



UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Education

The Current Status of English Grammar Instruction in the Norwegian school system: Attitudes, Opinions, and Practices

Hannah Sigrid Larsen

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Acknowledgments

Becoming a teacher has been my dream since lower secondary school. Throughout my years as a pupil, I have encountered several amazing teachers who have convinced me that being a teacher is the most essential and rewarding job in the world. These teachers are the reason why I chose this profession in the end and are evidence of how important it is to have good teachers.

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the current status of grammar teaching in the English subject in Norwegian schools, through English teachers' points of view. A mixed methods study was conducted by gathering data from English teachers all over Norway through interviews and an online questionnaire. The foundation of the research study is two research questions, each of which includes complementary sub-questions that further specify the topic. The research questions are formulated as follows: (RQ1). *How do English teachers in Norway currently teach grammar, and what approaches do they employ when teaching?* (1.1) Do they teach grammar implicitly or explicitly? (1.2) Do they favor a traditional approach, a purely communicative approach, or a combination of both? (RQ2). *What opinions and attitudes do English teachers in Norway currently have regarding grammar instruction?* (2.1) Do they believe grammar teaching is important? (2.2) Do they find grammar instruction challenging? The results of the present research study are discussed in comparison to relevant previous research and theory. The findings suggest that English teachers in Norway generally believe grammar instruction is important in school, and at the same time, they favor a communicative approach to language teaching. In addition, most of the participants state that they employ an implicit approach to teaching grammar, where they teach grammar without attracting the learners' attention to grammatical form. Most teachers in this study also do not feel uncertain about their knowledge when teaching grammar and generally do not find it challenging. The findings correlate with previous research done on the topic. It can be assumed that due to the change in perception of grammar teaching throughout the years, most teachers teach grammar implicitly, as a tool for communication and meaning-making.

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List of Abbreviations

SLA – Second language acquisition

PG – Pedagogical grammar

L2 – Second language

FFI – Form-focused instruction

FoF – Focus on form

FoFs – Focus on forms

LK20 – The national curriculum in English of 2020

MM – Mixed methodology

CLT – Communicative language teaching

L1 – First Language

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aims and Motivation

The English subject in school is a subject that is in constant development. Throughout the years the importance of English language competence has grown exponentially, as English is the lingua franca of today's globalized world. The subject is mandatory in all years of primary and secondary school, and pupils are taught to both speak and write proficiently in English. With the changing role of English in society, the teacher's role in the subject has also changed. The focus and aims of the subject fifty years ago were completely different from what it is today, and the way the subject is taught has also changed accordingly. Today, English teachers are required to have a wide competence in the subject as it revolves not only around written and oral communication but also topics like intercultural competence and worldviews. The national curriculum for English after year 10 states that "The subject shall give the pupils the foundation for communicating with others, both locally and globally, regardless of cultural or linguistic background" (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). This makes English a subject where pupils should be able to show a broad and deep competence level.

The approaches and views on teaching grammar have throughout the years been ambiguous, as there is no set standard for how or what should be taught about grammar. The curriculum does not explicitly state which grammatical forms teachers should teach, which can make this part of the subject challenging (Bader & Dypedahl, 2020, p. 253). Decades ago, grammar and formal language structures were a central part of second language learning, and the main goal was grammar drilling and comprehension of grammatical forms. However, throughout the years, the role of English in society has developed, and the usage of the language has dramatically changed. With this change, new approaches to language learning emerged, and the role of grammar and grammatical comprehension has slowly lost its focus in classrooms and curricula. Approaches like communicative language teaching (CLT) rose with this development. Pupils are today expected to utilize the language in communication and to make themselves understood in both written and oral communication. Grammar has therefore changed from being the most central part of language learning and comprehension to being a tool for communication and meaning-making.

Because of the development of grammar in second language learning, the way grammar is taught today is varying. Some teachers may still focus on a traditional grammar approach when teaching, and some may have omitted it in favor of other important tools for communication in classrooms. Because grammar instruction is an underexplored topic in Norwegian schools, this thesis aims to study how English teachers teach grammar today and what approaches they utilize for grammar teaching, and what attitudes they have to grammar teaching. According to Behre and Kifle (2023), research on perceptions of grammar and grammar teaching is important for several reasons. One of them is that throughout the years there have been concerns regarding teacher students' and teachers' lack of competence in grammar and the decreased amount of grammar in language teaching. They also state that grammar teaching has received more attention in newer years, and that language learning is specified as one of three core elements in the national curriculum for English. Teachers must adapt when it comes to linguistic competence regarding changes in curricula and teaching materials. With this being said, research on teachers' methods and opinions on grammar teaching, can inform teaching education, teacher students, and teachers about changes in education policy and the development of grammar teaching (Behre & Kifle, 2023, pp. 4-5).

I have formulated two research questions for this study. Since my topic is vast, I have also formulated sub-questions within each research question. These will help specify the topic and the focal points in each question.

RQ 1. How do English teachers in Norway currently teach grammar, and what approaches do they employ when teaching?

1.1 Do they teach grammar implicitly or explicitly?

1.2 Do they favor a traditional approach, a purely communicative approach, or a combination of both?

RQ 2. What opinions and attitudes do English teachers in Norway currently have regarding grammar instruction?

2.1 Do they believe grammar teaching is important?

2.2 Do they find grammar instruction challenging?

RQ1 will help explore English teachers' methods and practices for grammar teaching, and as stated in 1.1 and 1.2, I will focus specifically on explicit vs. implicit teaching, and if they favor a traditional approach, a communicative approach, or a combination of both. RQ2 will explore opinions and attitudes regarding grammar teaching, and as stated in 2.1 and 2.2, this question will focus on if the participants find grammar teaching important, and if they find it challenging.

The study includes two semi-structured interviews and an online questionnaire with questions exploring methods, opinions, and attitudes toward grammar instruction. In short, the study found that English teachers in Norway generally believe grammar is an important aspect of language learning today, but the communicational aspect of the language is in focus. The results suggest that most teachers utilize an implicit approach to grammar teaching, where they focus on grammatical structures the pupils struggle with, rather than teaching whole classes dedicated to grammar. However, some teachers also find explicit teaching valuable depending on the group of pupils. The results will be discussed further in section 5.1-5-6.

1.2 Structure of Thesis

The thesis is structured into seven chapters, with the first one being the introduction. The second chapter will provide background theory on my topic in addition to relevant previous research done in the field of grammar instruction. The third chapter will explain the methodology for the present research study which implements a mixed methodology including a quantitative and qualitative method. The fourth chapter is a presentation of the results from the respective research studies, two interviews, and an online questionnaire. The fifth chapter presents a discussion where the results from the research studies are discussed and compared with the previously presented theory and research. This chapter will also present answers to my research questions. Last, a conclusion will be provided where the main findings and points from the thesis will be summarized.

2 Theoretical Background

In this chapter, I will provide the theoretical background for my thesis. The theoretical background will include definitions of important terms and concepts that are relevant to my study. First, I will explain and define grammar and grammar instruction and include different teaching strategies for grammar instruction. Second, I will explain explicit and implicit knowledge and teaching, which are important concerning my research. This chapter will also explore previous research on English teachers' beliefs, opinions, and methods for grammar instruction. This research will later be used and compared to my own research I conducted for this thesis.

2.1 What is Grammar?

Grammar is a vital part of the language system and is often associated with rules relating to grammatical forms and structures. Just as there is a debate on whether and how to teach grammar, there is also a debate around how to define it. The word *grammar* is defined in Merriam-Webster's dictionary in several ways. One of them is "the study of the classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relations in the sentence" ("Grammar" in Merriam-Webster, 2023). A second definition in the same dictionary is that grammar is "a study of what is to be preferred and what to avoid in inflection and syntax" ("Grammar" in Merriam-Webster, 2023). Morphology and syntax are two main concepts that almost always are included in grammar definitions. A basic definition of grammar includes how words, the morphology, can be combined to make sentences, which refers to syntax. Morphology is the study of singular words and their forms, while syntax is the study of how words together create larger units such as phrases and sentences. Keck and Kim state that grammar descriptions at least "should involve the analysis of individual sentences, so that the underlying rules that make these sentences possible can be identified" (Keck & Kim, 2014, p. 33)

Communication and language generally consist of generating sentences and connecting them in a meaningful way, to convey meaning and participate in the communication (Keck & Kim, 2014, p. 33). With this being said, the definition of grammar ranges beyond the analysis of sentences with this understanding. Knowledge of grammar does not only consist of knowing structures and rules for inflection. It also consists of knowing the meaning of grammatical forms, and in what context to use them (Bader & Dypedahl, 2020, p. 251). In addition to the study of words and sentences, grammar also consists of other fundamental modules that make up a linguistic system. First, phonology refers to the sound systems of language and what

sounds are possible and not possible to make in a language. This relates to pronunciation. Second, semantics refers to creating meaning and reference to words. Last, pragmatics refers to how language is used in context. This relates to knowing how to adapt language to different situations we speak in (Gass & Selinker, 2008, pp. 8-13). Even though grammar is most commonly related to morphology and syntax, all the additional modules are relevant to grammar. Therefore, it is important to mention them when considering the definition of grammar and its functions.

2.2 Grammar and Grammar Instruction

When learning a second language, or any language at all, there are many different aspects a learner must consider. Often it is important for a pupil or student to be able to communicate in the target language, be comprehensible, know the structures of the language, and recognize its grammatical rules and forms. Many languages contain complex structures that might be difficult to obtain and learn. Depending on the language, the grammatical aspects can often be one of the most difficult aspects to learn as it may contain foreign structures and rules that are different compared to one's native language. Nonetheless, the grammatical aspect of a language is vital to be able to communicate in the target language, to comprehend and make oneself understood.

It is common for children to learn one or more foreign languages in schools all over the world. In Norway, children start learning English already in the first grade. Some are also familiarized with the language already in kindergarten. Second language acquisition is a vital part of education today and English is mandatory in all grades in primary and lower secondary school in Norway. With the growth of the English language in society, the role of the English subject in school has also grown. It is now one of the biggest subjects in school, and pupils from 8-10th grade have around 75 hours (60-minute hours) of English each year (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Despite this, the amount of English instruction has been argued to be too little to reach a certain level of proficiency. This will be discussed later in the paper. The field of SLA is large and includes theories, methods, and pedagogy in relation to language learning. For this paper, the latter will be the most important, as my thesis will focus on grammar instruction in schools in Norway.

The field of grammar in the English subject does not include certain topics or a set teaching guide that teachers need to use when teaching grammar. Therefore, the amount and extent of grammar instruction in school is varying, as some schools or teachers prioritize it more than

others. The prioritizing of the grammar also depends on the group of pupils which will be varying in needs and levels. Different grades also require different amounts of grammar instruction, as pupils are often more proficient in the language the older they are. Some teachers might find that their group needs more grammar instruction with a focus on rules and structures, to be able to build the language and be comprehensible. On the other hand, some teachers might experience that their group needs more focus on pronunciation, to be able to communicate what they want. This is why research on grammar teaching practices is so important because teachers employ different strategies as there is no common agreement on how to implement grammar in the subject.

The debate on whether to teach grammar, or how to teach it has been ongoing among linguists, researchers, and teachers for decades. Some believe grammar is unnecessary to teach, while others believe it is vital to second language acquisition. For the latter, pedagogical grammar (PG) is an important term. PG is a wide term that includes materials and practices involving grammar instruction. According to Newby (2020), PG can be understood as both “a set of tools – a pedagogical reference book, an FL coursebook, grammar exercises, etc. – and as a process of facilitating learning through appropriate methodology” (Newby, 2020, p. 213). FL here stands for foreign language. For the teacher, PG brings a variety of different objectives which can be used when teaching grammar in the classroom. These include, among others, dealing with grammar rules, designing grammar exercises with a specific aim, designing teaching sequences to help internalize new grammar and assessment of how well learners have acquired new grammar. With guidelines and tasks like these, several approaches to teaching grammar and language in general, have been proposed. The earliest ones concerned explicit grammar teaching, and draws upon several of the methods from PG.

2.3 Implicit and Explicit Knowledge and Instruction

When it comes to a learner’s knowledge, one can differentiate between two types of knowledge in the classroom. Implicit and explicit knowledge. When teaching any subject in school the teacher must be aware of what the pupils learn in class. A learner may, for instance, be able to say, “Can I use the bathroom”, which is a sentence containing a modal auxiliary verb proceeding the subject. However, the learner may not be able to explain that the sentence contains a modal auxiliary verb and its grammatical function in the sentence. This example explains the difference between knowing grammar and knowing about grammar. In this case, the learner knows the grammar required to formulate the sentence, even though they cannot

explain this knowledge. This is an example of implicit knowledge of grammar. On the other side, a learner shows explicit knowledge of grammar if they can explain for instance why the sentence “Can I use the bathroom” is structured the way it is, with a modal auxiliary verb, subject, and direct object (Bader & Dypedahl, 2020, p. 248).

Implicit knowledge can be defined as knowledge that is “unanalyzed”, as speakers are often unaware of the knowledge they obtain and use. Han and Ellis (1998) reference Mathews et al. (1989) who state that “implicit knowledge takes the form of compilations of memories of past experiences rather than of an integrated model that reflects analytical cognition” (Han & Ellis, 1998). Implicit knowledge is in other words memory- based, not rule-based. The rules have previously been internalized so that they become automatic in our brains, and we utilize them unconsciously. Knowledge like this includes knowing how to speak our first language.

Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, concerns conscious knowledge about language. Han and Ellis (1998) refer to explicit knowledge in two parts; analyzed knowledge and meta language. The analyzed knowledge is the knowledge the learners are aware of, such as L2 structures. The metalanguage is on the other hand the language that learners use to analyze or describe a language, and learners are fully conscious of this. (Han & Ellis, 1998). Specific learning strategies, like problem-solving activities, can generate analyzed knowledge. However, since it cannot be accessed rapidly, the learner often needs to be given the opportunity to deliberate on the language in depth (Han & Ellis, 1998). In relation to grammar, this is for instance the ability to describe with grammatical terminology why a sentence they use is structured the way it is.

Aside from implicit and explicit knowledge, it is important to discuss how teachers can help students obtain knowledge in different subject matters. Teacher instruction can be divided into implicit and explicit instruction. According to Ellis (2012), explicit instruction occurs when grammatical rules are being taught with an awareness of the rule. This can be done either deductively, when the teacher explicitly gives the pupils a rule, or inductively when the teacher asks their pupils to work out a rule for themselves. On the other hand, implicit instruction is when a teacher enables pupils to learn rules without awareness. This is for instance when grammatical structures are being learned through different inputs in the English subject, but not with the intent of explicitly learning grammar (Ellis, 2012, p. 275). The key difference between these two methods of instruction is the learner’s awareness and consciousness of the grammatical forms being taught. Explicit instruction enables the learners to “develop conscious mental representations” (Ellis, 2012, p. 275). Implicit instruction focuses on attracting the

learners' attention to grammatical forms in different types of communicative input but does not ask the learners to understand or describe the rules present. These two types of grammar instruction can be implemented and used in many ways. Choosing an explicit approach to grammar teaching does for instance not automatically mean that you choose a traditional approach to grammar teaching. The traditional approach will be explained further in section 2.5.1.

Explicit and implicit grammar instruction can be implemented several ways in classrooms. Explicit teaching can for instance be a teacher-led session, where the teacher explains rules for the class and lets the pupils work with tasks afterwards. This brings explicit attention to chosen grammatical structures, with pupils' awareness of them. Implicit teaching, on the other hand, might consist of giving pupils different contexts where they must produce appropriate output. This brings an awareness of language usage for pupils, without explicitly highlighting grammaticality.

2.4 Focus on Form vs. Focus on Forms

Form-focused instruction is a method of language teaching that draws the learners' attention to forms in the language, and this can be done either implicitly or explicitly (Spada, 1997, p. 73). According to Ellis (2001), form-focused instruction (FFI) is any planned or incidental instruction that “is intended to induce language learners to pay attention to linguistic form” (Ellis, 2001, pp. 1-2). Within this definition, Ellis also references Long (1991) who divides between focus on form (FoF) and focus on forms (FoFs). Focus on form is an approach where the main goal is to induce incidental acquisition by drawing learners' attention to linguistic forms while they are communicating. Focus on forms, by contrast, focuses directly and explicitly on pedagogical grammar, and aims at teaching grammar or linguistics intentionally. The main difference between FoF and FoFs is that the former includes incidental learning of form, and the latter is intentional learning of form (Ellis, 2012) (Long, 1991).

Ellis points out some important differences between focus on form and focus on forms. These points could also be applied to implicit and explicit teaching. First, FoF sees language as a tool, either in written or oral communication, while FoFs see language as an object. Second, the primary focus of attention in FoF is the message, and in FoFs it is the code. The difference between message and code is that message means a focus on what is communicated, while code means a focus on the structures of the language. Last, the instructional process of an FoF approach includes scaffolded production, negotiation for meaning, corrective feedback, and

consciousness-raising through tasks. These aspects of instruction favor a communication-based classroom, where grammar is implemented as a tool for creating meaning and comprehension. Because of this, a FoF approach can also be considered to have a “focus on meaning”. On the other hand, the instructional process of a FoFs approach involves consciousness-raising through the provision of explicit rules, structured input, controlled production practice, and corrective feedback. These aspects represent structured instruction where the goal is the acquisition of rules and structures of the language (Ellis, 2012). In other words, the main difference lies in whether the instruction aims at viewing language as a tool for communication or treating it as an object to be mastered.

One could also compare focus on form and focus on forms approaches to teaching with implicit and explicit instruction, as the former implements grammar when needed and the latter explicitly aims at teaching grammar as the object. Even though these terms may seem parallel, there are vital differences that distinguish them, according to Ellis (2012). Implicit teaching does for instance not necessarily involve a task with a focus on meaning, which is required in a FoF approach. In addition, explicit teaching may use tasks and be introduced through task-based learning (Ellis, 2012).

