbs

As shown in Figure 4B, 48% of the students' grammatical mistakes concerned verbs. A total of 179 incidences were found across all seven schools. Figure 4C shows that the highest number of mistakes were found in connection to subject-verbal concord and verb form.

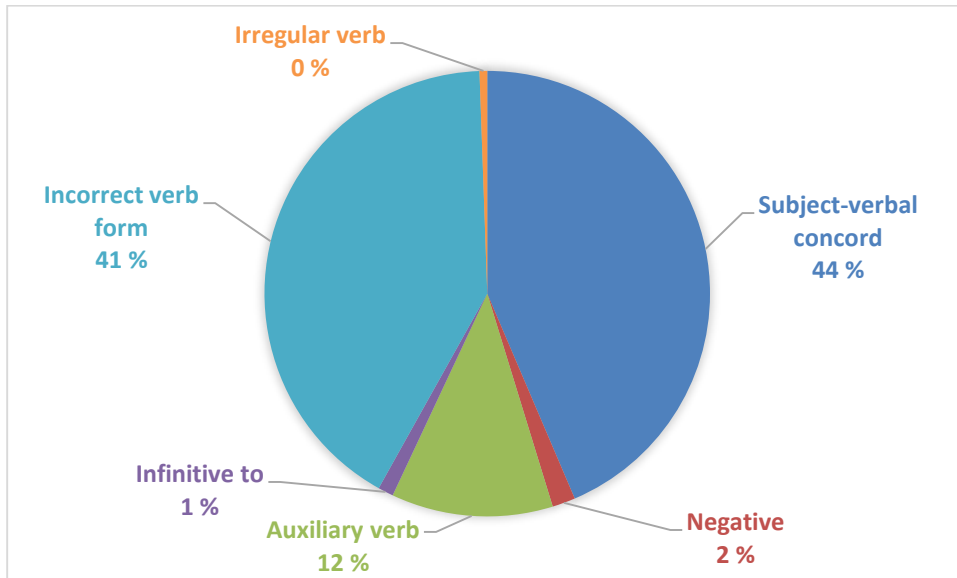


Figure 4C. Sub-categories of verb-related mistakes

Although there are six different sub-categories concerning verb-related mistakes, I only discuss mistakes concerning subject-verbal concord and verb form as these two sub-categories account for the majority of verb mistakes (85%).

Subject-verbal concord

The highest frequency of mistakes related to verbs is subject-verbal concord. A total of 78 incidences were found (44%). In English, the verb must agree with the subject in both person and number (Scrivener, 2010). Most mistakes made in relation to subject-verbal concord were found in relation to the use of the third person singular subjects *he*, *she* and *it*. The pupils tend to overuse the base form of the verb when writing in present tense in connection with the 3rd person singular subjects *he*, *she* and *it*, resulting in faulty sentences. Table 4E provides some examples of subject-verbal concord mistakes. Although Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) state that subject-verbal concord will not hinder communication, I have included this category as a mistake based on two reasons; first, since Jim at S50 stresses the importance of subject-verbal

concord when going through the grammar test in his grammar instruction, and second, it was the mistake that occurred the most in the students’ utterances across all schools.

Table 4E. Examples of subject-verbal concord-related mistakes from all schools

Student mistakes related to subject-verbal concord	Standard grammar (spoken language)
i. It’s about a poor guy that win some money.	i. It’s about a poor guy that wins some money.
ii. He have butter on his fingers so he can’t take the phone.	ii. He has butter on his fingers so he can’t take the phone.
iii. It symbolize power and wealth.	iii. It symbolizes power and wealth.
iv. It’s about a boy that have no parents and lives with his uncle.	iv. It’s about a boy that has no parents and lives with his uncle.
v. Because other people, especially older boys thinks it’s weird.	v. Because other people, especially older boys think it’s weird.

Utterances (i) to (iv) show that the mistakes the students made relate to the inflectional system in English in relation to the use of the present simple. The rule states that the form of the present simple does not change, except for when using *the 3rd person singular subject*, where we add *-s* after the base form of the verb (Scrivener, 2010). In utterances (i)-(vi), the students used the base form of the verb instead of the inflectional ending *-s*, or the irregular verb form *has*. In utterance (v), the student used the singular inflectional ending *-s* with subjects in the plural.

Verb form

Another type of mistake I identified related to verbs across the schools is verb form concerning tense (past or present) and aspect (progressive, perfect). A total of 74 incidences were found (41%). Table 4F below provides examples of these mistakes related to verb form.

Table 4F. Examples of verb form-related mistakes from all schools

Student mistakes related to verb form	Standard grammar (spoken language)
i. I have choose to analyze a commercial of Rema 1000 with Mr. Bean.	i. I have chosen to analyze a commercial of Rema 1000 with Mr. Bean.
ii. I think it could been both because it says that's why it was necessary to kill him, the red man.	ii. I think it could have been both because it says that's why it was necessary to kill him, the red man.
iii. As a result of the civil war, slavery become forbidden.	iii. As a result of the civil war, slavery became forbidden.
iv. Sitting Bull had a mission that they will gain new territory after the battle, and they did so.	iv. Sitting Bull had a mission that they would gain new territory after the battle, and they did so.
v. She has problems to remember things.	v. She has problems remembering things.

Utterance (i) shows that the student has omitted the past participle form of the verb *chose* after the verb *to have* in the perfect tense. Further, utterance (ii) shows that the verb *been* after the modal *could* does not appear to be in the correct form. In the simple active past, present, and future tenses, modal verbs should be followed by the root (bare infinitive) form of the verb. The passive form construction for the simple tense is *modal + form of be + past participle* (Scrivener, 2010). Utterance (iii) shows that the irregular past tense form of the verb has been omitted. The student here talked about something that had already taken place. The speaker revealed this by referring to an incident that shows how the utterance should be in past tense. Utterance (iv) shows that the student mixed tenses in one and the same utterance. The remaining utterance (v), shows that the present progressive form of the verb is missing. The progressive follows certain expressions in English, *to have problems* being one of these.

4.3.4 Mistakes related to determiners

As shown in Figure 4B, 25% of the students' grammatical mistakes concerned determiners. A total of 92 incidences were found across all seven schools. Figure 4D shows the two sub-categories of grammar mistakes concerning determiners.