2.5 Approaches to Grammar Teaching

When it comes to grammar instruction, there has been a lot of debate about what approach or method is the best and most efficient to employ in classrooms. This all started back when English was first introduced as a subject in school. For several years, grammar was taught with a focus on structures and correctness and was presented explicitly as a set of rules that pupils were expected to practice and memorize. From this approach to grammar, theories like the audiolingual teaching method were created with attention to mastery of the grammatical system and formal correctness (Ur, 2011, p. 507). However, in more recent years, new theories, and insights into how grammar should be taught have emerged. The focus shifted more toward communication, meaning that the emphasis was more on speaking and communicating rather than knowing the rules of grammar (Bader & Dypedahl, 2020, p. 249). This shift also included an emphasis on creating and adapting meanings and teaching pupils how to use the language instead of treating language as an object of study. As a result of this, a communicative approach to language learning gained popularity. With the development of the English subject, new approaches to teaching language naturally followed. I will review the two main groups of approaches in more detail below.

2.5.1 Traditional Grammar-based Approaches

Decades ago, grammar was the most important aspect of language teaching. Instruction during the 1800s and early 1900s was based on grammar and the idea that knowledge of grammar was the most crucial aspect of linguistic knowledge. This thought was mainly based on the way Latin grammar was viewed as the model for language teaching, and that every language was built upon the rules and structures of the Latin language. Therefore, teaching and learning Latin grammar became the consummate method for learning other languages. This emphasis on grammar instruction grew into various traditional grammar-based approaches, like for instance the grammar-translation method and the audio-lingual method. What these approaches have in common is that structure is the major problem in learning a second language, and that this needs exclusive attention (Fotos & Nassaji, 2011, p. 2).

The grammar-translation method was a widely used traditional grammar-based approach to language learning up until the beginning of the 20th century. This method draws on the teaching of classical Latin and involves exclusively studying grammatical rules and structures. This method uses the native language of the learners and divides it into parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, and articles. These segments are then explicitly taught through an explanation of rules, memorization, and translation from L2 to L1. The approach also utilizes the understanding of the native language to read texts in the target language and translate them to and from the native language. A method like this is not widely common in English classrooms today, as the subject has evolved from only focusing on the grammatical aspects of the language (Fotos & Nassaji, 2011, p. 3).

The audiolingual method appeared during the second world war and came about because the need for good foreign language speakers rose. Therefore, a shift in focus from knowing grammatical rules and structures to communicating correctly occurred. The audiolingual method focuses on grammatical structures; however, it views language learning as a process of habit formation. Because of this, it was important for learners to memorize structural patterns to reinforce language habits. There was little to no focus on meaning and writing texts in the target language. The difference from the grammar-translation method lies in the focus on grammatical structure drilling to be able to communicate directly, and lessons often included inductive teaching of rules through examples and repetition. Several other teaching approaches emerged from the two just presented. What they all had in common was their focus on grammar-based teaching and analyses of languages. They did not consider the functions of language and

real-life communication, factors that are highly important in language learning today (Fotos & Nassaji, 2011, p. 3).

2.5.2 Communicative Language Teaching

After the curriculum of 1974 was presented in Norway, a shift in how to teach language and grammar happened. The thought that language was first and foremost an expression of meaning, and that language teaching should reflect this became more prominent, and theorists like Chomsky and Krashen argued that grammar can be learned without explicit instruction. Through theories like “universal grammar” and “the input hypothesis”, they suggested that language can be acquired only through naturalistic input (Newby, 2020, p. 216) Consequently, the term *communicative competence* surfaced through the work of Dell Hymes, and the meaning of language and communication was more and more linked to the situation of usage. In other words, the language had to be adapted to the appropriate context (Fenner, 2020, p. 29). He suggested that grammar must be seen as an element of a communication system and that one must pay attention not only to grammar itself, but to the speaker who utilizes grammar.

It is thoughts like this that eventually created the communicative approach, or communicative language teaching (CLT). With meaningful communication as the main focus of language teaching, interaction naturally became an important part of classroom activities. This also changed the teacher’s role in the classroom, from previously being the person with the correct answer, to being the facilitator of language learning and communication. With this development language learning also became more learner-centred, from previously being teacher-centered (Fenner, 2020, p. 30).

Fenner states in relation to the communicative approach that “Learner progression was no longer defined by grammatical structures but by the learners’ different needs and abilities” (2020, p. 31). An approach like this focuses more on the individual pupil and their needs, in addition to giving the pupils more responsibility for their learning. By making the instruction more learner-centred, the dynamic of the teaching changed completely. The pupils were asked to produce more independent language, contrary to a traditional approach, which focused on grammatical structures and drilling. Although the grammatical aspect of the language had lost its primary focus, grammar was still important for establishing meaning in language. Grammar still had an important place in expressing meaning and conveying messages, and it was seen as both competence and performance. The dyad of grammar being both competence and performance suggests that it is not only something people know, like knowing rules and

inflection, but it is something people use to fulfill communicative purposes. Grammar, therefore, remains important in both theoretical and practical situations within CLT (Newby, 2020, pp. 217-218).

With this being said, the rise of a communicative approach to language teaching led to a change in the focus on grammar as the object of explicit instruction. However, Bader and Dypedahl state that “(...) the key to effective grammar instruction is in contextualizing grammar and making it an integral part of other learning activities” (Bader & Dypedahl, 2020, p. 248). This statement favors an approach that focuses on meaning and context which incorporates grammar as a tool for communication. An approach where grammar is integrated into subject matters is presumably what is being preferred by teachers today in English classrooms.

Teaching approaches do not have to be unilateral, as CLT and traditional approaches can both have an implicit and explicit focus. Teachers who want to have control over what grammatical features their pupils learn, but at the same time prefer communicative tasks, can for instance apply a “planned implicit focus on form” (Keck & Kim, 2014, p. 148). In this approach, the teacher decides on some grammatical forms to focus on in class and designs communication tasks where the pupils use this form. Keck and Kim also suggest a different approach that uses both meaning-focused communication tasks and explicit techniques. This approach is a three-part grammar lesson where the teacher introduces a grammatical aspect to the pupils, makes them communicate in groups about it, and lastly reviews the feature and responds to any challenges the pupils might have met. This approach combines an explicit focus on grammar, while also incorporating communication and group work. (Keck & Kim, 2014, pp. 148-149). With these teaching strategies, different approaches can be combined and adapted to the specific group of pupils to best target their needs in the classroom.

Grammar teaching is without a doubt vital for pupils' proficiency and communication skills. However, there has been discussion throughout the years about whether pupils can acquire language and grammar through a purely communicative approach. Keck and Kim (2014) present a study done in a French immersion program class, where the instruction focused primarily on meaning rather than form. This study found that the learners did acquire the target language and could communicate in it, but several grammatical forms had not been fully acquired. Keck and Kim state in relation to this study that “Many educators felt that a purely communicative classroom left open the possibility that some student errors would go unaddressed, and students would continue to make these errors without realizing it” (Keck &

Kim, 2014, p. 24). What the findings in this study might indicate, is that a focus on grammatical structures is important to be able to reach high proficiency levels in the target language (Keck & Kim, 2014, pp. 23-24).

2.6 The English Curriculum

The national curriculum in English (LK20) provides guidelines, competence aims, and core elements in the English subject. However, the curriculum does not prescribe any specific ways of teaching, as it is up to the teacher him/herself to interpret the curriculum and plan how they want to teach accordingly. This results in a variety of methods and beliefs among teachers, and presumably no common understanding of what is the “best” way to teach a specific subject matter. The curriculum generally focuses on a wider communicative competence with competence aims and skills that illuminate the importance of communication and comprehension, and grammaticality is integrated as a part of this competence (Newby, 2020, p. 226). Therefore, implementing grammar in today’s classrooms can be challenging for many teachers, as it is not the main focus of the curriculum.

LK20 does, as stated, not provide any specific teaching strategies or activities that are mandatory for teachers to utilize in class. Previous curricula did, however, prescribe teaching methods for teachers to employ in classrooms like for instance in *Mønsterplan for Grunnskolen* (M74); “A systematic approach to the selection, grading, and repetition of English words and sentence structures was a central point in M74” (Simensen, 2020, p. 28). It was also suggested in this curriculum that grammar teaching should be inductive. In addition, a list of important topics and grammatical phenomena were also included in *Mønsterplan for Grunnskolen* from 1987 (M87) (Simensen, 2020, p. 28). The fact that teachers were given methods and strategies for teaching in previous curricula meant that they did not have the same freedom to choose teaching approaches like teachers today do. For some, the freedom to choose freely makes it difficult to select among the many teaching methods, while for others it is a privilege.

The term *grammar* is not explicitly mentioned in the current English subject curriculum (LK20) after year 10. However, grammar-related competence aims have been specified for all stages in the curriculum. Language learning is also one of three core elements in the curriculum, meaning that it is a vital part of education. The following two competence aims after year 10 deal with grammar: “use knowledge of word classes and syntax in working on one's own oral and written texts» and “follow rules for spelling, word inflection, syntax, and text structure»

(Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). Even though the grammatical features of the language are represented in the curriculum, most competence aims relate to general language awareness and “knowledge about” language instead of language acquisition overall (Newby, 2020, p. 226). This is evident in for instance the competence aim “explore and describe some linguistic similarities and differences between English and other languages the pupil is familiar with and use this in one’s own language learning” (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019).

Communication is one of the core elements in the curriculum, and the curriculum stresses “the importance of language as a tool for communication and meaning-making and the context-sensitive nature of language use” (Bader & Dypedahl, 2020, p. 252). The curriculum does not favor any specific teaching approaches, even though one can assume that there are points that relate to the CLT in the curriculum. However, if the curriculum were to specifically mention a teaching approach, it would have to suggest activities and strategies for learning and teaching as well. The curriculum does not provide this, and it is therefore interesting to explore how different English teachers in Norway apply the limited information on grammar in the curriculum to their own classroom practices.

2.7 Research on Teachers’ Beliefs, Opinions, and Methods for Grammar Teaching

The present thesis explores English teachers’ beliefs, opinions, and methods for grammar instruction, and I will therefore in this section present some previous research specifically on this topic. This research will help establish what other English teachers have stated and feel about the topic of grammar instruction and will provide a foundation for my research. The topic of grammar instruction, and especially teachers’ opinions is an underexplored aspect of teaching. Because of this, it is difficult to find updated sources on this topic, especially in a Norwegian context. I have included one source which concerns English teachers in Norway, one source which concerns English teachers in England, and one research study from a Norwegian master’s thesis. The thesis is included because it presents results that are comparable to the present thesis and because it is difficult to find novel sources for the topic. The studies reviewed below will help establish a general picture of English teachers’ attitudes, opinions, and practices for grammar teaching.

2.7.1 Askland (2020)

Askland (2020) investigates the role of grammar in the English subject in secondary schools in Norway. The study also highlights teacher cognition and the use of the target language in

teaching English. The study includes interviews with teachers, classroom observation, and evaluation of term plans. Askland introduces the study by stating that Norwegian pupils are generally proficient in English but seem to be lacking the ability to communicate correctly in formal settings and struggle with grammatical accuracy. Therefore, Askland wanted to explore how teachers work with developing such skills when teaching English (Askland, 2020, p. 72).

Askland mentions previous studies that have investigated English teachers' opinions on grammar teaching in Norway which found that teachers generally have negative attitudes towards grammar and that pupils find grammar teaching dull. However, she states that teaching practices vary, and while most teachers regard grammar merely as a tool some teachers support grammar as an independent discipline. It is also mentioned that grammar teaching might be influenced by different English subject textbooks and that textbooks that cover grammar in an unsystematic, traditional manner might not encourage learning in pupils (Askland, 2020, p. 76). How grammar is covered in different English textbooks is not an aspect of my own research study, however, it might be a factor that has influenced and perhaps still influences the participants or their practice.

Askland categorized the findings into different categories; opinions about grammar teaching, methods, and activities used for grammar teaching. When it comes to teachers' opinions of grammar teaching, Askland found that grammar is an important part of the English subject and that teaching grammar for the teachers mostly meant explicit explanation of rules. Some teachers stated that grammar can be used as a tool to improve writing, while others stated that it can provide knowledge about the structure of a language. However, some teachers stated that grammar instruction can be difficult if students do not master the metalanguage and admitted that they do not spend much time on grammar (Askland, 2020, pp. 81-82). A majority of the teachers also stated that in the classroom, they focus on grammatical aspects that the pupils struggle with and explain the rules to them. Only a couple of teachers said that they let pupils themselves try to figure out the rules (Askland, 2020).

The findings in this study suggest that teachers believe that grammar is an important part of language learning, either as a tool for communication or to learn about structure. Most teachers in the study do not teach grammar explicitly but integrate it in classes according to what pupils struggle within the subject. However, some teachers also expressed favoring explicit grammar teaching, as it may help pupils draw attention to certain linguistic forms. Last, Askland found that teachers might need to reflect more upon different methods for grammar teaching, as many

of them felt that pupils do not advance in grammar with their current methods and that they are unsure of what other methods to use. Askland states that this “might be explained by the fact that teachers are pressed for time and do not have many opportunities to reflect upon teaching methods or develop new teaching material” (Askland, 2020, p. 93). Perhaps a more open dialogue between teacher colleagues and knowledge about different strategies and research on them might benefit teachers in planning how to teach grammar.

2.7.2 Pulk (2022)

Since the topic of grammar instruction in the English subject in Norway is an underexplored topic, it is difficult to find novel sources and research which can be compared to my research study. However, Pulk wrote a master's thesis in English didactics in 2022 where she aimed to explore “what English teachers in Norway think about grammar teaching, and what learning methods appear to have influenced their opinions” (Pulk, 2022, p. 4). Pulk employs a quantitative approach to answer her chosen research questions. A questionnaire was sent out to English teachers in Norwegian schools, and the only requirement was that they taught English and were familiar with grammar teaching. There were 57 participants in Pulk’s study. This study is comparable to my own research, and I will therefore present important findings from Pulk’s study.

Pulk first wanted to explore English teachers' general opinions on grammar teaching. First, 89.5% of the respondents state that they agree that they feel confident when teaching grammar. Overall, many teachers have a positive view of their abilities when it comes to grammar teaching. However, 61.4% of her respondents agreed to some extent that grammar teaching is not highly prioritized in school. When it comes to teaching approaches, Pulk found that most participants view grammar learning as “a highly cognitive activity” (Pulk, 2022, p. 46). She also questioned her respondents about communicative approaches to grammar teaching, and here over 90% of the respondents agreed to some extent that grammar teaching should focus more on communication. Pulk concludes that a sociocultural approach to language learning is highly favored by teachers, as this approach focuses more on communication and teamwork in the classroom.

Pulk also wanted to find out if English teachers favor an explicit or implicit approach to grammar teaching. She found that most of the participants think it is easier to teach grammar explicitly, however, they do also believe it should be avoided when possible. For instance, one

of the statements in the questionnaire was “There are grammatical features that second language learners can only learn through explicit grammar teaching”. In this statement, 54% either agreed or partially agreed. Another statement given in the questionnaire was “One should not give explicit grammar teaching, but rather try to “sneak” in the grammar in a fun and engaging way”. In this statement, there was a wide variety of agreement and disagreement, but a majority of the participants either partially disagreed or disagreed with the statement. (Pulk, 2022, p. 53). This shows that most teachers believe that explicit grammar teaching is to some degree important. Pulk states that it is likely that many of her respondents are lower-secondary teachers. She believes that is likely because there is an increased focus on grammar teaching in lower secondary schools, and this might have influenced the answers.

2.7.3 Watson (2012)

Watson (2012) conducted a study that investigated attitudes to grammar and grammar teaching among 31 secondary English teachers in England. Watson introduces the study by referring to a report published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which highlighted negative beliefs about grammar teaching among a variety of teachers in England and Wales. The report also stated that teachers feel that there are “poor linguistic subject knowledge and uncertainty as to how to integrate explicit teaching of grammar into the broader English curriculum” (Watson, 2012). Beliefs play an important role when it comes to pedagogical practice, and Watson states that the relationship between affect, beliefs, and practice is complex as a classroom with a variety of pupils may constrain teachers’ abilities to act according to their beliefs. The definition of beliefs is often ambiguous, but there is a common understanding that beliefs include an “affective and evaluative element” (Watson, 2012), and involve moods, emotions, and subjective evaluation. Previous research on beliefs and affect concludes that grammar is often a source of difficulty for English teachers and that they need support in developing linguistic and pedagogical competence.

Watson interviewed 31 English teachers in England three times over a year for the research study. The participants ranged from newly educated teachers to heads of departments with over thirty years of experience. Watson states that the participants were not explicitly told what the project focused on. This might have allowed the researcher to gain candid and honest reflections and opinions as the participants did not know what the researcher wanted from them. The final of the three interviews focused on grammar teaching and asked the teachers what they

understand by the term “grammar teaching. They were also questioned about its value or lack of it, terminology, and how they teach grammar themselves (Watson, 2012).

When it comes to the results of the study, Watson found that nearly half of the participants expressed negative feelings about grammar. The negative feelings often began with associations with the term “grammar” itself, and seven teachers stated that grammar has a stigma within the teaching community and students. Even teachers who believed in the value of grammar had some negative feelings or associations with the term, and Watson found that there was no correlation “between length of service and confidence amongst teachers in this study” (Watson, 2012). This means that even teachers who have taught grammar for many years still either struggle with teaching it or personally have negative emotions about the subject matter. Others in the study expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to teach grammar, some found grammar uninteresting, while fewer than half the teachers expressed confident feelings towards their grammatical subject knowledge. This group of teachers found grammar inspiring and empowering, and most of the teachers with positive feelings toward grammar stated that their feelings were shaped by “emotional reactions against the lack of grammar in their own education” (Watson, 2012).

Even though several teachers expressed positive emotions, most of the participants shared a generally negative attitude toward grammar teaching. Watson concludes the study by saying “this is a topic that provokes great emotion, even undermining professional confidence (...)” (Watson, 2012). Some teachers even admit that they must hide their lack of grammatical knowledge. Lastly, Watson points out that grammar teaching might have to be re-framed, and to achieve such a change teachers need to be able to articulate their challenges. This could be done with more studies like the present one, and reflection like this might “help teachers to explore, challenge and consolidate their beliefs” (Watson, 2012).