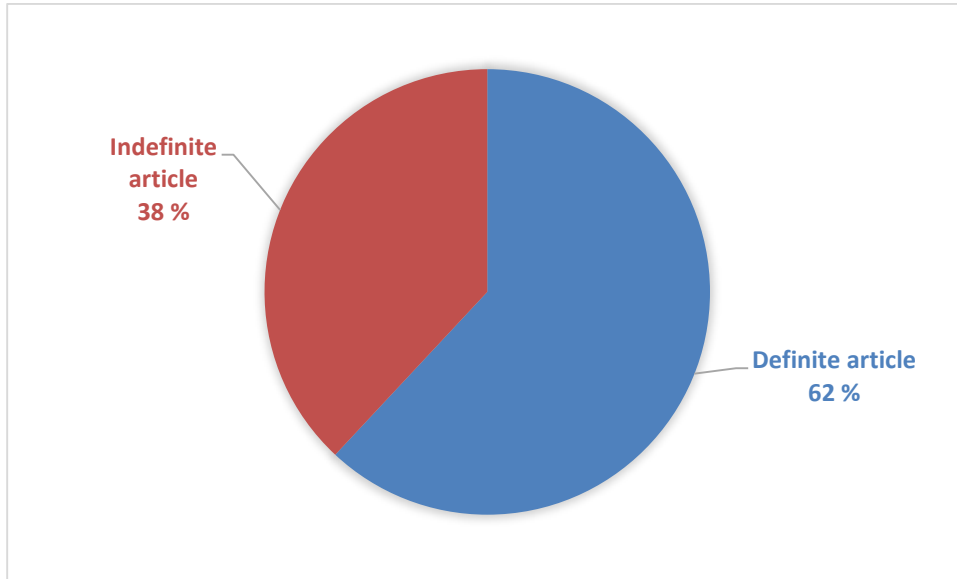


Figure 4D. Sub-categories of determiner-related mistakes

The students in these seven classrooms are found to produce grammatical mistakes concerning the definite and indefinite article in relation to determiners. The articles are either omitted or used incorrectly as shown in Table 4G below.

Table 4G. Examples of determiner-related mistakes from all schools

Student mistakes related to determiners	Standard grammar (spoken language)
i. I said it's not easy task to dress for a woman.	i. I said it's not an easy task to dress for a woman.
ii. No, it was a orchid.	ii. No, it was an orchid.
iii. Many have a Latin people in their families.	iii. Many have Latin people in their families.
iv. I think it was in North .	iv. I think it was in the North .
v. Ehh...the Republic is not a part of the UK, but the Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom.	v. Ehh...the Republic is not a part of the UK, but Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom.

In utterance (i), an indefinite article is missing. We use the indefinite articles *a* and *an* to show that we are talking about things in a general way without saying precisely which people or items we are referring to (Scrivener, 2010). Moreover, we use *a* before a noun beginning with a consonant sound and *an* before a noun beginning with a vowel sound, which the student has

not done in utterance (ii). The indefinite article can also be used with singular countable nouns, but not with plural countable nouns as the student has done in utterance (iii). Utterances (iv) and (v) indicate that the students might not be sure when to use the definite article *the*. The definite article *the* shows that we are talking about something specific (Scrivener, 2010). It can be used with some geographical terms, such as mountain ranges, regions and places with republic, kingdom, and states, etc., in the name, such as before *North* in utterance (iv), but not before name of countries without the respective words in it, such as, in this case, *Northern Ireland*, in utterance (v).

4.3.5 Mistakes related to nouns

As shown in Figure 4B, 12% of the students' grammatical mistakes concerned nouns. A total of 46 incidences were found across all seven schools. Figure 4E shows the three sub-categories of grammar mistakes concerning nouns.

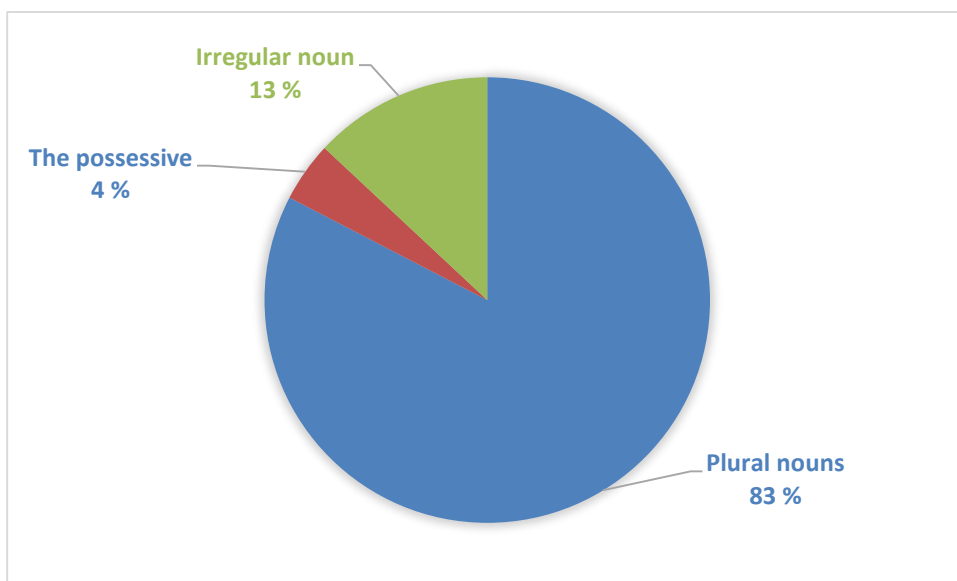


Figure 4E. Sub-categories of noun-related mistakes

I found most mistakes related to nouns in the uses of the plural form, while I only identified a few incidents in relation to the irregular form of the noun and the possessive form of the noun. Table 4H below shows examples of mistakes related to each sub-category.

Table 4H. Examples of noun-related mistakes from all schools

Student mistakes related to nouns	Standard grammar (spoken language)
i. There are also Indian reservation in Arizona and New Mexico.	i. There are also Indian reservations in Arizona and New Mexico.
ii. They were also sent to different school .	ii. They were also sent to different schools .
iii. ... and many peoples are looking up to her.	iii. ... and many people are looking up to her.
iv. They are using young and beautiful womans .	iv. They are using young and beautiful women .
v. It just looks like a, like a children book character.	v. It just looks like a, like a children's book character.

The noun *reservation* in utterance (i), shows that the student used the plural noun incorrectly after the verb to be (are/were) The intended meaning of utterance (i) is to explain that there are Indian reservations in more than one place. Therefore, the form of the noun *reservation* must be plural by adding the inflectional ending *-s*. The same applies to utterance (ii). Since the student refers to more than one person being sent to different schools, the inflectional ending *-s* must be added to the noun *school* to make it plural. In utterance (iii), the noun *people* has been used incorrectly. This noun can be confusing as it functions as the plural of *person*, but it also refers to a group of persons, such as the native peoples of America. As the plural form of nouns takes the inflectional ending *-s* it is a common mistake to add the *-s* to the irregular noun *people* in this case. However, as it already functions as a plural noun, no inflectional ending is added to the noun. *Womans* in utterance (iv), has been overgeneralized; although the student shows that he/she knows that plural nouns are formed by adding *-s*, he/she makes a mistake as the rule does not apply for irregular nouns such as *man*, *woman*, *mouse*, etc. These nouns all take different plural forms (Scrivener, 2010). In the last utterance (v), the student has omitted the singular possessive form 's of the noun children.