3 Methodology

This chapter will present and explain the chosen methodologies for data collection. I have in the present project decided to utilize two methodologies to collect data, and both will be presented in this chapter. First, I will discuss why I chose these research methods. Second, I will define and explain “mixed methodologies” and the use of multiple research methods for data collection. Third, I will present my first research method of choice, interviews. Here I will elaborate on my choice and present what the interview as a method is. Furthermore, I will present my second research method, the online questionnaire. Last, validity, reliability, and ethical concerns will be presented.

3.1 Choosing a Research Method

The choice of research method is vital in relation to a research project. Depending on what type of data a researcher wants, the method should be chosen to best fit the research question or questions. For the topic of grammar instruction in the English subject in school, a variety of research methods are available and appropriate for gathering data. For instance, one could conduct an experiment, do grammaticality tests on pupils, hand out questionnaires, or do interviews. The focus of this paper is to investigate and explore different teachers’ methods, opinions, and beliefs regarding grammar instruction in English. When deciding on a research method and design, the initial thought was to do a qualitative study focusing on the teachers themselves. I wanted to utilize a research method that helped me get access to teachers’ beliefs and views of grammar teaching.

In the field of research, there are primarily two different formats to choose from. Quantitative and qualitative. For this paper, both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to collect data. First, a qualitative method was used to gather personal, in-depth insights from two participants. This was done through a semi-structured interview. Then, additional data was collected quantitatively through a questionnaire that aimed to reach out to numerous participants, collecting similar data to the interview but with more quantity. A dual structure like this can be defined as “mixed methodology”.

When doing qualitative research, the researchers are interested in learning about how different interpretations are at different times and contexts. It also seeks to investigate how people make sense of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, pp. 5-6). Compared to quantitative research which is characterized by numbers, controlled experimental design, and replicable and

generalized outcomes, qualitative research wants to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon. It aims to understand how people interpret their experiences and understand the experiences. It is important to acknowledge that there can be biases to utilizing only one research method regarding the topic of this thesis. Therefore, a mixed methodology was chosen to hopefully address these biases and to gather both measurable and discussable data. (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018, p. 104).

3.2 Mixed Methodology

For the present research project, a mixed methodology was chosen for the data collection. Mackey and Bryfonski (2018) state that mixed methodology, or multi-method “employs aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods and designs to better understand a given phenomenon” (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018, p. 103). It is in other words an integration of both approaches within a single study. Such a method can be implemented for instance because one design cannot account for a question alone and to avoid limitations that can occur using only one approach. With both a quantitative and qualitative design the researcher is allowed to research a question from several different angles. A quantitative method is typically characterized by a sample with a focus on the number of answers or participants. The design aims to be reliable with generalized outcomes across a population. A qualitative methodology, on the other hand, is characterized by details, theory, and case studies. This method also focuses more on the process in order to understand a problem thoroughly (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018, p. 104). Implementing these two approaches simultaneously may give the researcher an enhanced picture of the research question.

Mixed methods are often characterized by concurrent or sequential designs depending on when the data collection takes place and its order. In concurrent designs, the researcher gathers both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time and uses the data simultaneously in interpreting the results (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018, p. 107). However, in the present study, a sequential, exploratory design was used. A sequential design in relation to mixed methodology is data collection that takes place in multiple phases or sequences. In the present study, the design is exploratory, meaning that qualitative data collection was done first, and a quantitative method was conducted subsequently. By implementing a research design like this, some primary questions can be asked in the first phase of the project, which later can be generalized through a second design. An exploratory design might also be used to research an under-explored topic or field where the researcher first describes and defines terms and variables,

before conducting a quantitative study to further investigate the topic (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018, pp. 109, 111).

Mackey and Bryfonski further state that a mixed methodology is advised to use in both applied linguistics and language practice as a way of layering epistemological perspectives. It also enables the researcher to explore the involvement of both cognitive and social factors in a variety of language processes. Mackey and Bryfonski state that “Quantitative data can be utilized to supplement qualitative data for example when little is known about a given research area prior to investigation” (Mackey & Bryfonski, 2018, p. 105). In the present study, a quantitative method is used to support the data in a qualitative approach, and the two methods were conducted via multiple phases in the research project.

3.3 Research Design

In the present study, I had planned to conduct between 3-5 semi-structured interviews with English teachers in Norway, about their beliefs, opinions, and methods for grammar instruction in lower secondary school (8th-10th grade). However, I did not get the number of informants I initially wanted, so I, therefore chose to include an online questionnaire in addition. I conducted two interviews with two different English teachers and received 68 answers from the additional questionnaire. The additional questionnaire included questions similar to those asked in the interview, which provides coherence between the two different methodologies. Neither method asked for information that could identify the participants and was done with consent from the participants. This will be explained further in section 3.6.

3.3.1 Interview

Interview as a method is one of the most common forms of qualitative research methods and is defined as a process in which a researcher and a participant have a conversation that focuses on a specific research question related to a study. An interview is in other words a conversation with a purpose. Interviews are often conducted because a researcher wants to explore other people’s perspectives, opinions, feelings, and interpretations, which are attributes one often cannot observe (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 108). There are primarily three types of interviews used in research: highly structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. The interview design depends on whether the researcher wants to follow a questionnaire-type order with a highly structured interview, or if the interview is open-ended and conversational in nature with no set structure. The semi-structured interview lies somewhere in between the two and consists of flexible questions with a mix of more and less structure. The interview guide acts as merely a

guide, but since informants' personalities, opinions and formulations are all unique, this type of structure allows the researcher to respond to a potentially dynamic conversation with new ideas on the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 110). Considering these points, a semi-structured interview was chosen for the present research project.

3.3.1.1 Interview Subjects and Recruitment

Interviews were chosen as the primary method for research. Originally, I wanted to contact between three to five teachers to interview, as I thought that this number would give me enough data and insights for the thesis. To recruit participants for interview rounds I contacted teachers and schools by mail, asking if anyone was interested in participating. An information letter with further information was also included (see Appendix 2). When contacting potential participants, the only requirements I had was that the person had formal education as a teacher in a lower secondary school, had English as one of their subjects in school, and was available for an interview in person. Other than that, the teachers' background, age, or years of experience had no importance for the project.

During the recruitment process, some difficulties occurred. A majority of the teachers that were contacted did not answer or did not have the time to participate, resulting in a reevaluation of the research design. Eventually, two teachers accepted to participate, and two interviews were conducted instead of the planned three to five. The two teachers were practicing teachers in lower secondary school, with English as their major subject.

3.3.1.2 Interview Guide

The formulation of interview questions is vital in order to get the type of information desired. The language and wording have to be adapted to the interviewee and it is important to avoid terms and concepts that are foreign to the participants. The language should be familiar, clear, and understandable. Merriam and Tisdell explain that good interview questions “are those that are open-ended and yield descriptive data, even stories about the phenomenon” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 120).

When designing an interview guide, there are several types of questions the researcher can ask. The most commonly used in interviews are open and closed questions. For the present study, open questions were generally prioritized, as open questions do not lead the interviewee in any particular direction with their answers. This type of question often leaves multiple possibilities for answers and makes it up to the interviewee to interpret the questions and answer them in

their way. Conversely, closed questions will leave little room for the interviewee to maneuver in their answers and can, for instance, be yes/no questions. However, closed questions can also be answered with more than a yes or no. In the interviews, some closed questions were used when asking about attitudes in specific situations (Seale, 2018b, p. 201). Follow-up questions or probes might also encourage interviewees to talk further about a specific question or topic.

Seale (2018) suggests four vital aspects that need to be considered when designing an interview. Firstly, the questions need to be relevant to the research problem. Secondly, the researcher has to design questions with comprehensiveness so that all aspects of the research problem are represented. Thirdly, it is important to consider feasibility. The interview should not be too long or complex for the interviewee. Accordingly, the questions must be adapted to the interviewee's situation and/or background. Lastly, there must be a sense of comprehensibility. The questions asked should be understood by the interviewee and preferably in the way the interviewer intends them to be comprehended (Seale, 2018b, p. 203). Although the interview I had planned seemed to meet these four criteria, I carried out both a pilot study and collected feedback in order to ensure that this was the case.

Pilot interviews and feedback are important when designing an interview guide. After writing my initial interview questions, I received feedback on the interview guide which gave me suggestions for additional questions and help with editing the overall structure and order of the interview guide. Before conducting the interviews, I wanted to practice the questions and make sure they were comprehensible and relevant and if the guide needed editing. Therefore, I conducted pilot interviews with peers to help cut out questions that were repetitive and refine question formulations (Seale, 2018b, p. 203). Actions like piloting and receiving feedback are important steps in the interview process and made me as an interviewer confident in my design.

The interview guide consisted of 57 questions which were divided into thematic blocks. A lot of the questions were not used during the interviews. The interviews were planned to be semi-structured, and I did not find time for a lot of the questions included in the interview guide, or they were not relevant to the respective conversation. I could not anticipate how the candidates would behave during the interviews, so to be certain that I had enough materials, the interview guide was extensive. Nonetheless, I experienced that the conversation flew nicely and a lot of questions did not need to be included to get the answers that I wanted. The English version of the interview guide can be found in Appendix 3, and the Norwegian version can be found in Appendix 4.

3.3.1.3 Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were estimated to last between 30-60 minutes and the two interviews were recorded within this timeframe. The interviews were conducted at the participants' workplaces, as preferred by them. I gave the participants the choice of having the interview in Norwegian or English. Both participants requested to have the interview in Norwegian as they felt most comfortable expressing their thoughts in this language. I had prepared both an English and Norwegian interview guide, so it was completely up to the participants to choose their preferred language for communication.

The interviews were recorded on my phone using a Dictaphone app developed by *Nettskjema*. Nettskjema is a webpage by the University of Oslo created for designing and conducting questionnaires online. It also offers apps like “Diktafon” for recording and encrypting the finished recordings for safe use in the future (UiO, 2010). Nettskjema follows SIKT’s guidelines for recording in relation to research projects like this. The participants were provided information about this method for recording, as well as information about their and my duty of confidentiality. In addition, the interview process was introduced with general information about what to expect and practical information about the length of the interview and the questions. The information letter given to the participants and approval for research can be found in Appendix 2.

As mentioned above, the benefit of a semi-structured interview is that it allows the interviewer to follow up on points or topics where this is necessary or desirable (Thomas, 2009, p. 164). The semi-structured interview format worked well in the interviews I conducted as the participants on several occasions provided additional information when encouraged to do so. Both participants provided clear and informative answers to the questions. Moreover, they additionally provided deeper insights when being probed to do so. Both interviews were conversational in nature and as a student teacher, I could agree and relate to many points being made during the interviews. This led to a natural conversation where I could easily ask follow-up questions where given. However, as an interviewer, it was important for me to take a non-judgemental and respectful stance toward the participants so that they feel comfortable bringing their personal experiences, thoughts, opinions, and beliefs forward in the interview. This is also important because all interviewees are different in their opinions and beliefs, and it is vital to remain respectful and understanding for the interviewees to speak freely about the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 130).

3.3.1.4 Transcription and Analysis

Notes were actively taken during the interviews. However, I saw the need to transcribe the whole interview to be able to use the data in the present project. The interviews were transcribed in the original language Norwegian and further translated when used in the present thesis. The transcription process was done without any digital tools, by listening to the recorded interviews and writing down everything said. I found that transcribing the interviews manually encouraged me to familiarize myself more with the gathered data and made it easier to utilize and analyze in the future. To make it easier for coding, I categorized the questions and coded the question using colours, with the answers in normal writing, and my probes or comments in italics. For the present project, it was not important to transcribe the participants' body language, gestures, or way of speaking. The main goal of the transcription process was to capture the participant's thoughts, opinions, and methods, and not analyze their behaviors. Therefore, I did not include small talk or movements that I found irrelevant to my paper.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

In addition to two qualitative interviews, I included a questionnaire that was sent out to several English teachers all over Norway. This represents the quantitative part of the project. A questionnaire is in short, a written form of questioning. The questions might be open or closed and can ask about for instance facts, attitudes or to assess something. Like an interview, a questionnaire can be tightly structured but also more open and less structured to allow for a more discursive response. This may depend on the type of questions asked, for instance, if they are open-ended or closed (Thomas, 2009, pp. 173-175). A questionnaire including open-ended questions will give the respondents the opportunity to freely write an answer without any boundaries, for instance in a “free-text” answer in an online questionnaire.

One of the advantages of using a questionnaire, and in this case an online questionnaire, is that it is a low-cost and easy procedure to set up. For the present project, I used *Nettskjema* again for my survey. *Nettskjema* is as stated, an institution-owned survey tool that is free to use for all students in certain academic institutions. This web page makes it easy to set up and disperse an online questionnaire. There are various tools, designs, and variables one can use when setting up a questionnaire in *Nettskjema*, making it an effective tool to use. *Nettskjema* made it possible for me to set up a questionnaire that included several types of questions. These include multiple-choice, linear scales, matrices, and free-text answers.

An online questionnaire does generally not require a consent form, contrary to an interview. In the present paper, the questionnaire did not ask for any personal data that could make the participants identifiable. Therefore, the participants answering and sending in the questionnaire online acts as an indication of consent (Seale, 2018a, p. 189).

3.3.2.1 Designing the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was as stated, designed as an addition to the interviews in the present project. Therefore, I wanted the questions in the questionnaire to reflect the questions from the interviews so that the data from both methods could be co-used and compared in the results chapter. The aim of using a questionnaire in addition was to gather the same type of data that was gathered in the qualitative interviews, and therefore the questionnaire included similar questions to the ones asked in the interviews. The questions in the questionnaire were written in Norwegian. I wanted to write the questions in one language only to avoid any misunderstandings, and since the questionnaire was sent out to Norwegian schools, I chose Norwegian. This was a deliberate choice because it can be assumed that using English could perhaps be difficult for some participants concerning the subject matter and the terminologies used.

The questionnaire is essentially a quantitative method of collecting data, but for this project I wanted the questionnaire to explore different concepts with several variables. Variables can be either categorical or numeric and, in this study, I chose to include both types of questions. Categorical variables are, according to Seale (2018), variables made up of a set of attributes that form a category. This type of variable can be characterized as either nominal or ordinal. Categorical variables must be mutually exclusive and cover a range of variations in the variable. For the present questionnaire, I operated with both nominal and ordinal variables (Seale, 2018b, pp. 199-200). A nominal question included was for instance “Which type of school do you currently work at?”, with a variety of mutually exclusive answers. An ordinal question included was for instance “To what degree do you agree with the following statement”, with answers ranging in order from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

Numeric variables were used frequently in the questionnaire. Numeric variables are identified by numbers that represent each unit of the variable. These variables can be interval-level or ratio scales. An interval-level question was for instance included where the participants had to drag a linear scale with numbers from 0-6. The question asked to what degree the participants thought grammar instruction in school is important, and 0 represented “not important” and 6

represented “very important”. Numeric variables can be in ratio scale, where the variables have a true zero point. This can be for instance height, weight, or age (Seale, 2018b, p. 200). The present questionnaire asked for age; however, the variables were grouped in for instance 0-5, 5-10, 10-15, etc. Because of that, the numeric variables become ordinal.

3.3.2.2 Questionnaire Respondents

Since I did not get as many participants for the interview rounds as I anticipated, I wanted as many respondents for my questionnaire as possible. This would help me get a clearer picture of the practice of grammar instruction in schools. Therefore, I sent out e-mails to multiple schools all over the country with a link to the online questionnaire. This included both primary schools, and lower secondary and upper secondary schools. In addition to sending out e-mails, I published my research project in multiple Facebook groups and personally asked colleges I work with at different schools to participate. This resulted in a number of respondents I am happy with for the present project.

Two of the questions in my questionnaire asked for age and years of experience as an English teacher. This gave me an indication of whom the respondents of my questionnaire were. The project did initially not ask for specific age groups or years of experience, so all teachers who have experience in teaching English were wanted. However, when analyzing the responses to the questionnaire 95.6% of the respondents have a formal education as a teacher and 97.1% have English as one of their subjects in school. This means that a couple of respondents were unique to the majority. In addition, I got the most answers from teachers working in lower secondary schools, and the most answers from teachers with 0-5 years of experience. However, there is a lot of variety in both ages, years of experience, and schools. I will come back to this in the results chapter of the thesis.

3.3.2.3 Analysis of Questionnaire Data

The tool used to design the online questionnaire, *Nettskjema*, has a lot of advantages when it comes to analyzing the data. One of them is that it automatically analyzes the numbers and puts them both in percentages and diagrams on the web page. In addition, the data can automatically be put into Excel for further analysis. I primarily used *Nettskejma*’s analysis directly on the page, which made it easy for me to continuously utilize the data in my paper. Below is a picture attached of how *Nettskjema* automatically presents a report of your data, both in numbers, percentages, and diagrams. This makes it easy to read and analyze further. For the presentation of the results, however, diagrams were manually created in Excel to visualize the data in a more

structured and readable manner. Since the questions are written in Norwegian, they will be translated when used further in the present paper.

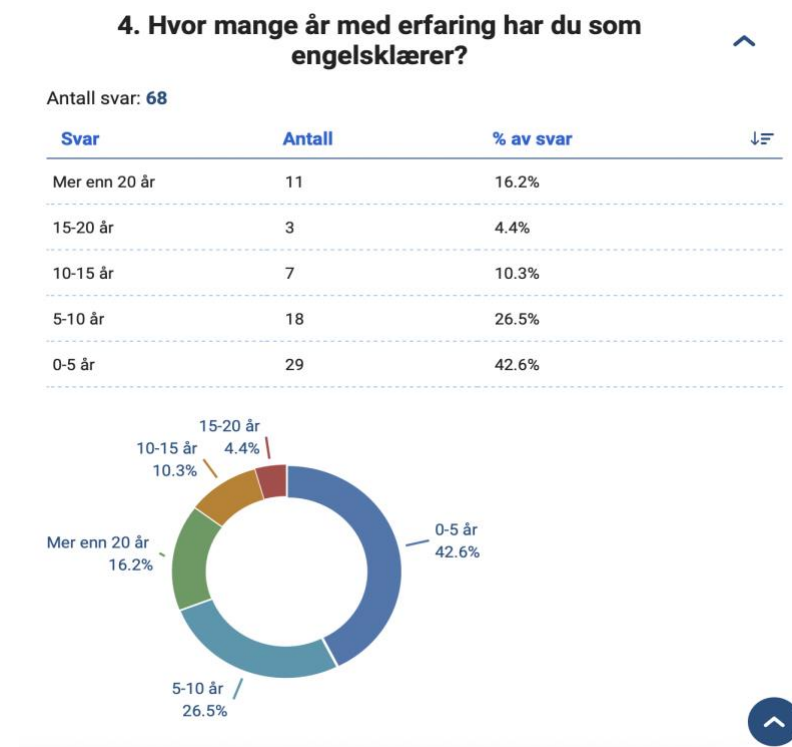


Figure 1: Years of experience as an English teacher.