4.3.6 Mistakes related to prepositions

As shown in Figure 4B, 12% of the students' grammatical mistakes concerned prepositions. A total of 45 incidences were found across all seven schools. Figure 4F shows the three sub-categories of grammar mistakes concerning prepositions.

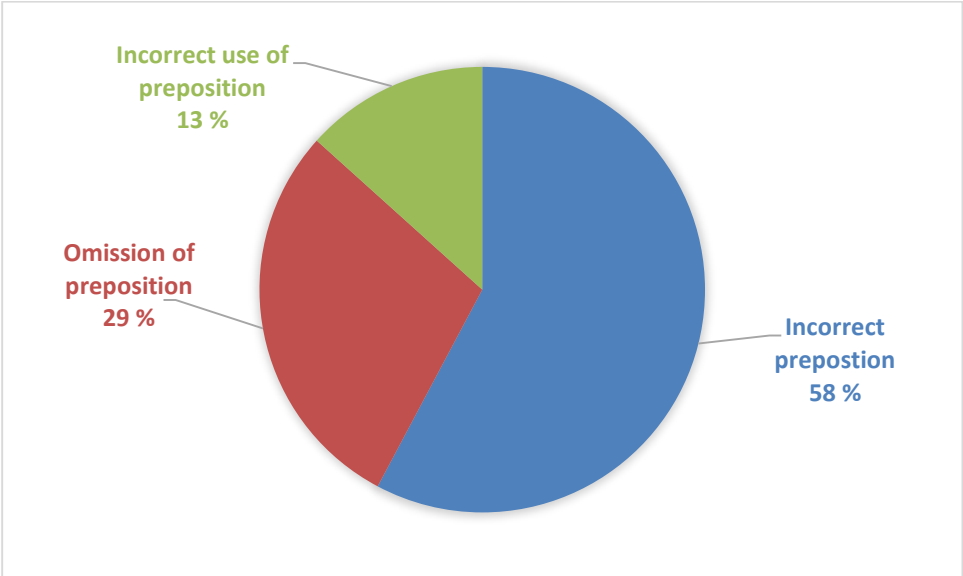


Figure 4F. Sub-categories of preposition-related mistakes

I found most mistakes related to prepositions concerned incorrect use of prepositions in where the students would mix the prepositions, while the other two sub-categories concerned incorrect use and omission of preposition. Table 4I below shows examples of mistakes related to each sub-category.

Table 4I. Examples of preposition-related mistakes from all schools

Student mistakes related to prepositions	Standard grammar (spoken language)
i. One day the Spain, the Spanish people came inland of the shores in Mexico.	i. One day the Spain, the Spanish people came inland to the shores of Mexico.
ii. They are one of few tribes who made spears and used it when they were hunting on sea animals.	ii. They are one of few tribes who made spears and used it when they were hunting for sea animals.
iii. Ehm, she was sitting in the desk to fill in or get the information or something, but she like ...	iii. Ehm, she was sitting by the desk to fill in or get the information or something, but she like ...
iv. Yeah, it was in the 17 th of May.	iv. Yeah, it was on the 17 th of May.
v. Sitting Bull was born the Dakota territory, and his name at birth was Jumping Badger.	v. Sitting Bull was born in the Dakota territory, and his name at birth was Jumping Badger.

In utterance (i), both the prepositions used are incorrectly. As the Spanish people came towards the inland, *to* must be used instead of *of*, and since the shores belong to Mexico or are connected to Mexico the preposition *to* should be used instead of *in* (Scrivener, 2010). The preposition *for* always follows the noun *hunt*, as in utterance (ii). Therefore, the preposition *on*, in this context, is used incorrectly. The preposition *in* in utterance (iii), is used incorrectly as well. The student is indicating that the person is actually sitting inside the desk, rather than behind the desk. The correct preposition to use here is *by*. The preposition *on* is usually used to express a surface, day or dates. Therefore, the correct preposition to use in utterance (iv), is *on* instead of *in*. As for the remaining utterance (v), the student has omitted *in* as the preposition of place.

4.3.7 Mistakes related to pronouns

As shown in Figure 4B, 3% of the students' grammatical mistakes concerned pronouns. A total of 12 incidences were found across all seven schools. Figure 4G shows the three sub-categories of grammar mistakes concerning pronouns.

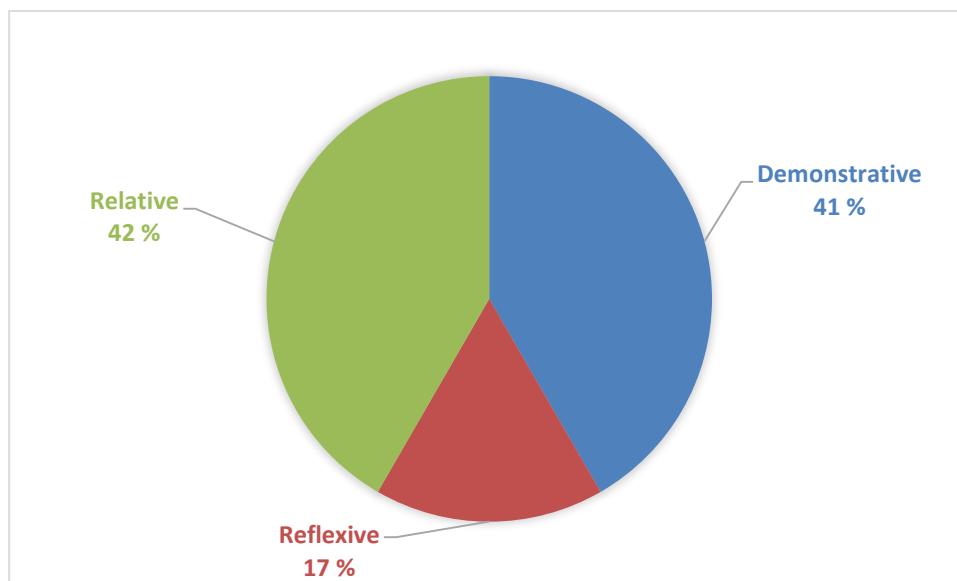


Figure 4G. Sub-categories of pronoun-related mistakes

I found most mistakes that were found in relation to pronouns were either that the students had omitted the plural form of the pronouns, omitted the pronoun altogether or used the pronoun incorrectly. Table 4J below shows examples of mistakes related to each sub-category.

Table 4J. Examples of pronoun-related mistakes from all schools

Student mistakes related to pronouns	Standard grammar (spoken language)
i. Indians from smaller villages had to go on long trips were often buying and trading things for people back home.	i. Indians from smaller villages who had to go on long trips were often buying and trading things for people back home.
ii. I think it's about a person either won something or lose something.	ii. I think it's about a person who either wins something or loses something.
iii. Like these one.	iii. Like this one.
iv. You can get this hearts.	iv. You can get these hearts.
v. They lived in cabins they had built them self .	v. They lived in cabins they had built themselves .

In utterance (i) and (ii), the students have omitted the relative pronoun *who*. We use the relative pronoun *who* when talking about people (Scrivener, 2010). In utterance (iii), the

plural pronoun form of the demonstrative pronoun *these* is used with a singular noun. The alternate would be the plural *these ones*. However, based on the utterances before and after suggest that the student intended to use the singular form. In utterance (iv), the student has used the singular pronoun of the demonstrative *this* with a plural noun instead of the plural pronoun form *these*. In the remaining utterance (iv), the singular form *them self* is used instead of the plural form – *selves* of the reflexive pronoun.

With this category, I conclude the analysis of the five categories of student mistakes illustrated in Figure 4B.

4.3.8 Spoken vs. written language

In addition to the mistakes covered above, a pattern of utterances that were acceptable in spoken language needs to be presented. These are utterances that would hinder communication in written language, such as when students pause, stop, omit words, etc., but that would, however, be acceptable in spoken language. Table 4K gives an overview of such utterances.

Table 4K. Acceptable utterances in oral communication

Acceptable utterances in oral communication: pauses, stops and omissions	
i.	I know, but.. (pause)
ii.	I heard that a woman in America was killed when she won the lottery and...(pause)
iii.	Because it's old, and like...(pause)
iv.	I think it's really good that talk about the picture during your presentation. (stop)
v.	No, they did make back in the days. (omission)

These utterances are all incomplete, and typical characteristics of spoken language are found; the students seem unsure of what to say in terms of which word to use to fit the context. Words such as pronouns are omitted, and the language is informal. The students' pause, use hand gestures or stop midsentence. In written language, these utterances would be inappropriate as they, to some degree, hinder communication in writing. First, if these were written sentences, they would be hard to interpret. Second, a written text including such sentences would lack flow, making it difficult for the reader to understand. Producing such

utterances in oral communication would, however, be accepted as correct as none of the utterances hinder communication when uttered orally although they are incomplete.

Since Anne (S09) taught sentence connectors in her grammar instruction, I have chosen to present examples of sentence connectors that would be accepted in oral communication. I observed that the students used a minimum of sentence connectors in oral production, not only at S09 but across all seven classrooms. Anne wanted her students to use sentence connectors to “vary their sentences [...] and use different words when continuing a thought” (S09, lesson 1a). She further stated that typical sentence connectors were personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, comparatives, conjunctions, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbials. The students were taught to vary their oral utterances, and include more sentence connectors after they finished planning their presentations., Most students started their utterances with a *noun* or *pronoun*, or one of the conjunctions, *but* or *and* as seen in Table 4L below.

Table 4L. Sentence connectors accepted in oral communication

Sentence connectors accepted in oral communication	
i.	And , like, even if you believe some people are going to hell, maybe don't they, maybe they don't have anything against going to hell? And then you come
ii.	Because , the first world war has just been, so if, so that would mean the British troops were less, had less soldiers than they usually would have. Because it seems unless the IRA had very good tactics this would be very hard for them to...ehh well.
iii.	And after a couple of years, they were moved to Mount (unclear) in Oklahoma where they also were slaves and had to work long days. And after a couple of years there, they were moved to Fort Sill Alabama. And there they lived.
iv.	They wanted slaves there. They couldn't leave Fort Sill. They had to be there all the time.
v.	Native Americans were the people who lived in America before other countries came there. Native American respect nature and they took care of earth and only used what they needed. Native American used natural resources to meet their needs, like trees, water, stones, and animals.

Although some of these utterances contain grammatical mistakes mentioned above, examples (i) – (iv) start with connectors that are accepted in oral communication; *and*, *because* or *they*. However, it does not account for a mistake as it only shows that the students did not vary their sentence connectors.

An interesting thing is the fact that Anne (S09) used an example where she started all the utterances with *the Native American*, to exemplify the importance of varying sentence connectors. Utterance (v) starts all utterances with the same word, namely *Native American* and since one of Anne's students made the utterances suggests that the aim of her grammar instruction was not fulfilled.

4.3.9 Summary of oral communication mistakes

In this section, I have aimed to answer RQ3: *What characterizes the students' oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms?* The same grammatical mistakes were found in all seven classrooms, although to different extents. It was, therefore, interesting to categorize and provide examples of these mistakes.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss my findings in light of prior research and the theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Initially, I posed the following main research question for my MA study: *How do English teachers approach grammar instruction in lower secondary school, and which grammar mistakes are observed in English among the students in their oral communication?*

Based on my analysis, I identified three main findings:

- (1) Only two of the seven observed teachers taught grammar in their English lessons, and in their grammar instruction, they seemed to follow a 6-step deductive sequence based on students' needs.
- (2) The students in the observed lessons made oral mistakes in 27% of their utterances, and the teachers' corrections of these were rare.
- (3) Although the same types of grammar mistakes were found in all seven classrooms, there seemed to be a difference in the two interviewed teachers' attitudes when it comes to corrective feedback and the need for grammar instruction.

In this chapter, I will, therefore, discuss whether or not there is a need to teach English grammar in lower secondary school, and whether grammar instruction should be based on the students' needs.

5.1 Grammar teaching

The findings of my video analysis show that two of the observed teachers taught grammar in their English classrooms, while the remaining five did not, and both used a deductive teaching model. Considering the contrasting views about grammar teaching among researcher in the field (Corder, 1967; Ellis, 2006; Krashen, 1982; Myhill, 2004; Myhill et al., 2012, 2013; Scott, 1990; Thornbury, 2001), it is interesting to discuss the relevance of the observed individual grammar teaching practices.

5.1.1 Frequency of grammar teaching

In the two classrooms where grammar instruction occurred, the teachers approached grammar in six of the 11 observed lessons, which means that when grammar instruction occurred, it did so in almost half of these teachers' lessons. This amounted to 65.5 minutes of grammar instruction out of 475 observed minutes. Jim at S50 introduced his students to grammatical elements such as verb form and the relative pronouns, while Anne at S09 introduced her students to sentence connectors.

According to Flognfeldt and Lund (2016), students need to be exposed to useful words and grammatical patterns that are necessary for communication in English, as seen in Jim and Anne's lessons where grammar instruction occurred. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask whether it is worrying that out of the 32 English lessons I observed across the seven schools, for a total of 1.646 minutes, grammar instruction only occurred in 19% of the observed lessons, which is quite limited.