3.4 Evaluation of Methodical Quality

When doing research, the quality, validity, reliability, and ethics of the research are vital parts to consider. Merriam and Tisdell state that “All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner” (2015, p. 237). No one wants to conduct research without some confidence that it might be successful. However, since qualitative research is based on people’s thoughts, assumptions, and attitudes, the standards for rigor differ from that of quantitative research. Nonetheless, ethical research conduct regarding validity and reliability is highly important in all types of studies. This involves that research comes across as true to readers and other researchers, and validity and reliability can be approached by carefully considering the way data is collected, analyzed, and interpreted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 238).

3.4.1 Ethics

The ethical concerns of a study should always be considered before conducting it. The participants in a study should be confident in the information given by the researcher, and if a project seeks confidential materials, the participants must know their rights and how the information will be used. If confidential or identifiable materials are not gathered, the participants must nonetheless permit consent to use their time and opinions, attitudes, thoughts, etc. in the project. In cases where for instance identifiable materials, videos, or voice recordings are being gathered, the researcher must apply for permission to conduct this research from *Sikt – The knowledge sector’s service provider*. This organization deals with permissions to conduct research that asks for confidential or identifiable data, and it was previously known as *NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS (Sikt - Kunnskapssektorens tenesteleverandør 2023)*.

For the interviews, a consent and information letter with the invitation to participate was sent out to several English teachers in my region. This letter can be found in Appendix 2. The invitation, sent out by email, also included information about the approval for research I had gotten from *NSD (now Sikt)*, which can be found in Appendix 1. In addition, if the participants wished to participate, I contacted the principal of the school to give information about the project. On the day of the interview, before conduction, I presented the information letter again and informed the participant about the interview process and their rights. This included informing them about the method for voice recording, their right to withdraw their participation and voice recordings, and how they were not obliged to answer the questions in any way. Lastly, before the interview, the participants signed a consent form.

No consent form was needed for the questionnaire as it did not inquire about any sensitive data that could make the respondents identifiable. This was informed in an email sent out to several schools in Norway. By sending the email directly to the schools and not the teachers personally, the school administration also got information about the potential participation of their English teachers in the present project. Both the interviewees and respondents to the questionnaire were informed that the gathered data would only be used for my thesis and deleted afterward.

3.4.2 Reliability and Validity

Reliability in a research study refers to the extent findings can be replicated and their quality. To ensure reliability in research methods, it is important to first, consider ways the data may have been affected by the way it was gathered, and second, question whether the results can be reproduced by other researchers. When it comes to qualitative research, reliability can be

problematic. This is because human behavior is never static, and reliability assumes that there only exists one reality, and by studying it, you get the same results every time. Merriam and Tisdell state that “The more important question for qualitative research is *whether the results are consistent with the data collected*” (2015, p. 251). The researcher should rather than wishing for reliability, aim for a result that makes sense to the readers and stays consistent with the data collected. Therefore, if the results of a study are consistent with the presented data, the study can be considered dependable (Gleiss & Sæther, 2021, p. 203; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 252).

To ensure reliability of the qualitative study, it is important to mention that the two candidates in the interview cannot be considered representatives of their generation of teachers. Because there were no grounds to draw such a conclusion, a second research method was added, to make the research altogether more dependable. The second quantitative data collection can either confirm or dismiss the results from the first qualitative data collection. If the results from both studies are comparable, the dependability might be strengthened. This would also help include more relevant perspectives to the study.

When it comes to quantitative studies, they are more replicable as the sample of the population is larger and the answers are based on numbers. However, in the present study, there is no way of knowing if the sample is representative of the population. The request for participation was sent out to several schools, and it may have attracted only people who are interested in the topic to actually answer the questionnaire. Nonetheless, the rather big size of the survey sample suggests that the views expressed are likely to be common rather than idiosyncratic.

The term validity broadly relates to the quality of the data materials and the researcher's interpretation and conclusions. In other words, the validity revolves around if the method is suitable to answer the research questions if the interpretations and conclusions are connected to the data, and if the researcher can answer the research question. A way to ensure validity in quantitative questionnaires is for instance to reuse questions from well-tested surveys. In the present research study, validity was ensured one way by reusing questions from the interviews in the questionnaire. This was done to provide more data on specific topics and to ensure that the research question is answered. It can be difficult to ensure validity in qualitative research, but one way is to combine research methods. The validity is also strengthened by comparing previous research to one's own findings, which is done in the present study (Gleiss & Sæther, 2021, pp. 204-205)

It is important to consider potential biases that can occur in the data collection. In the present study, it is important to note that for instance, the way one asks questions may influence the answers one gets. Interviews face to face may cause some nervousness or pressure for the interviewees, which may influence how they answer. The fact that the candidates were recorded might also have influenced their behavior. Likewise, the choice of answers in the questionnaire may have influenced the respondents' answers. If the answers are not neutral, there is a potential risk of not including answers that cater to the respondents. In addition, it is important to assess what the chosen methods can provide in the research study. An interview with a teacher exploring their beliefs and methods does not provide insight into what they truly practice in classrooms. Interview as a method only provides discussion and interpretations of teaching practice. The same goes for the questionnaire. A questionnaire only provides a sample of the population, with limited possibilities for elaboration and interpretation (Gleiss & Sæther, 2021, p. 206). There are several other points that are important to consider when it comes to the reliability and validity of the data. Additional points revolving more around the participants' backgrounds and biases will be discussed in section 5.6.

4 Results

This section of the thesis will present the qualitative and quantitative research data. Both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative questionnaire provided me with a large number of valuable data, but only the data that is relevant to my research question will be presented in this section. The relevant qualitative data will be picked from the transcribed and analyzed interviews, translated, and presented in a thematic order. The quantitative data will mostly be presented with figures and tables, in addition to presenting some of the comments made in the free text sections of the questionnaire. The interviews and questionnaire were originally conducted in Norwegian, but all questions, answers, and quotes are translated into English when presented.

4.1 The Interview Results

The different categories of results that will be presented are (1) background information, (2) views on grammar and grammar teaching, (3) views on the English curriculum, (4) methods and practice for grammar teaching, and (5) beliefs and attitudes. The results will be presented in textual form, with quotes and descriptions of the conversation. The initial interview guide included over 50 questions, but all of these were not included in the interviews. During the interviews, I chose to prioritize specific questions depending on how the conversation went. Therefore, not every question was made time for. The Norwegian and English versions of the interview guide can, as stated, be found in Appendix 1 and 2. The different interviewees will be referred to as Candidate 1 and Candidate 2. As stated above, all quotes from the candidates will be translated from Norwegian into English.

4.1.1 Background Questions

The first questions of the interview asked the candidates for information about their background as teachers. Both candidates currently work as teachers in lower secondary schools. Candidate 1 works in 10th grade, and Candidate 2 works in 8th-10th grade. Both have formal education as teachers and had English as their primary subject during their education. When it comes to years of experience as a teacher, Candidate 1 has over 10 years of experience, while Candidate 2 has around 25 years of experience in both primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary schools. The candidates were further asked if grammar instruction was an important part of their education as teachers and if they feel that the focus has influenced their personal views and opinion on grammar in the present. Both candidates stated that their education had some focus on grammar, but it was not an important part. Both also mentioned phonetics during this

question. Candidate 1 further stated that the focus on grammar in her education did not influence her personal view of grammar and that it was not until she started teaching it herself that she learned the grammar. Candidate 2 was uncertain about this influence; however, she states that her education was good and that the focus on didactics has helped her in grammar teaching.

4.1.2 Grammar and Grammar Teaching

After asking the candidates about their education, some questions about grammar and grammar teaching were asked. The first question was “What is grammar in the English subject for you?”. Candidate 1 answered that grammar consists of word classes and building blocks in the language. She also stated that grammar is “what we convey”, referencing communication. Candidate 2 answered that grammar is rules and drilling of rules, but that she does not like drilling rules with her pupils. She believes that grammar is about understanding the language situation, having a vocabulary, and adapting the language to a receiver. In addition, Candidate 2 stated that grammar is taught less in today’s classrooms, as pupils have more language knowledge without necessarily being able to explain the grammatical aspects they utilize. This relates to implicit knowledge or knowing grammar as opposed to knowing about grammar. Further, when asked about to what degree grammar is a central part of the English subject, candidate 1 says that grammar is less important today than for instance 15 years ago. Pupils had less language knowledge in English before, so grammar was taught explicitly each week. She also states that grammar today is used more as a tool to correct and provide comprehension of language, and pupils dare to use the language more as they are more exposed to it than before. On the other hand, candidate 1 also believes that even though pupils are more proficient in English today, the way it was taught before was more “correct”.

The candidates were next asked if they think it is easy to include grammar instruction in the subject. Candidate 1 first argues that if she is teaching younger pupils, she may highlight it and assure that they understand the grammar. However, when the pupils are older, she does not focus on it too much. She believes grammar instruction is important but more important the younger the pupils are. Candidate 2 however, states that it is not necessarily easy to include grammar in lessons. She believes that grammar is slowly disappearing from the subject, and the best way to incorporate it is to give the pupils “missions”, for instance, to correct their own texts. For grammar teaching to be effective, candidate 2 states that “it has to perhaps be more targeted to work”. By that, she means that the grammar has to be adapted to the individual

pupil, and not be generalized. A general lesson on for instance concord might lead to half of the class already knowing the rules.

The candidates were next asked if they think it is important that their pupils learn grammar in the English subject. Candidate 1 states that it is indeed important, but more important the younger they are. She focuses more on grammar in grade 8th grade compared to the 10th grade, as they are expected to have a certain amount of language competence in 10th grade. Candidate 2 also states that it is important, and she compares it to the importance of grammar in Norwegian as she is a Norwegian teacher as well. When asked if they believe that grammar is as important as other aspects of the English subject, the candidates both agree that grammar and an understanding of language structures are important. However, they both also believe that other aspects of the subject are more enjoyable to teach and that grammar and accuracy come naturally with language production.

4.1.3 The English Curriculum

The curriculum was also brought up during the interviews, and the candidates were asked what they think about the new curriculum (LK20), and their opinions on the focus on grammar in the curriculum. Candidate 1 highlights the decreased number of competence aims and the focus on interdisciplinary topics, in addition to the more detailed descriptions of the basic skills in the English subject. Candidate 2 does not think the new curriculum is easier to work with, but she mentions how she as a teacher has worked with several other curriculums throughout the years. When it comes to the focus on grammar in the new curriculum, candidate 1 believes that if grammar had a more central role, with for instance more explicit competence aims relating to grammatical knowledge, the pupils would have been brought back 20 years in time. She believes that it would have been unnatural to include more competence aims about grammar, as the pupils' knowledge of English should revolve around "composite skills and English as a language of use". Candidate 2 thinks the focus on grammar is fine and does not have any specific opinions on it.

4.1.4 Methods and Practice for Grammar Teaching

For the next part of the interview, the candidates were asked about their classroom practices and methods for grammar teaching. First, they were asked if they teach grammar explicitly with whole lessons dedicated to grammar, or if they integrate grammar instruction with other topics as smaller parts of a lesson. Both candidates state that they do not dedicate whole lessons to grammar, but rather include it either as shorter lessons or incorporate it into lessons on other

topics. Further, the candidates were asked if lessons are teacher-led or pupil-led when they include grammar. Both candidates agreed that they mostly want these lessons to be pupil-led, with discussion and corporation, but that they have to present new rules or grammar to some extent.

In relation to lessons with a focus on grammar, the candidates were asked if they have to explain grammatical rules to the pupils, or if they feel that the pupils understand the rules themselves through enough input. Candidate 1 states that pupils today “are worse than ever when it comes to reading and finding out stuff on their own”. Therefore, she says that she has to show them the rules and let them work practically with them afterward. Candidate 2 on the other hand, believes that the pupils can infer rules themselves through input. She states that she would never explicitly teach the pupils grammar rules on the blackboard,” as rules often have exceptions”. However, candidate 2 may provide explanations of grammar rules when giving feedback on written assignments.

Next, the candidates were asked if they think it is important to correct grammatical errors the pupils make, for instance in written assignments. Candidate 1 states that if the assignment focused on grammar after for instance learning about a specific grammar topic, then she can correct them. However, if the assignment focuses on content, she says that “the red pen is gone” Candidate 1 also states that if the focus is always on grammaticality, the pupils’ interest in writing might decrease. Candidate 2 says that she will choose an aspect she sees pupils struggles with within a text, and comment on only this. She also uses color-coding when correcting, so that pupils can go through their own text and look up specific types of mistakes. Both candidates also state that it is important to prohibit habits in relation to grammatical mistakes. Both mention how a lot of pupils write “i” instead of capital I, and mistakes like this need to be corrected even though it is most important that pupils make themselves understood.

Further, I wanted to explore what the candidates think about a traditional vs. communicative approach to grammar teaching. Therefore, they were first asked if a traditional grammar approach with a focus on forms is more effective, or a communicative approach with a focus on meaning in their opinion. Candidate 1 answers that she prefers a focus on meaning approach, as she thinks a focus on form often is too isolated and “cold”. However, she does believe that a focus on form is necessary to obtain knowledge about meaning, “so maybe a combination is best”.

The candidates were subsequently asked to describe in their own words, a typical grammar lesson or a lesson with a grammar component. Candidate 1 explained how every pupil has individual needs and therefore she does not believe in doing only one thing for the whole class. She describes that if she has shorter lessons with an explicit focus on grammar, she often lets the pupils decide what they want to work with and how they want to work with it. She further describes that years ago pupils got a sheet of paper with tasks and tables to fill out, and by doing this the differences in competence levels are enhanced. Therefore, she adapts the tasks to individual needs. Candidate 2 states that she either includes grammar as a starter to the lesson, with an introduction first and then some discussion around the topic. Other times she might include it at the end of a lesson, with different tasks the pupils can choose between. She states that “it is often stunts”. By “stunts” she means that they go through topics or rules that are unplanned or that pupils ask about in class. Further, she also mentions that she uses methods like this because she wants pupils to be active in class and discuss topics orally. “I tell my pupils that a quiet English lesson is an unsuccessful English lesson”. She believes that one of the most important things is that pupils try, fail, and reflect on tasks together.

4.1.5 Beliefs and Attitudes

For the last category in the interview sessions, the candidates were asked some questions about their personal beliefs and attitudes when it comes to teaching grammar. First, they were asked if they think that teaching grammar can be challenging, and what can be the most challenging. Candidate 1 finds that it is generally not challenging, but it can be when it comes to teaching complex grammatical structures and not being prepared to answer questions. However, she further says that she is confident in admitting not knowing everything and often encourages pupils to look up the answers themselves if she cannot answer. When asked if she sometimes feels uncertain about her own knowledge when it comes to grammar, candidate 1 says that she can be uncertain at times. Candidate 2 finds that teaching grammar can sometimes be challenging, especially when it comes to making the pupils realize the purpose of grammar lessons. In addition, she believes it can be hard to decide what to focus on and what is most important for the pupils to learn at times. She also states that it can be difficult to know if the pupils acquire the knowledge and content or not. When asked if she sometimes feels uncertain about her own knowledge when teaching grammar, candidate 2 states that she does not feel uncertain because she often looks up aspects she is uncertain about.

The next question asked if the candidates feel that the challenges in teaching grammar have changed throughout their years as a teacher. This could for instance be regarding the materials in the subject or the group of pupils. Candidate 1 says that when you teach a subject for many years you will of course learn what you teach better. In addition, she comments on how the pupils vary a lot each year. Candidate 2 also comments on how pupils change and especially that pupils today know more than pupils ten years ago. “They are more secure and understand more”. She feels that pupils today use the language more and write more, but their reading skills are lower than before. Candidate 2 and I further discuss that the latter might be because of social media and the growth of platforms like Netflix and that pupils often just read headlines and not whole texts.

Further, the candidates were asked why they believe grammar teaching has changed throughout the years. With this question, I provided some background on how the focus on grammar in classrooms and the curriculum has changed throughout the years, with it often being traditional and form-based in the 1900s, and more communicative and meaning-based in recent years. Candidate 1 reflects upon how the need for English has developed, and that it was not a language people used in their everyday lives before. She compares it with learning a foreign language like Russian. “If we would have learned Russian, focus on form would have been a lot more important than focus on meaning, because we do not have a context to put it in in our daily lives”. She mentions further that today, pupils are exposed to English every day on their phones, and the language input is extreme compared to for instance twenty years ago. However, the English language teenagers speak today is highly influenced by social media and it is not the same as Standard English, she states. For instance, when teenagers are texting, they often use abbreviations. Because of that, it has become vital to teach pupils the correct grammatical forms of words and sentences so that they do not make a habit of using abbreviations in school settings. Candidate 2 also mentions how the focus on English grammar has changed because the usage of the language has developed. She says that “You have to use and understand it, not just read and translate”. Both candidates acknowledge that since the language is used more today, the focus on grammar has changed.

Next, the candidates were asked if they think pupils can learn grammar through exposure to the language only, and that explaining grammatical rules may be unnecessary. Candidate 1 says that it depends on how old the pupils are. In Norway, children start speaking English relatively early, “so in some ways, they have been exposed to it since childhood”. Because of this, she believes that if you speak enough you will learn to speak with correct grammar. However, in

most cases, she has to explain the rules if they are brought up in her class. Candidate 2 also states that she thinks pupils can learn grammar only through exposure, but sometimes they need to learn certain rules. She mentions for instance verb tenses and that some pupils have to drill these. However, she believes that the most important thing is to make oneself understood, and if you do that, no one will correct your grammar when speaking.