Based on the teacher interviews, my findings show that the two teachers found it hard to interpret the LK06/13 due to its vagueness concerning what aspects of grammar to teach, how to teach grammar, and which language to use while doing so. Both Paul at S07 and Jim at S50 considered the lack of methods in the LK06/13 to be a problem, and in addition, they found it hard to include grammar instruction due to few English lessons per week (time constraints). Although they both found grammar to be important, grammar instruction consequently came in second place for both teachers.

Seeing that some grammatical elements are necessary to obtain good communication skills in both spoken and written language, grammar skills should be given equal importance as other skills. For example, Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) argue that the most important grammatical aspects concern verbs, prepositions, and determiners, which Jim, to some degree, addressed in his grammar instruction (verbs). Nevertheless, since LK06/13 does not define which grammatical aspects are necessary to obtain good communication skills in English, this might be one of the reasons why five of the seven teachers do not teach grammar in the observed lessons.

Although I observed seven different classrooms, for a total of 32 lessons, grammar instruction among the observed teachers might have been different if I had observed more lessons. Since I observed two teachers who taught grammar and interviewed one who stated he taught

grammar when he saw a need for it, I can only assume that the other four remaining observed teachers also, at times, focus on grammar to some degree. Still, there is a case to be made concerning the predominant lack of focus on grammar, as there was only very limited evidence of implicit grammar instruction (two instances), and no evidence of inductive grammar instruction at all in the observed lessons. Both observed grammar instructions complied with explicit deductive grammar teaching.

5.1.2 Explicit – deductive grammar teaching

A somewhat surprising finding was that the two teachers, Jim and Anne, seemed to consistently teach grammar using what I identified as a 6-step deductive approach to grammar instruction, where they (1) switched language from English to Norwegian, (2) explained the purpose of the grammar instruction, (3) taught the targeted grammar rule, (4) linked the rule to the students' own knowledge, (5) showed examples of the targeted grammar elements to engage the students and make them aware of the grammar rules, and (6) provided opportunities for the students to work with gap-filling tasks concerning the targeted grammar aspects (see Figure 4A). Although the 6-step deductive approach is based on my findings, the deductive approach to grammar teaching coincides with what both Ellis (2006) and Thornbury (2008) state as a way of teaching grammar that falls under explicit teaching. Considering the limited amount of English lessons, which both Paul and Jim mentioned in the interviews, it is understandable that the teachers favor a deductive approach to teaching grammar since it is more time-saving and effective as it goes straight to the point (Thornbury, 2008). However, among the disadvantages of focusing solely on a deductive approach, one problem could be that some grammatical concepts can be hard for some students to understand since the concepts might be unfamiliar to them (Thornbury, 2008). Considering that a deductive approach is highly teacher-oriented, this might limit student interaction and involvement. The students run the risk of becoming passive rather than active learners, which might hinder them from developing sufficient language skills.

Another interesting finding concerning the 6-step deductive approach is that the two teachers, Jim and Anne, tended to use the students' L1 when teaching grammar. Alternating between using their L1 and the target language during lessons, can be a positive thing when looking at the disadvantage of deductive teaching as some students might find some grammatical concepts difficult to understand (Dahl, 2015; Thornbury, 2008). This is in line with what both

Paul and Jim explained as being one of the reasons why they switched to the L1 as they believed it would be easier for the students to understand the grammatical concepts in their L1. This view on code-switching coincides with Kumar and Narendra's (2012) findings, which showed that teachers tended to switch to their L1 in grammar lessons since they believed students would then understand more.

Another argument concerning this kind of code-switching is that by using the students' L1 instead of English as the target language, they will not receive enough exposure (input) needed to produce output (Cook, 2001). According to Cook (2001), the students will be exposed to enough input, and the opportunity to produce language, if the teachers encourage them to use the target language in other classroom situations, which is what both Jim and Anne did when they did not teach grammar. They both used the target language and encouraged the students to do so as well. Two of Dahl's (2015) arguments against code-switching; that the students will not receive enough exposure to the targeted language, and that it can seem confusing and lead to interference, might explain why Paul stated on the other hand, that he only used the L1 when he identified the need to do so, to ensure the student's understanding.

It is, however, interesting that I only found use of the deductive approach to grammar teaching in the observed classrooms, considering the argument by Ellis (2006) and Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) that there is not only one approach to teaching grammar. They also argue that grammar should not only emphasize form but also meaning. Although Jim and Anne taught grammar, I found that they did so out of context, with little or no focus on meaning. This is in line with what Newby (2015) claims to be a consequence of the lack of consensus about how grammar operates as a communication system, and what methodology should be applied to facilitate grammar acquisition. Because of this, Newby (2015) states that teachers all-to-often base their teaching on what the textbook offers on grammar, which is what both Anne and Jim did.

Moreover, teaching grammar deductively, makes it difficult to vary the grammar lessons and incorporate grammar with other skills. Newby (2015) suggests that grammar needs to be integrated into the language teaching in a more holistic approach by drawing on a theoretical model of pedagogical grammar that incorporates cognitive and communicative grammar. The students need to explore for themselves how language works, and in this process, teachers should only function as facilitators of the communication process (Newby, 2013). Based on

the findings, I agree with Newby (2015), that teachers should focus on a more holistic approach to grammar teaching, and engage the students in meaningful communicative tasks that engage them to develop their communicative competence in English. This view is also in line with the intentions of LK06/13. Unfortunately, the grammar lessons I observed fell short of this ideal.

To focus even more on variation and communication, a suggestion would be to focus on both explicit and implicit grammar approaches to teaching. Ellis (2014) argues that both approaches are of value in grammar teaching, considering that both focus on important aspects in gaining good communicative skills. Therefore, a mix between implicit and explicit approaches might be favorable, with the latter focusing both on a deductive and inductive approach where learning grammar might be more exciting considering that the students have to figure out the rules for themselves (Thornbury, 2008). However, seeing that only two incidents of implicit teaching were found across the seven observed classrooms, and that neither of the students picked up on it, suggests, in line with Scott (1990), that teachers need to be more explicit in their approaches to grammar in the classroom. In sum, these findings suggest that an integration of grammar instruction in the English lessons may be warranted, instead of teaching grammar out of context; bearing the students' strengths and needs in mind to develop their communicative competence.

5.2 Students' needs

Interestingly, Paul, who did not teach grammar in the observed lessons, claimed in the interview that he taught grammar only when he identified the need for it among his students. Jim on the other hand, who taught grammar in the observed lessons, did not mention students' needs but instead revealed that he taught grammar after each completed chapter in the textbook. Despite the fact that Jim claimed to find grammar teaching time-consuming, he nevertheless stated that he consciously devoted time for grammar instruction. What Jim stated correlated with what I observed during his lessons concerning his use of the textbook. In addition, though, he explicitly explained to the students in the classroom that his grammar instruction was based on their needs in a prior grammar test. According to Flognfeldt and Lund (2016), grammar is taught more effectively if based on the students' needs where the focus is on engaging and meaningful tasks, instead of focusing on grammar as separate units based on the textbook or other decontextualized choices.

Although the students' mistakes were not very frequent, with only 27% of the utterances including some form of grammatical mistake, it might be hard to argue that there were students in need of grammar teaching in all the observed classrooms. Indeed, the number of oral students' mistakes in the two classrooms that experienced grammar instruction varied greatly, as one represented the highest number of student mistakes, while the other represented one of the fewest. In fact, in S09 I found 164 grammar mistakes, while in S50 I found 12 only (see Table 4D). The difference can be partly explained by that the students in S09 spoke a lot more than in any of the other classrooms since they gave oral presentations during several of the observed lessons. This suggests that it is only to be expected that there is a higher number of mistakes in this class. On a similar note, in S50 the instruction was mostly teacher-oriented with fewer opportunities for the students to speak.

Thus, it is more relevant to compare the frequency of mistakes in the two classrooms compared to the five other, i.e., to look at the percentages of utterances containing one or more mistake, as identified in section 4.3.1. Doing the comparison by frequency, in S50 about 10% of the utterances contain one or more mistake, while in S09 the number is about 30%. Due to the limited amount of data, especially in S50 with only a total of 109 utterances, it is hard to make any conclusions about differences between these two classes. Among all classes, the ones with more than 150 utterances all have a mistake rate around 20-30%, suggesting a need to work to correct these across all the observed classrooms. This was also confirmed by the teachers in both interviews and is in line with Myhill's (2004) suggestion that the teaching of grammar helps the students develop specific skills. Considering that one of the aims in LK06/13 is developing their communicative skill, the students need to be aware of what they can gain from grammar instruction to make their utterances more meaningful. This view is in line with what Flognfeldt and Lund (2016) propose as the reason why the teaching of a variety of grammatical aspects should be given priority.

5.2.1 The need for accuracy or fluency

Although my findings show that in general, there is a 20-30% mistake rate among the utterances in the seven classrooms, this does not indicate that the mistakes made in oral communication is a barrier to the students' use of English. Looking more closely at the type of oral mistakes they make, one can see that mistakes with verbs and determiners are the largest categories; corresponding to 48% and 25% of the mistakes respectively. Most

mistakes concerned subject-verbal concord, with a total of 78 incidences (21%) among the 374 mistakes. However, according to Flognfeldt and Lund (2016), subject-verbal concord mistakes will not necessarily hinder oral communication among people in the same way as verb tense, determiners and prepositions might. As a consequence, it is not necessarily efficient in terms of oral communication to focus on the largest mistake categories. Instead, it might be useful to focus on verb tense, determiners and prepositions since these grammatical elements will to some degree hinder communication in terms of creating misunderstandings.

In line with Ellis (2009), I agree that the students' utterances do not necessarily have to be accurate or "correct" for them to convey meaningful communication. Teachers should instead help their students develop skills needed for fluency in effective communication, which is in line with the main aim of CC. Fluency and accuracy in CLT are seen as complementary principles when using the language productively, as the students in all the observed classrooms did.

Next, since effective communication is the overall aim of LK06/13, there is a need for closer attention to determiners, prepositions, and verb tense to avoid that the students are misunderstood (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). The fact that a number of determiners in English are quite different from those in Norwegian might explain the high number of mistakes found in relation to determiners across the seven schools. Even more important to avoid misunderstandings, is the use of correct prepositions. Distinguishing between prepositions is perhaps the most challenging part of the English language (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016), as was seen among the student mistakes concerning prepositions in the observed classrooms. As for verb tense, it is important to refer to use the correct occurrence of time, if not, unnecessary misunderstandings can occur. This is also in line with David Crystal (Brown, 2014) who states that grammar is about meaning and clarity.

In other words, students should be taught to communicate effectively to avoid such misunderstandings, although instruction of these grammatical elements might not be enough, the students need to use these grammatical elements in communication as well. Fortunately, misunderstandings are more easily avoided in oral than in written communication, since one can ask the person to repeat the utterance, explain and get confirmation that you have understood the message. Considering that most of the identified mistakes made by the students will not hinder communication, shows that accuracy might not be as important as fluency.

5.3 Corrective feedback

Among the 32 observed lessons, I found only two occurrence of corrective feedback related to grammatical mistakes, which was surprising. However, both in the interviews, Paul and Jim stated that both positive and negative feedback types had a positive and motivating effect on the students, but that they mostly focused on the students' written production. Why then does not corrective feedback occur in connection with oral communication? It might be considered a good strategy to avoid correcting the students' oral grammar mistakes in the classroom in the sense that it is difficult to distinguish between what is an actual error or a mistake (Brown, 2007). In line with what Terrell (1982) states, since there is no evidence which shows that the correction of speech errors is necessary or even helpful in language acquisition, and some students might interpret such corrections as negative, indicating that they are not good enough, might in turn result in less student interaction. She further states, along with Krashen (1983), that corrections made in public, might have a negative effect on the students' eagerness to be orally active in class.

According to Ellis (2009), there are two types of feedback; positive feedback, which provides support and motivation, and negative, which signals linguistic deviation in the learners' utterances. Considering the low percentage of mistakes (27%) made among the seven classrooms, there should be ample room for positive reinforcement. This is in line with LK06/13 and Brevik and Blikstad-Balas' (2014) view on feedback; stating that spontaneous feedback in the classroom related to mastery strengthens the students' eagerness and motivation to participate. However, neither corrective nor positive feedback concerning grammar use were provided in any of the lessons. Considering that while the wrong verb tense hinders communication to some degree, not many mistakes were made in relation to verb tense. Therefore the teachers could have praised their correct use of verb tense instead of saying nothing.

Nevertheless, how easy or difficult would it be for teachers to know whether what they observe in the students' utterances is a grammatical mistake or error? For me, as an observer, I had an advantage as I could listen to the lessons over and over again, which let me identify such occurrences, although I had no way of knowing whether my findings represent mistakes or errors. Unfortunately, teachers do not have this opportunity in the classroom, unless they specifically listen for their students' potential grammatical errors.

6 Conclusion

This MA study combines a qualitative analysis of 32 videotaped English lessons taught by seven teachers in seven classrooms at different lower secondary schools (Year 9), with interviews with two of these teachers. The data were collected as part of the Linking Instruction and Student Experiences (LISE) project and analyzed to identify grammar instruction in the English classroom, to characterize the students' oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms and the teacher's correction of these.

The background for this MA study is that although we have knowledge about what theorists believe is important when it comes to grammar teaching, little is known about what actually happens in the Norwegian classroom when it comes to English teaching in general, and especially English grammar teaching (e.g., Aasen et al., 2012).

In light of the above status of knowledge and my participation in the LISE study, the main research question of this MA study is:

How do English teachers approach grammar instruction in lower secondary school, and which grammar mistakes are observed in English among the students in their oral communication?