The last question of the interview sessions was “Would you like to change something about how you teach grammar?”. Candidate 1 answers here that it changes all the time, and each lesson is different. This is because of how the importance of language has developed. Candidate 2 states that she wishes she could delve into more of the topics so that the learning environment is stable, but at the same time make it interesting for the pupils to learn. She sometimes feels like lessons are surface levelled. She concludes that there are so many things teachers have to go through in class and that in the end, it is up to her and her colleagues to make time for the important subject matters.

4.2 The Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire results will be presented mainly in figures and diagrams. All in all, 68 people responded to the questionnaire in *Nettskjema*. Diagrams will also be included to provide a visualization of the results of specific questionnaire questions, and they will include both the number of answers and the approximate percentage of answers. It will look like this in the diagrams: “17:25%”, meaning 17 respondents answered this, which is 25% of the sample. The results will not necessarily be presented in the original order of the questionnaire, as it was noticed afterward that the questions were not presented in the same thematic order as the interview guide. In the present chapter, the results will be presented in the same thematic order as the interview guide and the original order can be found in Appendix 5. Additional comments on the results will be provided in written form. Only results that are relevant to the research question and thesis will be presented. The questions in the questionnaire were originally written in Norwegian but will be translated into English when used in the present section.

4.2.1 Background Information on Respondents

The first section of the questionnaire asked the respondents about their backgrounds. The first question asked whether the respondents have a formal education as a teacher. Here, 95.6%, or 65 of the respondents, answered yes, meaning that three respondents are not formally educated as teachers. The second question asked whether the respondents have English as one of their subjects in school. 97.1% stated yes, meaning that two people do not teach English. When

sending out the request for participation by e-mail I specifically asked for teachers in any grade who has English as one of their subjects in school. nonetheless, some respondents claimed to not be a teacher and do not have English as one of their subjects. The fact that some of the respondents do not qualify for the questionnaire may have influenced the answers.

The third question in the questionnaire asked about what type of school the respondents currently work at. As presented in Figure 2, I listed the three main school types, which are primary school (barneskole), lower secondary school (ungdomsskole), and upper secondary school (videregående skole). In addition, an option with “other” was also included, if some teachers for instance worked at an adult educational institution or any other schools that did not fit into the three main options. The majority answered either primary school or lower secondary school, but the answers are rather evenly divided between the schools.

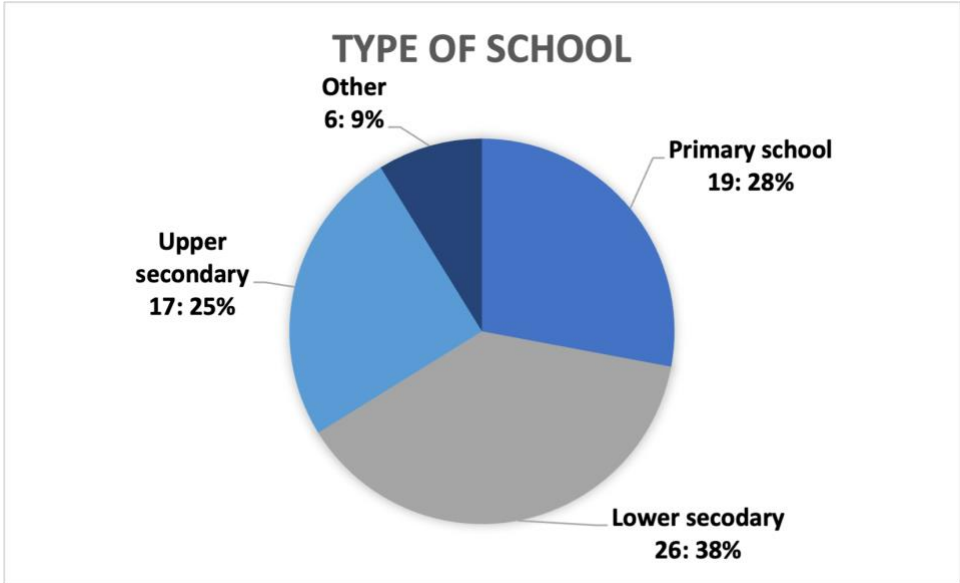


Figure 2: What type of school do you currently work at?

The fourth question asked about the respondents’ years of experience as English teachers. For this question, there were listed five options, all with 5 years intervals, ranging from 0 to more than 20 years of experience. Over 40% of the respondents have 0-5 years of experience, and 27% have between 5-10 years, which makes up the majority of the participants. There were also around 16% of the participants who has more than 20 years of experience as a teacher.

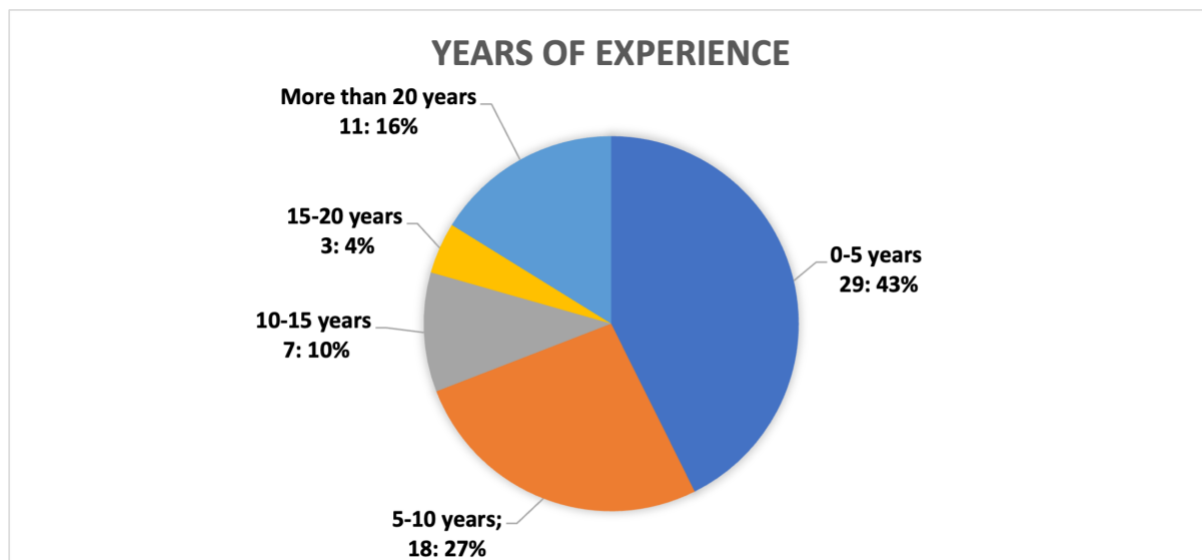


Figure 3: How many years of experience do you have as an English teacher?

4.2.2 Definitions of Grammar

The next question presented in the questionnaire was an open question where the respondents could freely write in their own words. The question was “What is grammar in the English subject for you”. This question was not obligatory to answer, however, 62 out of 68 provided their definition of grammar. When including a voluntary free text question like this, one cannot always expect to receive a lot of answers. Therefore, the number of answers on this question was surprising and provided valuable data for the present research project.

Definitions of grammar may vary depending on what context and where they are given. This is evident in the answers to the question in the questionnaire, as almost no answer is the same. A lot of respondents state that grammar is “the rules of language”, rules which build a language or a tool to help understand words, word classes, and sentences. Some also state that grammar is “important”, “fundamental for comprehension”, “a small part of the subject”, “boring, but important”, and “patterns in language”. These answers are common. Some respondents also stated that grammar is a tool for communication. In addition, some answers were vague or merely incorrect according to previously mentioned definitions of grammar. Some teachers seem to not be able to separate grammar from other areas of language. These include “text design”, “sounds”, pronunciation, transparency, and abbreviations”, and “oral learning through activity”. Even though these answers might not be as relevant, it is interesting to include and

see the different definitions of grammar. Below, some of the answers I thought were well-written and particularly interesting are listed.

Grammar in the English subject for me is working with language and word classes and putting it in a system. By that, I mean working with words and word classes by using them correctly and precisely in communication. grammar is also a part of the subject that can create a sense of accomplishment, development, and competence enhancement.

The construction pupils need to master to be able to produce written and oral texts with meaning. Communication.

Dreary, but important. Motivating for pupils who master it, needs to both be taught and drilled specifically, but also experienced in genuine contexts.

4.2.3 Grammar Teaching Approaches and Practises

The next questions in the questionnaire wanted to explore English teachers' approaches to grammar teaching and different practices. First, the respondents were asked how often they teach grammar. Five options were included under this question, ranging from "never" to "often, several times a week". The majority of the respondents answered either "once or twice a week", with 36.8%, or "monthly", with 32.4%. However, there was also one person who stated they never teach grammar and eight people who stated they teach grammar several times a week. These two findings are particularly interesting in relation to the other answers, as they stand out on each side of the scale. This question might depend on what school someone works in, as there might be more grammar in some grades than others.

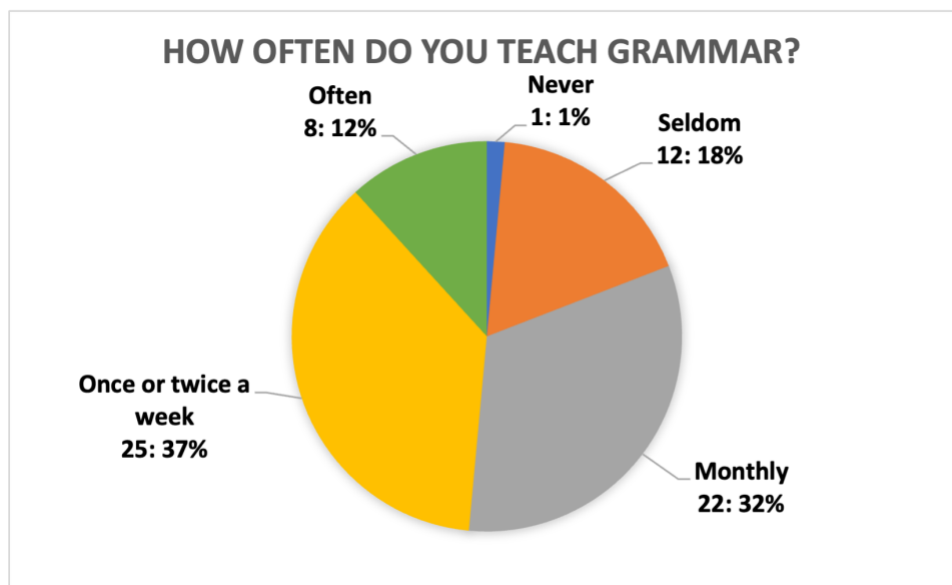


Figure 4: How often do you teach grammar?

The next two questions in the questionnaire presented different statements that the respondents had to agree or disagree with, ranging from no opinion (ingen formening), strongly disagree (svært uenig), disagree (uenig), neutral (verken enig eller uenig), agree (enig) to strongly agree (svært enig). The first statement was “I teach whole, explicit lessons in grammar in the English subject”. I included an explanation of explicit teaching in this question to avoid any misunderstandings. This explanation said, “This means that you plan whole lessons, weekly or monthly focused around grammar or working with subject matters relating to grammar in the English subject”. Here, the majority of the respondents claimed to either disagree, with 29.4%, or strongly disagree with 23.5%. However, several respondents also claimed to strongly agree, with 7.4%, or agree, with 23.5%. This means that although most respondents do not agree with this type of teaching, over 20 people agree with using an approach like this.

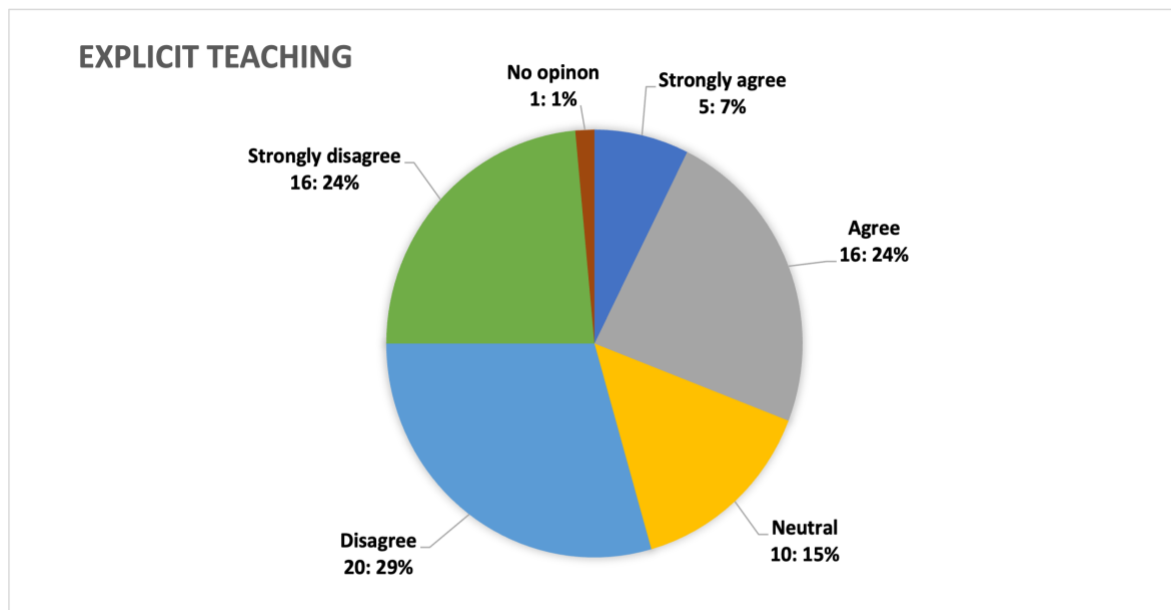


Figure 5: I teach whole, explicit lessons in grammar in the English subject.

The next statement covered the opposite of explicit teaching, which is implicit teaching. The statement asked for a degree of agreement in “I implement grammar instruction implicitly in lessons where I teach other subject matters in English”. Here, 57 respondents out of 66 answered either “strongly agree” or “agree”. This means that 11 people, or around 15%, either disagree, do not have an opinion, or are neutral. From these findings, 0 people strongly disagree with implementing implicit teaching, which is an interesting finding.

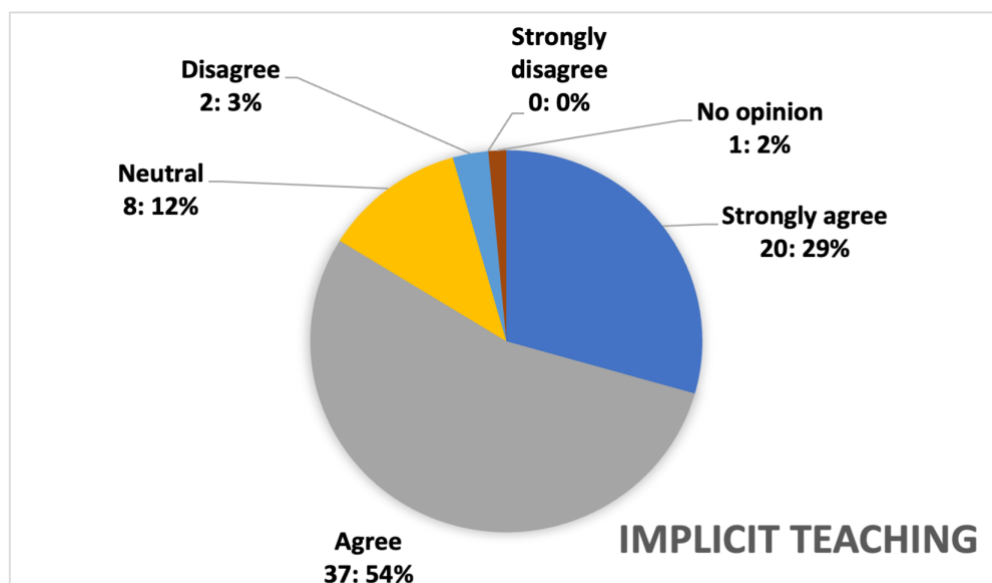


Figure 6: I implement grammar instruction implicitly in lessons where I teach other subject matters in English.

In the next question, a series of statements were asked about how pupils learn grammar in the subject. The statements were (1) I always have to explain grammar rules to the pupils for them to understand them, (2) The pupils understand grammar rules through enough input and work with the subject, and (3) Pupils do not need to learn grammar rules. The majority of the respondents disagreed with the last statement, that pupils do not need to learn grammar rules. However, there is a variety in the degree of agreement in the first and second statements. 45 participants strongly agree or agree that pupils learn grammar rules through input and work with the subject. However, 37 respondents strongly agree or agree that they have to explain grammar rules to pupils.

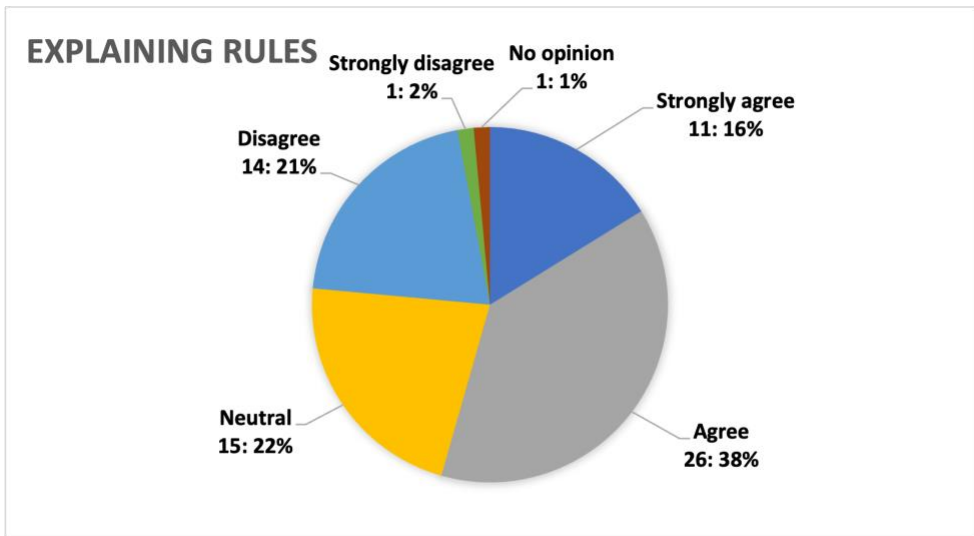


Figure 7: I have to explain grammar rules to pupils for them to understand.