To investigate the main research question in greater detail, I developed three sub-questions:

- (1) To what extent and how is grammar taught in English in seven lower secondary school classrooms in 9th grade?
- (2) How do two of the teachers in the observed classrooms explain their teaching of English grammar?
- (3) What characterizes the students' oral grammar mistakes in the observed classrooms?

One of the most interesting findings regarding the first sub-question (1) was the similarity in the teaching approaches between the two observed teachers who taught grammar. Both teachers seemed to follow what I identified as a 6-step deductive approach to grammar instruction, where they (1) switched language from English to Norwegian, (2) explained the purpose of the grammar instruction, (3) taught the targeted grammar rule, (4) linked the rule

to the students' own knowledge, (5) showed examples of the targeted grammar elements to engage the students and make them aware of the grammar rules, and (6) provided opportunities for the students to work with gap-filling tasks concerning the targeted grammar aspects (see Figure 4A). These teachers also taught grammar out of context, where they based their teaching on the textbook. This contrasts to the English subject curriculum in the LK06/13's intentions, where teachers should focus on meaningful communicative tasks that engage them to develop their communicative competence in English.

The main findings related to the second sub-question (2), were that both interviewed teachers found grammar instruction necessary but challenging due to time-constraints. They suggested that as the LK06/13 English subject curriculum is vague when it comes to defining what areas of English grammar to teach and how to teach it, and therefore, grammar instruction was often neglected. However, when they did teach grammar, they both acknowledged mainly using deductive grammar instruction based on their students' needs, which is in accordance with the identified grammar instruction in the two classrooms mentioned above. A prominent aspect promoted by the teachers were the importance of drawing on the students' needs and prior knowledge when approaching grammar instruction in the classroom, but also to engage their students in using the language. Based on the findings from the observed grammar instruction and the teacher interviews, it seems that to gain good communicative skills, a focus on both explicit and implicit grammar approaches to grammar teaching might be favorable, to focus on students' needs and meaningful communication in the classroom.

The findings related to the third sub-question show that the students in the observed lessons fairly seldom made oral grammar mistakes and that the teacher's corrections of these were indeed rare. The students' oral grammar mistakes constituted a 20-30% mistake rate among the students' utterances in the seven classrooms. However, the types of oral grammar mistakes they made, were no barrier to them. Although verbs (48%) and determiners (25%) constituted the largest number of grammar mistakes, most mistakes concerned subject-verbal concord, constituting a 21% mistake rate among the 374 mistakes, which will not necessarily hinder oral communication among people in the same way as verb tense, determiners and prepositions might do (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016).

When the teachers' infrequent correction of these grammar mistakes did occur, they were implicit and focused on the development of the students' communicative competence, rather than correctness. This is in line with the notion that the English teachers' error correction

occurs to help students avoid being misunderstood. Considering that most of the students' grammar mistakes should not hinder communication, accuracy might not be considered as important as fluency in these classrooms. My findings showed almost no occurrences of corrective feedback that were related to grammatical mistakes. Considering the low percentage of mistakes (27%) made in the seven classrooms, there should be ample room for positive reinforcement to strengthen the students' eagerness and motivation to participate.

To sum up so far, the present MA study uses video observations and teacher interviews to provide new insight into what happens in Norwegian classrooms when it comes to English grammar teaching in lower secondary school. This includes insight into what types of mistakes the students make, and how the teachers approach grammar teaching.

6.1 Implications for teachers of English: some suggestions for improvement

In light of the discussion above, I will in the following present some of the implications for the teaching of grammar in lower secondary classrooms. Based on my findings, both in terms of incorporating grammar skills in line with other skills and on some of the mistakes made by the students, grammar instruction should be made an integral part of English lessons to a greater extent than what I observed. Next, there also needs to be greater variation and better integration with other aspects of the English instruction, and preferably, little or no teaching of grammar out of context. I do not propose to entirely avoid teaching grammar based on a deductive model, but instead, incorporating it with the topic at hand, as argued for instance by Myhill (2004). This does not mean that grammar should be incorporated into each lesson, but instead, lessons dealing with the same topic could be broken down into different sequences where grammar is one of these sequences. A good choice would be to integrate grammar teaching and literature by using literary or expository texts to find grammar elements the students need do pay attention to.

According to my findings, verb tense and prepositions must be paid greater attention. For instance, by looking for verbs in the past tense in a text, teachers would have the opportunity to ask how the use of verb tense(s) in the text contributes to conveying a historical perspective in a text. In addition, focusing on the narrator of a literary text by having students identify the use of the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person singular verbs might be effective, i.e., teaching subject-verbal

concord. Jim, for example, could have used the lyrics for a song that they listened to in class to teach the students about past tense and subject-verbal concord to meet the needs of the students revealed in a past grammar test, as the lyrics concerned a historical event. Literary texts used in this sense will not only function as a springboard for learning grammar rules, but also for communicative tasks. In fact, using literary texts in this sense as well as for other purposes, will contribute to varying the lessons in a holistic manner, and even make the students become familiar not only with literary elements of the text but also focus on recognition of grammatical forms. For some students, this might make each lesson more interesting and may also lead to greater student involvement. Hopefully, it will also provide students with more meaning-focused tasks, which is in line with what Krashen (1982) proposes as the key to language learning and development.

Another implication concerns the 6-step deductive approach I identified as a teaching structure used by both Jim and Anne, who based their grammar instruction on their students' needs for information about verbs and sentence connectors. This is in line with Flognfeldt and Lund's (2016) suggestion that grammar is taught more effectively if based on the students' needs. Although the students in both classes were actively involved in the learning process and worked with gap tasks, some improvement is needed to involve the students even more actively. The tasks could focus more on engaging and meaningful tasks (Flognfeldt & Lund, 2016). A way of doing this is getting the students to communicate more with each other, for example by talking together for two minutes about something they have done, and about something they are going to do. Not only will they become more aware of the past and present tense forms of the verb, but they will also produce output, which will push learners to process language more deeply (Swain, 2000). To meet the aim of successful communication, students not only need input but also to produce language to become aware of what they can and cannot do, which is in accordance with what Swain (2000) states. Using the language this way might encourage the students to develop their communicative skills and to develop skills in grammar as well.

Yet another implication concerns feedback on grammar use. By praising their students, using positive feedback, the teachers can confirm that their students' utterances do not only include mistakes. A way of doing this is to utter an ill-formed utterance and have the students notice

the grammar mistake for example by writing the correct utterance on an index card⁵. After having collected all the index cards, the teacher could divide the cards into two piles; a yes- and a no-pile. The yes-pile contains the right corrections, while the no-pile contains the wrong corrections. In the end, the teacher picks the wrong correction that was most representative among the incorrect answers. First, the teacher could focus on what was correct and what was good in the correction (positive feedback of student mastery), and afterward, focus on how to correct the mistake(s) and improve their grammar use (feed forward). Focusing first on the correct part, and then on the incorrect part, indicates to the students that the whole utterance did not ruin communication. This task will hopefully make students less afraid to make mistakes, engage them more actively, and make them gain more self-confidence. Also, the lower-intermediate students will hopefully feel like they are not being punished for being wrong as they are not corrected in front of the whole class. It is important to make the students aware of the fact that everyone makes mistakes, but that their mistakes, however, are of importance to the teacher to indicate how much they understand and help them improve.