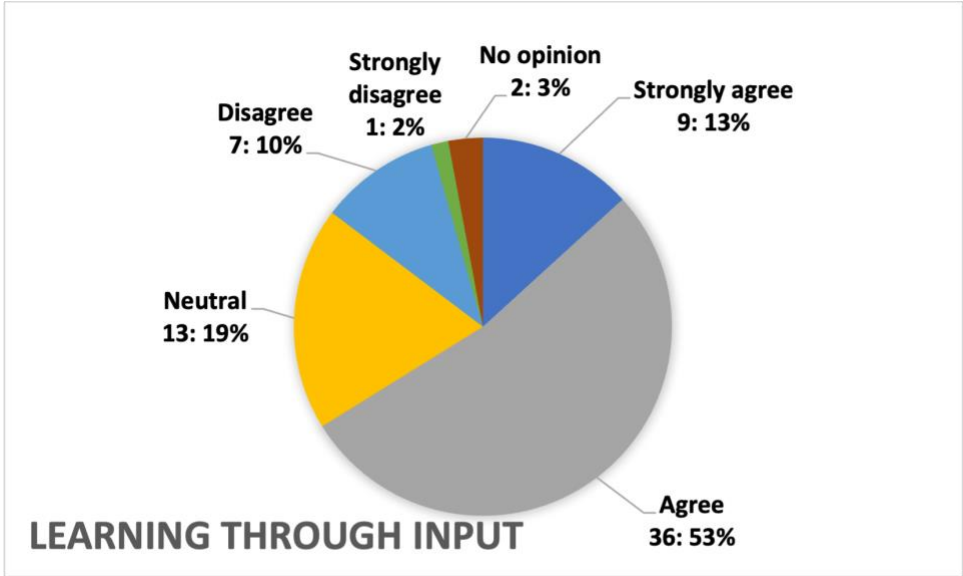


Figure 8: Pupils learn grammar rules through input and working with the subject.

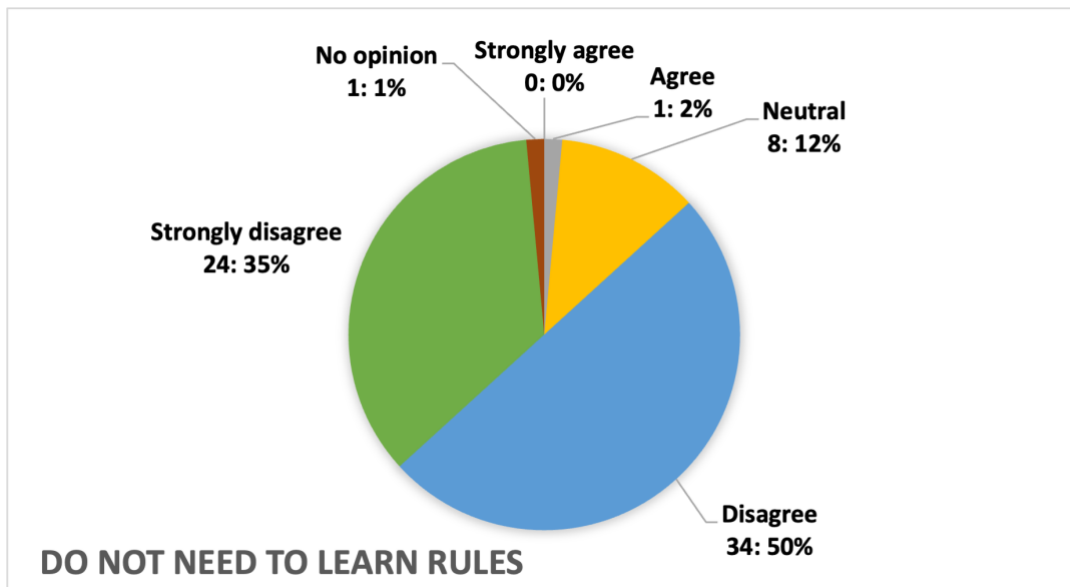


Figure 9: Pupils do not need to learn grammar rules.

The respondents were also asked if they focus on correcting grammatical mistakes pupils make, both in oral and written work. This question was poorly formulated as I am not able to distinguish between whether a respondent corrects oral, written or both, as both were listed in one question. Nonetheless, over half of the respondents, 37, answered that they do “sometimes”. 20 people also stated that they often correct their pupils, while 0 stated “never”.

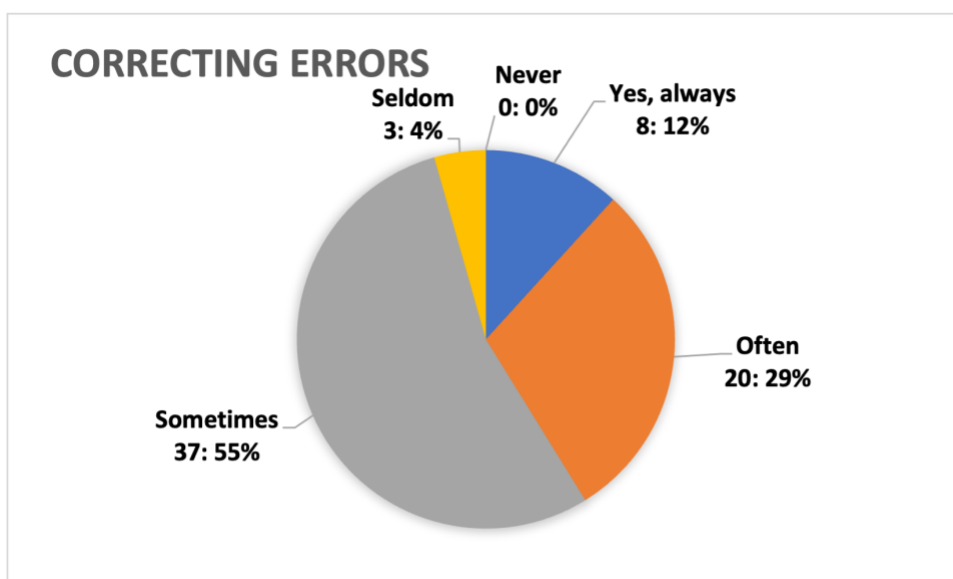


Figure 10: Do you correct pupils' grammatical errors, in both written and oral work?

The last question in this category presented the respondents with three statements they had to decide their degree of agreement on. The statements were, (1) I think traditional grammar instruction with a focus on forms and rules is effective, (2) I think grammar instruction with a focus on communication and meaning is effective, and (3) I think grammar instruction should have a focus on both forms/rules and communication/meaning. This question gave a variety of answers, especially when it comes to the first statement. Here, only 1 person stated they strongly agree, 20 people agree, and 22 people were neutral. 24 people all together stated they either disagreed or strongly disagreed. With respect to the second statement, the majority of the respondents either strongly agreed, with 22 people, or agreed, with 40 people. In addition, the majority also either strongly agreed or agreed with the last statement, with respectively 22 and 36 respondents. This means that the majority of teachers in the questionnaire feel that either a focus on merely communication/meaning or a combination between communication and rules is most effective.

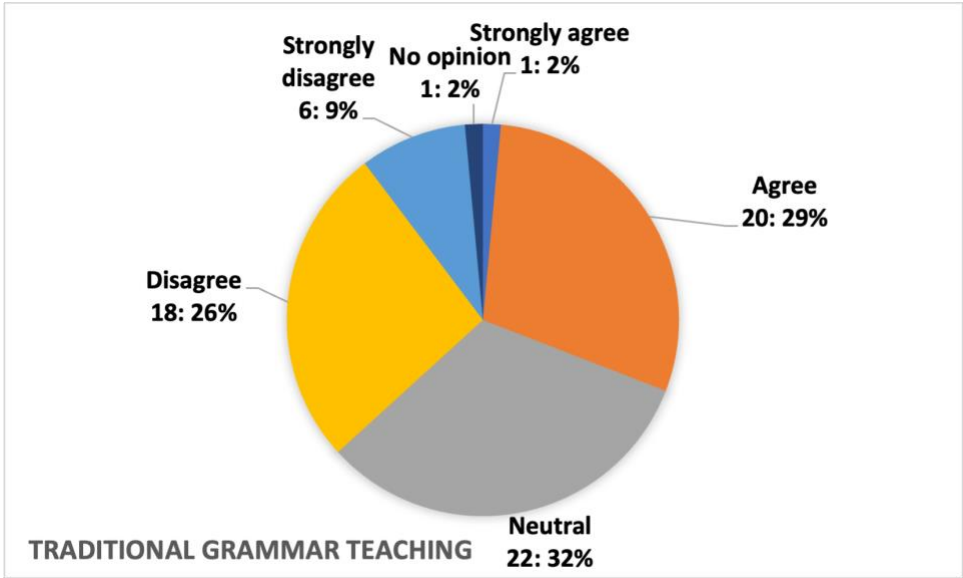


Figure 11: I think traditional grammar teaching is effective.

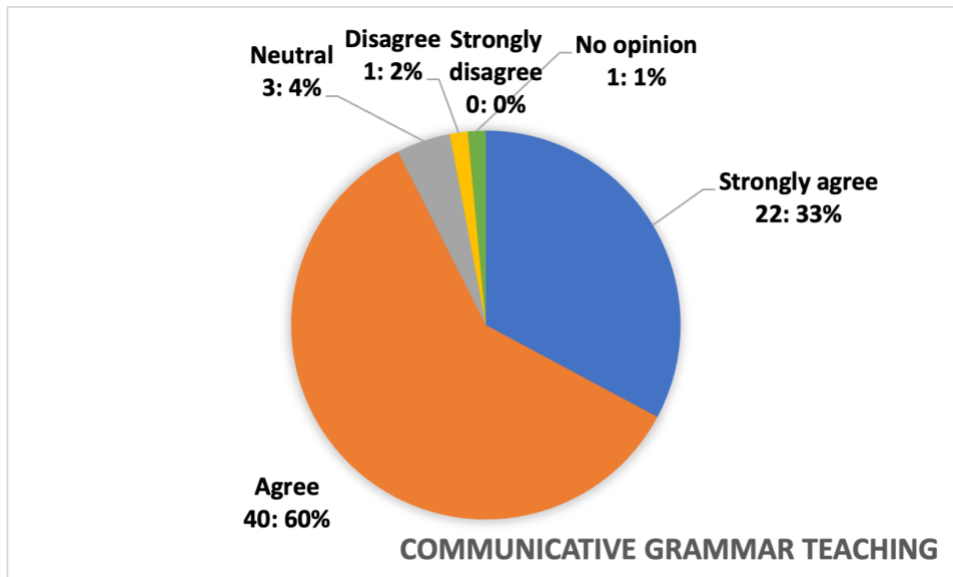


Figure 12: I think grammar teaching with a focus on communication is effective.

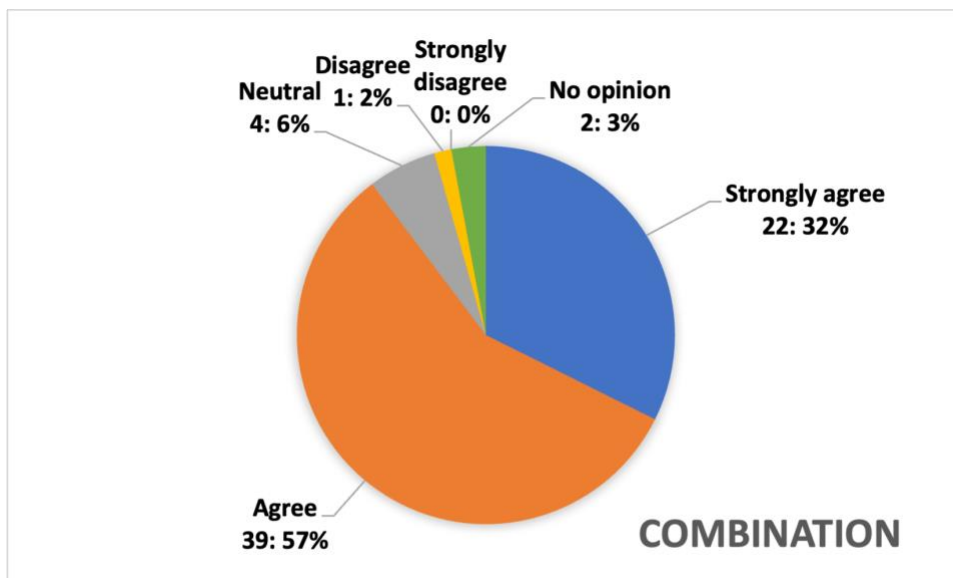


Figure 13: I think grammar teaching should focus on both rules and communication.

4.2.4 Beliefs and Opinions on Grammar Teaching

The last category included questions regarding the teachers' personal beliefs and opinions on grammar teaching in general. The first question was again a statement on which the respondents had to agree to a larger or lesser extent. The statement was "I think it is challenging to teach grammar in the English subject". Here, only 5.9%, or four people strongly agreed, and 13.2%, or nine people agreed. The majority were either neutral, with 35.3, %, or disagreed with 36.8%.

Six people or 8.8% strongly disagreed, meaning there was a lot of variation regarding whether teachers feel that teaching grammar is challenging.

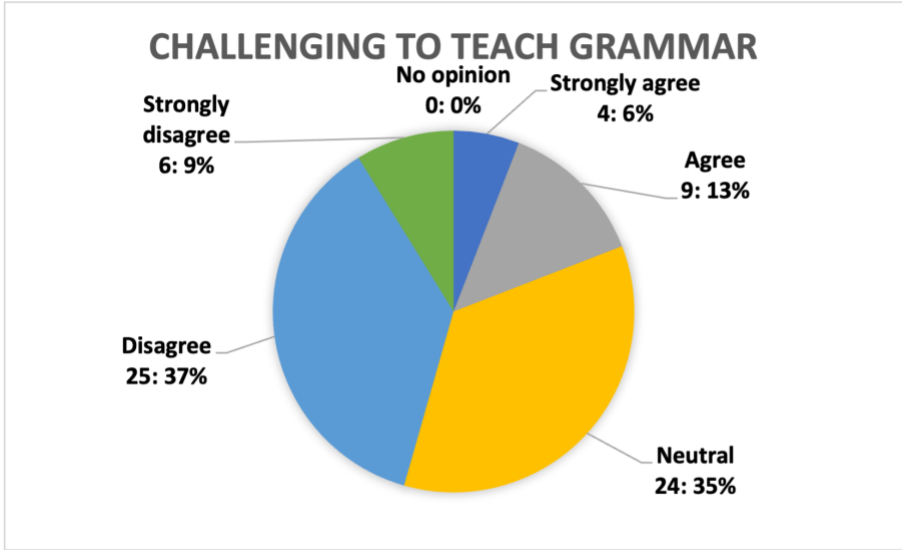


Figure 14: I think it is challenging to teach grammar.

The next question in this category was presented in a scale form, where the respondents had to choose a number between 0-6, indicating a degree of importance. The question was “Do you think it is important that pupils receive grammar instruction in English?”. Here, the majority of the respondents chose either value four, with 35.3%, five, with 29.4%, or six, with 26.5%. This means that the majority feels that it is important that their pupils get grammar instruction. However, three respondents chose the value three, and an additional three chose two. *Nettskjema* also provided a mean value with this type of scale question, which in this question is 4.69.

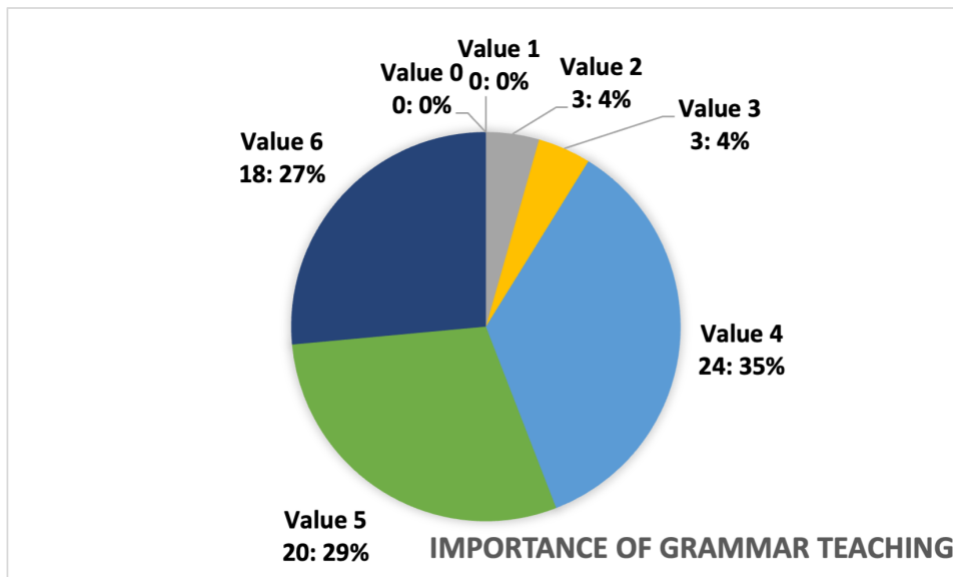


Figure 15: Do you think it is important that pupils receive grammar instruction?

In the next question, the respondents were asked to express their degree of agreement with the following statement: “I often feel insecure about my own knowledge when teaching grammar”. Two respondents or 2.9% answered “strongly agree” and six respondents or 8.8% answered, “agree”. However, the majority of the respondents answered either “disagree” with 48.5%, or 33 people, or “strongly disagree” with 26.5%, or 18 people. Most of the respondents, therefore, do not feel insecure about their own knowledge when teaching grammar.

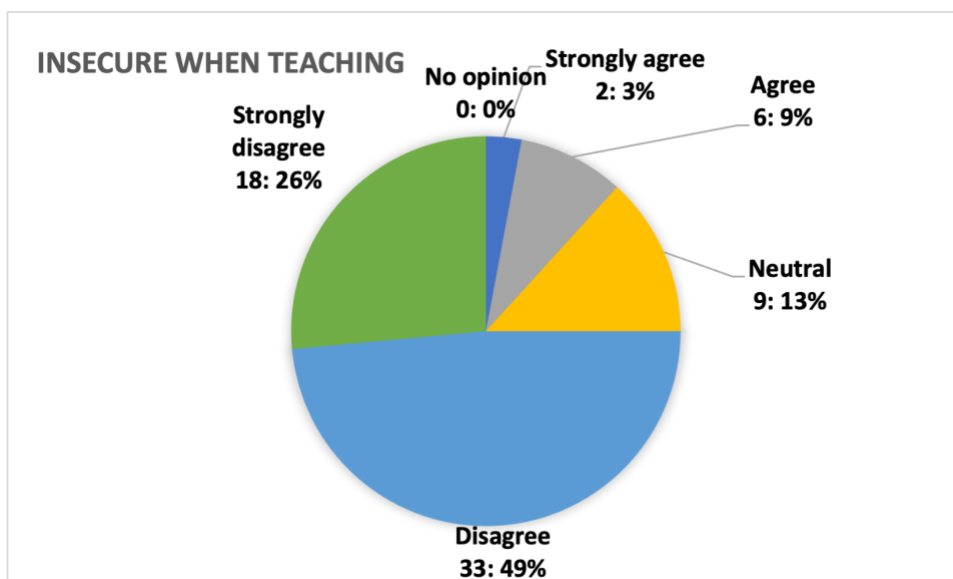


Figure 16: I often feel insecure about my own knowledge when teaching grammar.

The last part of the questionnaire included a free-text answer where the respondents could include additional information, comments, or questions to the overall questionnaire and topic. Many respondents provided explanations as to why they answered the way they answered. For instance, one respondent wrote:

I have answered quite ambiguously here and that is because I think grammatical comprehension and correctness are very important, and we have to teach it if necessary. I experience in my classes in VGS, there is little need to use time on this as they often have the necessary knowledge from previous years in school.

Several other respondents also commented on the difficulties of teaching grammar in upper secondary school, mainly because of the wide variations in knowledge among the pupils. Some respondents find it hard to adapt grammar teaching to the variety of competence levels in the classroom, and that may be a reason why grammar has lost its focus in upper secondary school. Other respondents also comment on the latter, that grammar is losing its focus in school, and that it is important that teacher education values grammar teaching more. One respondent for instance states:

Regarding the increased amount of interdisciplinarity in the new curricula, it is especially important that English grammar is taught and not forgotten when working with the subject, both in relation to interdisciplinarity and in the English subject.

The free-text answer provided a lot of supplementary and additional comments to the results of the previous questions. It also helped explain some of the results, as I see that many respondents agree on several topics and questions. By having gotten answers to this last part of the questionnaire, I as the researcher have gained a broader picture of the results and what they might mean.

5 Discussion

This thesis wanted to explore English teachers' attitudes, opinions, and methods for grammar instruction in Norway, as this topic is an underexplored topic with several different viewpoints and approaches. As presented previously, the ideas about grammar teaching are in constant development, and new approaches, thoughts, beliefs, and methods always occur. Beliefs, attitudes, and opinions also change over time, so this research study wants to give an overview of how English teachers currently view grammar. To do this, I have formulated two main research questions, each of which is broken down into sub-questions that help specify what I want to answer within each RQ:

RQ 1. How do English teachers in Norway currently teach grammar, and what approaches do they employ when teaching?

1.1 Do they teach grammar implicitly or explicitly?

1.2 Do they favor a traditional approach, a purely communicative approach, or a combination of both?

RQ 2. What opinions and attitudes do English teachers in Norway currently have regarding grammar instruction?

2.1 Do they believe grammar teaching is important?

2.2 Do they find it challenging to teach grammar?

The discussion chapter will discuss important findings from my research study and compare them to relevant theories and previous research. The chapter is divided into different sections (5.1-5.6) which each focus on an important topic in relation to my research questions. The discussion in each section will ultimately help answer the research questions above. I start by clarifying how teachers define grammar since this question is foundational to all the questions treated in this thesis.

The participants in this study were asked to define grammar because the term might be defined differently by different teachers. In the interviews, both teachers explained grammar as a tool for language learning, with Candidate 1 stating that grammar is the building blocks of a language, and Candidate 2 stating that grammar is rules and drilling of rules. These two definitions also appear in the questionnaire respondents. In the questionnaire, the question

“What is grammar in the English subject for you” included an open box where the respondents could freely write their definitions. The respondents state, among others, that grammar is a tool for communication, syntax, patterns in the language, and sounds and pronunciation. All respondents generally equated grammar with structure and consequently expressed an understanding of grammar which is in line with the common definition of grammar discussed in section 2.1. However, some also defined grammar as being a “dull” and a tedious part of language learning, and something that pupils find boring to work with. This may be because they struggle with the topic themselves, or that their group of pupils struggle with it. One can assume that the people who wrote that grammar is “dull” or “boring” do not enjoy teaching it or struggle with seeing the value in the topic in school.

5.1 Do English Teachers in Norway Teach Grammar Implicitly or Explicitly?

The duality of explicit and implicit teaching is one of the main research areas in this thesis. As previously stated, one of the RQs in this thesis is “Do English teachers in Norway teach grammar explicitly or implicitly?”. This question was explored both in the interviews and the questionnaire. Askland (2020) found that a majority of the teachers in her study do not dedicate time for explicit grammar instruction, but rather integrate it into lessons according to what pupils struggle with. This finding is similar to what both candidates in the interviews in the present study state. Both candidates in the interviews state that they do not dedicate whole lessons to explicit grammar teaching, as pupils find it difficult and too isolated to work with. Candidate 2 states that she sometimes includes explicit teaching if her pupils need it, especially when the pupils are younger. This can also be found in Askland (2020), where some of her participants find value in explicit teaching (Askland, 2020). However, both candidates believe that grammar should be taught to correct and prevent errors pupils might make.

The findings from the present research study and Askland’s study from 2020 are similar when it comes to explicit and implicit language teaching. One explanation for this can be that teachers might find that pupils today do not require a substantial amount of grammar instruction and rather focuses the lessons on other important topics in the subject. Language is only one of many core elements in the subject, as listening and reading skills are more focused on today than before. Since there seems to be a common opinion that grammar should not be the focus of lessons, it is supposedly used more as a tool that is brought up when needed. Conversely,

this assumption can be linked to the fact that CLT is a preferred teaching approach. Teachers seem to focus more on communication and usage of the language. Therefore, grammar is perhaps being used as a tool to aid in the production of output, instead of being the main object of instruction in the English classroom. Using grammar as a tool for communication corresponds to a FOF approach which was presented in section 2.4. Such an approach is also comparable to methods the participants in the present study claim to employ.

The present research study also wanted to explore if teachers have to explain grammar rules to their pupils, or if they feel that the pupils learn grammar rules through input only. This question relates to the explicit vs. implicit dyad as the former often represents an explicit approach and the latter represents an implicit approach. Candidate 1 stated in the interview that her pupils do not “take rules intuitively”, and she has to show them a grammatical concept first and let them work with it later. She states that pupils today struggle with reading and inferring rules and patterns themselves. Candidate 2 on the other hand, states that her pupils eventually learn the rules by themselves, and she does not believe in presenting a rule and drilling it with her pupils. She would rather explain the rule when correcting pupils’ assignments for instance. These answers show a clear distinction between the two teachers interviewed.

This distinction can also be found among the participants in the questionnaire. 37 respondents agreed to some extent that they have to explain grammar rules to their pupils for them to understand. This finding is interesting concerning the fact that most respondents claimed to teach grammar implicitly. 15 people disagreed to some extent with the same statement, and 15 answered neutral (verken enig eller uenig). However, 45 respondents agreed to some extent with the claim that pupils understand grammar rules through enough input, and only eight disagreed to some extent with the same statement. Even though some respondents must have agreed with both of these statements because of the overlapping numbers, most teachers agree that pupils can learn grammar rules through sufficient language input only and working with the subject. Candidate 2 explained that the more pupils speak the language, the more they acquire when it comes to grammar. This suggests that a lot of teachers in this study favor an implicit approach, and do not teach grammar explicitly.

It is also important to note that even though a majority of the participants in the present study seem to favor implicit grammar teaching, there are findings suggesting that some teachers teach grammar explicitly. Many of the respondents in Pulk (2022) stated that they think an explicit

approach is effective, and Pulk discussed in her paper that this might be because many of the respondents work in primary schools (Pulk, 2022). Compared to my research study and Askland (2020), Pulk's respondents seem to believe more in an explicit approach. Askland found that only a few of the teachers in her study utilized an explicit approach, and the teachers in her study taught at lower and upper secondary schools. Presumably, there is a larger focus on grammar in the lower grades, as the pupils need grammatical input in the beginning stages of learning English. It can perhaps also be because they teach a group of pupils that demands grammar instruction explicitly or because the respective teachers might personally favor an approach like this.

As to the variation in pupils' knowledge, comprehension, and learning styles in all classes, teachers have to change and adapt their teaching approaches according to the needs of the pupils. Teachers in upper secondary school might find that their pupils know most grammar rules, because they are older, and perhaps do not need to focus on grammar instruction. However, teachers in primary school may need to introduce and drill grammar rules, as it is here pupils are being introduced to English for the first time. This might require teachers to use an explicit approach to grammar teaching more in the lower grades. With this being said, the choice of approaches may be influenced by or dependent on what grade the teachers teach in.

5.2 Do English Teachers in Norway Favor a Traditional Approach, a Purely Communicative Approach, or a Combination of both?

As stated, the national curriculum in English includes a few competence aims about grammar and provides no elaboration or instruction about how teachers should teach grammar. Throughout the years, the idea of grammar instruction has also changed extensively, and grammar has gradually lost its focus. This is evident in the emergence of a communicative approach to learning, how it is portrayed in the curriculum in English, and also in studies like Askland's (2020). This study finds that grammar teaching is rather unsystematic in schools today, and teachers do not seem to reflect much upon their choice of methods for grammar teaching. Askland also found that many teachers seem to view grammar as a tool to fix errors, not to develop linguistic awareness. These findings are comparable to results from the present research study, which will be discussed in this chapter.

The two main approaches to language learning discussed in this paper are the traditional approach and CLT. The former is in general more focused on forms and rules, while the latter focuses on communication and meaning. When asked about the effectiveness of these

approaches in the interviews, Candidate 1 stated that a focus on meaning is definitely favorable, as instruction with a focus on only form is too isolated. She said that the subject has to have a meaning and purpose, but pupils also have to recognize forms of language for it to be meaningful. Candidate 1 previously stated that she often has to explain rules explicitly to her pupils, which might explain why she mentions the importance of form here. Candidate 2 uttered that a communicative approach is most effective and that she does not believe that drilling rules in the subject is effective for the pupils. She clearly explained that she prefers active learning strategies in her classroom and that pupils produce language. In the theoretical background chapter, focus on form vs. focus on forms was explained. Both candidates explain that they favor a communicative approach but have also stated that they do include grammar teaching to some extent. From these findings, we may infer that these teachers favor a focus-on-form approach to language teaching, even though they never explicitly mentioned it. This approach is similar to implicit grammar teaching and incidentally draws learners' attention to linguistic form in combination with communication.

The same question was asked in the questionnaire. Only one respondent strongly agreed that a traditional approach is most effective, and 20 respondents agreed. By contrast, 22 respondents strongly agreed that a communicative approach to grammar teaching is most effective, and 40 respondents agreed. However, 39 respondents agreed that grammar teaching should focus on both rules and communication, and 22 strongly agreed with the same statement. This statement represents a combination of a traditional and a communicative approach. These numbers can be hard to interpret as it means that most participants favor both an approach with a focus on communication and with a combination of focus on rules and communication. Candidate 2 explicitly stated in the interview that “Maybe a combination [of the two approaches] is best”. She believes that focusing on meaning is most important, but that focus on form is vital to be able to comprehend the meaning.

Pulk (2022) also investigated different approaches to grammar teaching and found that over 90% of her respondents agreed to some extent with the statement “Grammar teaching should focus more on communicating with others than filling in worksheets” (Pulk, 2022, p. 45). Over 90% also agreed to some extent that pupils learn grammar by doing practical assignments with fellow pupils in English. Pulk links these two statements to a “communicatively oriented – or socio-cultural” (Pulk, 2022, p. 46) approach to teaching. This indicates that these teachers favor a communicative approach to grammar teaching.

As an answer to RQ 1.2, it can be concluded that most teachers believe that a communicative approach to grammar teaching is more effective than a traditional approach, but a combination of the two may be most effective. The fact that a large number of respondents agreed that a combination of both is most effective does not necessarily mean that they employ this approach in classrooms. It may suggest that they merely believe such an approach would be the most effective.

These findings suggest that CLT is more prominent in classrooms today and that a traditional approach to language learning is more infrequent. This correlates to what the theory presented in section 2.5 assumes, which is that a communicative approach to language learning and focus on meaning seems to be most prominent today. A traditional approach is often associated with how language was taught before modern times, and language beliefs in the 19th century generally revolved around sentence-leveled grammar and language as an object of study. It can be assumed that teachers might believe this approach is outdated. Both candidates in the interviews stated that they find that pupils today know more English because of the widespread usage of social media and globalization. Both candidates also stress the fact that the English language has evolved from being a foreign language to being a language pupils use more and more. Similarly, the language beliefs in linguistics and education today have developed to focus on the language as used by people (Rindal, 2014). This might be a factor in why a communicative approach is more used in classrooms today, as pupils require more training in how to use and communicate in the language, not what the components of the language are and consists of.

The candidates in the interviews were asked what they believe is a reason for the development and change in grammar teaching throughout the years. When asking this I referred to the change from a traditional approach to a more communicative approach to language teaching. As explored in the theory chapter, grammar teaching traditions have changed significantly from when the English subject first was introduced in Norwegian schools, to today. The role of the language has also changed accordingly. The candidates state that English has a much grander role in society today, which makes the subject even more important in schools than it was before. As English is more prevalent in society, pupils are exposed to the language more. Consequently, their language competence is better, and perhaps the need for explicit grammar teaching decreases. This might explain why a majority of teachers prefer a communicative, implicit approach to grammar teaching. They might find that pupils today do not need to learn grammar, as exposure to the language provides them with a benefit when it comes to learning

the language. 20 years ago, for instance, pupils did not have the amount of exposure and comprehension to the language as pupils have today, hence why grammar teaching had an important role in school.

5.3 Other Relevant Findings on Grammar Teaching

The curriculum does not, as stated, prescribe any methods of how English should be taught or what learning activities should be included. The curriculum does however highlight a couple of competence aims about language and language comprehension, meaning that correct usage of language is an important part of language learning. With teaching approaches like the grammar-translation method and the audiolingual method, grammar, and correctness were in focus. The role of the teacher was to provide accurate information and grammatical structures, and correct mistakes pupils made (Fenner, 2020). With the change in views on teaching approaches and increased focus on communication, the role of the teacher has also changed. “The teacher’s role is to promote learning and cooperation and in many ways be the facilitator of learning, rather than the one who provides all the correct answers” (Fenner, 2020, p. 30). To explore the role of the teacher in grammar instruction, the participant was therefore asked about whether lessons should be teacher-led or pupil-led, and about correction of pupils' work in school. These answers gave me an idea about the teacher’s role in the classroom today, and the importance of grammatical correctness among teachers.

In the interviews, the candidates were asked if they believe lessons with some type of focus on grammar should be teacher-led or pupil-led. Candidate 1 states that she sometimes has to go through grammar rules in class, but mostly these classes are pupil-led. Candidate 2 also says that sometimes she has to explain rules to them, but she does not believe in an approach where the teacher leads the lesson and drills grammar with the pupils. She believes that cooperation is important and that pupils have the opportunity to find out things for themselves. Askland (2020) found that when observing teachers in classrooms, most lessons were teacher-led. Most teachers in her study seemed to favor a deductive approach, and this approach is based on the teacher explaining new rules and structures to the pupils. The deductive approach may therefore explain why most of the observed lessons were teacher-led (Askland, 2020).

When it comes to correcting grammatical errors pupils make, there is a variety of views, methods, and practices among teachers. The curriculum states that the pupils should “follow rules for spelling, word inflection, syntax and text structure» (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019) in written work. This may for instance involve teachers correcting pupils' work for them to

learn these rules mentioned in the curriculum. The participants in the present study were asked if they focus on correcting grammatical mistakes pupils make, either in written or oral work. Candidate 1 stated that she does not correct grammatical mistakes if the focus of the task was not related to grammar. Therefore, it varies depending on the goal of the task for her. Candidate 2 says that she corrects mistakes depending on the pupils' levels of competence. If someone struggles a lot with concord, for instance, she will correct only that. The respondents in the questionnaire were also asked if they focus on correcting grammatical errors in both written and oral work, and here a majority, with 37 respondents, answered "sometimes". This correlates to what the candidates in the interview stated, as they do correct sometimes, depending on the situation. However, 20 respondents answered "often" and eight answered, "yes, always". This indicates that a lot of teachers focus on correcting grammatical mistakes to some extent. It is however important to state that since this question included both written and oral work, the answers may be misleading. There is no way to interpret whether respondents correct mostly written or oral work, as they are both included in the question.

5.5. Do English Teachers in Norway Believe Grammar Teaching is Important?

In addition to teaching strategies and approaches used in the classroom, the present research study wanted to explore teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward grammar teaching. When it comes to the importance of grammar and grammar teaching, both candidates in the interview stated that they think it is important that pupils receive grammar instruction in school. However, they both agree that it is more important in the lower grades. In the questionnaire, the respondents were also asked if they think it is important for pupils to learn grammar in school, and they had to choose a value between 0 to 6, where 0 means not important, and 6 means very important. The majority of respondents choose between the values 4-6, and the mean value came to 4.69. This is relatively high, meaning that most teachers believe it is important that pupils receive grammar instruction in school. However, three respondents chose value two, and three who chose value three. All in all, no one chose the value 0 or 1, meaning that all teachers in this research study think it is important that pupils learn grammar, to some extent.