The last implication concerns how teachers can distinguish between the students' mistakes and errors. By using audio recordings, for example using the audio program Audacity, or simply recording sound on the students' phones, teachers can ask their students to record brief presentations of a given topic. This can be done at school or home. The recordings do not have to be more than a minute long, but enough to notice the students' grammatical strengths and needs. Using audio recordings is time-saving and efficient, which would benefit teachers such as Paul and Jim, who both stated that they did not focus on grammar because of time-constraints. To notice the mistakes, the teachers can take notes while listening to the recordings while using parts of the coding systems I used when categorizing the mistakes (see Table 3D). The teachers can also ask the students to record their presentation again after pointing out what they need to improve. Eventually, the students might be able to self-correct, and the audio-recorded utterances will only contain errors (Brown, 2007).

Finally, teachers could, of course, make notes of students' mistakes in the classroom while students interact in communicative tasks, by using my coding system (Table 3D).

⁵ This suggestion is based on a video in mathematics by the Teaching Channel, called "My Favorite No".

6.2 Further research

This MA study is mainly a qualitative study of seven different English classrooms. A follow-up study could use a larger, and if possible, a random sample to replicate this study to increase the knowledge of how grammar teaching is approached in Norwegian English classrooms, and thus be able to generalize the results. This study should be quantitative, and the aim of such a study could be to test the hypothesis that only deductive grammar teaching happens in the classrooms. Such a study could also be used to identify what types of grammatical mistakes 9th graders make in general and explore what type of grammar teaching conducted on a larger scale in English classes in Norway. In such a study, the coding system developed for this MA study could be useful for further research within this research topic, in terms of registering the type of mistakes made by students.

A limitation of this study is that it is purely qualitative and it is not possible to generalize the results. However, as mentioned, this study can be a basis for further research within the topic of grammar use and instruction.

Another interesting question is whether or not grammar teaching is actually based on students' needs. In a same type of study as described above, the aim could be to identify whether the grammar teaching matches the types of mistakes the students make, or if there is a discrepancy.

A similar study as the one conducted in this MA study could also be conducted at the upper secondary school level, to see how teachers approach grammar instruction in English throughout secondary school. Such a study would also enable a comparison between lower and upper secondary school levels, to see if there are differences from the findings in this study, and to identify if the same types of grammatical mistakes are made in oral communication by older students.

Finally, and considering the many approaches to grammar teaching described in Chapter 2, it would be interesting to look at the English teachers' education to see if there seems to be a link between grammar instruction and their educational background.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide

In English:

General information: age, gender, total amount of teaching the English subject, present teaching class and age of students, education place, amount of points from English.

1. Do you focus on grammar in your English class?
2. How do you teach or cover grammar? (Which methods do you use?)
 - a. Why do you use these specific methods? (Are you inspired by others, theory, education, own imagination, textbook, own research)
 - b. Did you learn methods for teaching grammar in your teaching program?
 - c. Do you use a combination of methods or one during a class?
 - d. Do you use the same methods/strategies in every class?
 - e. What influences your choice of methods?
 - f. Have you considered alternative methods? If yes, which ones? Why/why not?
 - g. How do you know if these methods work?
 - h. Positive/negative sides of the methods you use?
3. Do you think it is important to teach grammar? Why/why not?
4. What do the students benefit from learning grammar?

In Norwegian:

Generell informasjon: alder, kjønn, erfaring i skolen med engelskfaget, undervisningsklasse og alder på elevene, utdannelsessted og poengsum i engelsk.

1. Fokuserer du på grammatikk når du underviser engelsk?
2. Hvordan underviser du grammatikk? (Hvilke metoder bruker du?)
 - a. Hvorfor bruker du disse metodene? (Har du fått ideer fra andre? Teori? Utdannelsessted/kurs? Egen fantasi? Egen forskning?)
 - b. Lærte du noe om undervisning i grammatikk i løpet av egen utdanning?
 - c. Bruker du flere metoder eller en spesiell metode i undervisningen?
 - d. Bruker du ofte de samme metodene flere ganger i samme klasse?
 - e. Hva er tanken bak metodene du bruker?
 - f. Har du vurdert andre metoder? Hvilke i så fall? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
 - g. Hvordan har du bevis for at metodene fungerer?
 - h. Kan du komme på noen positive/negative sider ved metodene du bruker?
3. Mener du selv at det er viktig å undervise grammatikk i engelskfaget? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
4. Hva sitter elevene igjen med fra å lære grammatikk?

Appendix 2

Consent form

UiO : **Det utdanningsvitenskapelige fakultet**
Institutt for lærerutdanning og skoleforskning

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Dato: 01.12.2015

Erklæring ved tilgang til LISA (Linking Instruction and Student Achivement) sine forskningsdata

Forskningsprosjektet LISA (Linking Instruction & student achievement) har forpliktet seg til å følge personopplysningslovens retningslinjer ved all registrering, lagring og bruk av det innsamlede datamaterialet. Ved tilgang til dette materialet er du forpliktet til å gjøre deg kjent med og følge disse retningslinjene (se: <http://www.lovdatab.no/all/nl-20000414-031.html>). Datamaterialet skal ikke under noen omstendighet deles med tredjepart eller fremvises til andre

Jeg bekrefter herved at jeg har gjort meg kjent med personopplysningslovens retningslinjer, og lover å følge disse i mitt arbeid med datamaterialet tilhørende forskningsprosjektet LISA.

Undertegnede plikter også å referere eksplisitt til LISA prosjektet (ved prosjektleder og dataeier Professor Kirsti Klette) ved all bruk av data/ design, kodeskjema og tekniske løsninger som bygger på dette prosjektet, jf. Forskningsetiske komiteers krav til God Forskningspraksis/ Henvisningsskikk (<http://www.etikkom.no/Forskningsetikk/God-forskingspraksis>). Enhver situasjon der datamateriale som tilhører LISA benyttes i analyser i publikasjoner skal være kjent for prosjektleder og dataeier Professor Kirsti Klette før publisering.

Sted	Dato	Underskrift
<u>Oslo</u>	<u>23/8-16</u>	<u>Liza L. Bentzen</u>

For LISA		
<u>Oslo</u>	<u>23/8-16</u>	<u>Bjørn S. Gullhaug</u>



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