In the interviews and the questionnaire, there is an overall consensus that grammar is an important part of the English subject. Both interviewees also stated that it is even more important to teach grammar the younger the pupils are. This is comparable to Askland (2020), who also found that the teachers in her study believed that grammar generally is an important tool for language learning and meaning-making. Teachers do seem to find grammar vital for

pupils' language competence and development. In Pulk's thesis, over 60% of the respondent agreed to some extent that "grammar teaching is not a high priority in the English subject" (Pulk, 2022, p. 43). This finding might indicate that the teachers believe grammar is important, but do not find enough time in the subject to prioritize it. However, it can also indicate that the teachers personally do not prioritize it in their classes, or do not find it as important.

5.4 Do English Teachers in Norway Find Grammar Instruction Challenging?

In the interviews, both candidates stated that they find it challenging to teach grammar sometimes, especially when it is more complex structures. Candidate 1 sometimes feels certain about her knowledge when teaching grammar, while Candidate 2 does not. In the questionnaire, 45.6 % of the respondents disagreed to some extent with the statement that they feel that teaching grammar is challenging. Only 18,9% agreed to some extent. The rest of the respondents, 35.3%, choose the answer "neither agree nor disagree" (verken enig eller uenig). The fact that many teachers neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement may suggest that they have not taught grammar much or do not have too much experience as teachers. It may also imply that they find it challenging in certain situations, but not always. The sample of teachers in this study may in addition not be representative of the population. If the sample is overrepresented by teachers who have positive attitudes toward teaching grammar, this might explain why so few feel uncomfortable about teaching grammar.

The questionnaire also asked the respondents if they feel insecure about their knowledge when teaching grammar, and here, 75% of the respondents disagreed to some extent. The results from the interviews and the questionnaire somewhat differ. One of the reasons for this might be that a lot of the respondents in the questionnaire teach English at primary school levels. It may also be explained by a skewed sample, as explained above. Both teachers in the interviews teach in lower secondary, meaning that they teach grammar at a higher level than some of the respondents in the questionnaire. This may have affected the answers. Pulk (2022) also asked her participants if they feel confident when teaching grammar. 57.9% agreed and 31.6% partially agreed with the statement "I feel confident in teaching grammar" (Pulk, 2022, p. 42). Only 10.5% disagreed to some extent. These findings are comparable to the findings in my research study, as a majority of the respondents disagreed with feeling insecure when teaching grammar. Askland found that several teachers in her study admitted to feeling unsure about what methods to use for grammar teaching, as their pupils did not seem to advance in grammatical knowledge (Askland, 2020) With these findings it is evident that most teachers do

not struggle with grammar teaching, but there are indications that some do experience challenges with teaching it as well.

In Watson's study from 2012, results suggest that a lot of English teachers have negative attitudes toward grammar teaching. Even though some of her participants found grammar exciting and inspiring, over half of the participants expressed that they struggle with the topic in class and experience a lack of confidence. This study was conducted with English teachers in England, at secondary schools (Watson, 2012). One can therefore assume that the respective teachers had English as their first language (L1), which is important to consider when comparing this study to the others in this thesis. Teaching grammar in an L1 presumably means that the grammar teaching is at a higher level than those focused on in an L2. This can explain why teachers in Watson's study feel less confident about teaching grammar, as the difficulty is more exigent for teachers. Another explanation can be that the teachers in Watson's study might have experienced a lack of grammar instruction in their teaching education and feel less confident because they have not received enough training in the field. This can also explain the varying answers in my questionnaire, as the amount of training in English grammar in teaching education varies across the country and depends on how much education you have in the subject.

5.5 The Importance of Research on Teachers

The English subject is constantly developing as society and the need for language competence similarly develops and rises. Being able to speak and communicate in the world language of English has never been more important. Without looking at individual grades in the English subject, there is no way to know whether pupils in Norway get the amount of language learning they need to be able to communicate and comprehend language structures. In addition, there is no way of knowing how teachers operate in the classroom, what approaches they employ, and what they focus on in subjects without doing proper research. There is a major gap in research when it comes to English teachers' practices, views, and opinions on grammar teaching in Norway, and research like this may contribute to the field of English didactics. Research like this can also help provide a deeper understanding of why different teachers choose different teaching approaches and strategies. Since there is no common consensus on how grammar should be taught or which approach is most effective, teachers teach the subject matter differently in different schools and grades. Knowledge of different approaches, strategies, and teachers' beliefs and practices, is crucial to give pupils an optimal language learning experience.

It was previously stated that lower secondary pupils in Norway receive approximately 75 hours of English lessons from 8th to 10th grade (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2019). In an article by Lightbown and Spada, it is stated that to reach intermediate levels of proficiency in an L2 for a closely related language, it takes around 600 hours of classroom instruction (Lightbown & Spada, 2020, p. 423). These findings were related to a context of intensive instruction but can be assumed to apply to regular schooling as well. With these numbers in mind, it is evident that pupils in Norwegian schools do not have a substantial amount of English teaching. Thus, it is exceedingly important to consider what teachers spend time on in the English classroom, and how they teach.

The rise of social media has also led to an increase in exposure to the English subject, especially between children and adolescents. Teens listen to and write English more than ever today, which consequently improves their language proficiency immensely. With this being said, the need for competent English teachers is great as the subject has never been more principal than now. With the massive change in society that has happened and still is happening, it is important to be informed, understand and research how teachers employ and adapt their teaching practices to their group of pupils in development. By comparing current beliefs and methods to teaching strategies to previous trends and methods, one can gain an understanding of how and why education has developed and changed the way it has today.

5.6 Limitations and Future Research

The present research study presents findings from a sample of English teachers in Norway and their methods, attitudes, and opinions on grammar teaching. The findings help provide a picture of how teachers teach the topic of grammar and what approaches they find most effective in their respective classrooms. What this study does not present, however, is observation of these approaches and how they truly work in the classrooms. Because of this, one can never know exactly if what the participants in this study state and express is the objective truth. There might in addition be aspects of teaching that constrain teachers from acting according to their beliefs, for instance, a lack of resources or a challenging group of pupils.

As stated before, the participants may have been influenced by the formulations of questions and by the different answer alternatives. In addition, as explained above, the invitation to participate in such a project may have attracted teachers who enjoy teaching grammar, which may have influenced the results. These factors are important to ruminate about when considering the quality and trustworthiness of the results. Something that also could have

influenced the answers from both the interviewees and the respondents, is what textbook they utilize in their subject. Different subject textbooks provide different representations of grammar, and this representation might influence how teachers teach grammar in their classes. If their textbooks include grammar consistently throughout the chapters, it might be easier for teachers to implement grammar in class. On the other hand, if the textbook does not cover grammar in a good manner, this might make it difficult for the teacher to implement.

Concerning the two research methods utilized in this study, there are a few implications that are important to mention. First, the questions should have been formulated more objectively, as some of the questions might have instigated certain answers. For the questionnaire, the questions were not presented in a thematic order. This made the analysis for the present thesis difficult and unstructured. Some questions included several statements that the respondents had to decide their degree of agreement on. For future research it would have been better to only include one statement per question, to simplify the analysis and concreteness of the question. Also, some questions in the questionnaire were perhaps too ambiguous in their formulation. This might have led some respondents to not understand what the question asked for, as it is important to be precise and understandable when formulating questions.

For future research, a more extensive study with observation of teachers' practices would help provide a clear representation of the effects of different teaching approaches, and how they play in comparison to each other. In addition, research on pupils' opinions and performance on different grammar teaching approaches would complement a research study like the present one. The present study only provides a limited collection of results from how teachers themselves experience their practices, which in some cases can deviate from their actual practices. Therefore, this study contains limitations and potential for improved implementation which includes additional perspectives from for instance classroom observation and pupils' performance. It is important to explore teachers' views and opinions on specific topics nonetheless, to gain an insight into why teachers operate the way they do and their reasoning for it. However, since this study does not contain field investigations as well, one can only consider their words and reflections.

6 Conclusion: Summary of Findings

The present research study wanted to explore the current status of grammar teaching in the English subject in Norwegian schools, with a focus on teachers' attitudes, opinions, and practices. This topic is underexplored in a Norwegian context. Therefore, it is important to establish knowledge and information about this, to develop the field of grammar instruction potentially further in schools. There are, as stated, no guidelines or methods established for grammar teaching in the national curriculum for English. This was however provided in older curriculums, which presumably meant that most teachers employed these methods in classrooms. With no common consensus on how grammar should be taught today, teachers employ different methods, approaches, and teaching strategies in the classroom. To be able to comprehend the effect of grammar teaching and what methods have the most effect, researching what approaches teachers use today is important.

The following RQs were explored in this thesis:

RQ 1. How do English teachers in Norway currently teach grammar, and what approaches do they employ when teaching?

1.1 Do they teach grammar implicitly or explicitly?

1.2 Do they favor a traditional approach, a purely communicative approach, or a combination of both?

RQ 2. What opinions and attitudes do English teachers in Norway currently have regarding grammar instruction?

2.1 Do they believe grammar teaching is important?

2.2 Do they find it challenging to teach grammar?

To answer RQ 1.1, the majority of participants stated that they do not prefer explicit grammar teaching, and rather implement grammar in class when needed implicitly. However, some teachers do believe some explicit teaching is necessary, especially when pupils are younger. Almost 40% of the respondents in the questionnaire claimed that they have to explain grammar rules for pupils to understand them. Even though most participants employ an implicit approach, there is evidence in this study that some teachers teach grammar explicitly. It seems that teachers include explicit teaching specifically when pupils struggle with certain grammatical aspects.

To answer RQ 1.2, the participants in the present study evidently favor a communicative approach to grammar teaching. It seems that a majority of the teachers believe that communication and cooperation are most important in the English subject, and that grammar is integrated as a tool for communication and correctness. Especially Candidate 2 in the interviews does not believe in traditional grammar teaching and a majority of the respondents in the questionnaire also favor a communicative approach to language learning. However, in the questionnaire, a majority of the respondents also stated that they believe a combination of a traditional and communicative approach is effective. A combination of the two approaches might include teaching explicit grammar only in certain situations.

To answer RQ2.1, the vast majority of participants in this study claimed that grammar teaching is an important part of the English subject and that it is most important in younger grades. Both in the present study and in Askland (2020), participants state that grammar is an important tool for communication and meaning-making, which relates to a focus on meaning approach or a communicative approach to language learning. These findings indicate that grammar is not viewed as the main object of study in the subject, but rather as a tool for comprehension and correctness. This is presumably because, as the candidates in the interviews discussed, pupils are more knowledgeable of the language today because of the major exposure to English in their everyday lives. Perhaps teachers find that grammar is not the main concern in Norwegian classrooms today.

The study conducted by Watson (2012) found that English teachers in England generally find grammar teaching challenging and unmotivating. To answer RQ 2.2, the candidates in the present study also explained that grammar teaching can at times be challenging, and at times they can be uncertain about their own knowledge. However, a majority of the respondents in the questionnaire disagreed with finding grammar teaching challenging and to feeling uncertain when teaching. These findings indicate that the teachers in this study do not find grammar teaching challenging and they do not feel uncertain when teaching it, most of the time.

Language learning is one of the core elements in the curriculum of English, and even though the word grammar is not explicitly mentioned in the curriculum, there are aspects of it included. How to teach grammar, however, is not mentioned in the curriculum, and the findings from this study help explore how English teachers in Norway teach it and what they think about the topic. These findings suggest that English teachers in Norway today highlight grammar and grammar teaching less than it was done years ago. A traditional approach to grammar teaching with

explicit attention to form and structure seems to be uncommon today, as communication, corporation, interaction, and meaning-making seem to be the main focal points of English language learning currently. This is in line with how the English language has developed from being a foreign language that needed explicit focus on grammar and structures, to be a world language that pupils utilize constantly, are proficient in, and are exposed to almost daily.


There are still major knowledge gaps in research on English teachers' practices when it comes to grammar teaching in Norway. One important question that has not been answered in this thesis is "What approach(es) to grammar teaching is most effective when it comes to pupils' knowledge and development in the subject?". More extensive research on the field of grammar instruction in school will provide a deeper understanding of how the need for traditional and explicit grammar instruction has developed throughout the years. It can also inform teaching practices and didactics and provide future teachers and practicing teachers with valuable information on different methods for, ways of, and experiences in implementing grammar in Norwegian schools today. All in all, language and grammar teaching have and will be in constant development, as the importance of English in schools and society in general, is increasing.

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Appendix 1: Approval from SIKT

Norsk ▾ Hannah S. Larsen ▾

[Meldeskjema](#) / [Engelsklæreres meninger og metoder om grammatikkundervisning i skolen - maste...](#) / [Vurdering](#)

Vurdering av behandling av personopplysninger

Skriv ut 17.10.2022 ▾

Referansenummer 975452	Vurderingstype Standard	Dato 17.10.2022
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Prosjektittel
Engelsklæreres meninger og metoder om grammatikkundervisning i skolen - mastergrad i Engelsk ved lektorutdanningen 8-13

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
UiT Norges Arktiske Universitet / Fakultet for humaniora, samfunnsvitenskap og lærerutdanning / Institutt for språk og kultur

Prosjektansvarlig
Natalia Mitrofanova

Student
Hannah Sigrød Larsen

Prosjektperiode
22.08.2022 - 16.05.2023


Kategorier personopplysninger
Alminnelige

Lovlig grunnlag
Samtykke (Personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a)

Behandlingen av personopplysningene er lovlig så fremt den gjennomføres som oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. Det lovlige grunnlaget gjelder til 16.05.2023.

[Meldeskjema](#)

Kommentar
OM VURDERINGEN
Personverntjenester har en avtale med institusjonen du forsker eller studerer ved. Denne avtalen innebærer at vi skal gi deg råd slik at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet ditt er lovlig etter personvernregelverket.

 Chat med hverdager

Personverntjenester har nå vurdert den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at behandlingen er lovlig, hvis den gjennomføres slik den er beskrevet i meldeskjemaet med dialog og vedlegg.

VIKTIG INFORMASJON TIL DEG

Du må lagre, sende og sikre dataene i tråd med retningslinjene til din institusjon. Dette betyr at du må bruke leverandører for spørreskjema, skylagring, videosamtale o.l. som institusjonen din har avtale med. Vi gir generelle råd rundt dette, men det er institusjonens egne retningslinjer for informasjonssikkerhet som gjelder.

TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET

Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til den datoen som er oppgitt i meldeskjemaet.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG

Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake.

Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER

Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Personverntjenester vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER



- formalsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikk, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lenger enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

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Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1 f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemalieferandør, skylagring eller videosamtale) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde:
<https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema>

Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Personverntjenester vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Appendix 2: Consent Form and Information Letter

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet:

” Mastergradsoppgave i Engelsk – lektor 8.13. English teacher’s views and methods for grammar instruction in lower secondary school”

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke hvordan engelsklærere i Norge ser på og driver grammatikkundervisning i ungdomsskolen. Prosjektet ønsker også å sette lys på ulike metoder, synspunkter, og holdninger til grammatikkundervisning og på grammatikk i læreplanen i Engelsk. I dette skrivet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Prosjektet er en masteroppgave i Engelsk, på lektorutdanningen 8-13 ved UiT. I prosjektet vil jeg intervju et utvalg av engelsklærere fra ulike ungdomsskoler i Troms. Intervjuet vil inneholde spørsmål som vil sette lys på hva grammatikkundervisning er og ulike læreres meninger, holdninger og metoder til grammatikkundervisning i ungdomsskolen.

Noen av forskningsspørsmålene prosjektet ønsker å besvare er:

- Hvordan definerer engelsklærere i Norge grammatikkundervisning, og mener de grammatikkundervisning er viktig i dag?
- Hvordan gjennomfører engelsklærere i Norge grammatikkundervisning i klasserommet etter den nye læreplanen LK20?
- Har grammatikkundervisningen forandret seg, og er det mer eller mindre utfordrende å implementere grammatikk i undervisningen etter LK20?
- Bør engelsklærere undervise i grammatikk på en implisitt eller eksplisitt måte?
- Hvilke holdninger og metoder har engelsklærere i Norge til grammatikkundervisning i dag, og på hvilke måter foregår grammatikkundervisningen i klasserommet?

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

UiT – Norges arktiske universitet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Jeg ønsker å intervju et utvalg av engelsklærere på ungdomstrinnet, med variasjoner i kjønn, alder og erfaring. Du får spørsmål om å delta fordi du er utdannet lærer eller lektor og underviser i engelsk på ungdomstrinnet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Metoden som brukes i dette forskningsopplegget er intervju. Hvis du ønsker å delta vil du stille opp til en intervjurunde med meg, der jeg spør deg en rekke spørsmål om tema. Spørsmålene som blir stilt handler om din praksis og dine metoder som engelsklærer, med spesielt fokus på grammatikkundervisning. Spørsmål som kan bli tatt opp er:

- Underviser du rene, eksplisitte grammatikk økter, eller legger du opp til at grammatikken skal integreres implisitt i øker med fokus på f.eks. litteratur eller kultur?
- I hvor stor grad er grammatikktimene dine lærerstyrt eller elevstyrt?
- Er det lettere å forstå og jobbe med kompetansemålene i den nye læreplan enn den gamle?

Intervjuet vil foregå enten på engelsk eller norsk. Det er opp til deg som intervjues å vurdere hvilket språk som er mest hensiktsmessig å bruke for å kommunisere tankene dine på en tydelig måte.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg om du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene jeg har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Jeg behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Opplysninger vil registreres gjennom notater og lydopptak. Sensitive personopplysninger vil ikke bli inkludert i registreringen, foruten yrke og mengde erfaring. Opplysninger som kan bli publisert i oppgaven er svar på intervju spørsmål og diskusjoner rundt tema. Det er bare jeg, studenten, med veileder som vil ha tilgang til opplysninger fra intervjuene, og eventuell identifiserbar informasjon vil anonymiseres i den ferdige masteroppgaven. Opplysninger og øvrig data vil bli slettet når forskningsprosjektet er ferdigstilt.

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes 16.mai 2023. Etter prosjektslutt vil innsamlet data, som lydopptak fra intervju bli anonymisert, helt til oppgaven er godkjent til utgangen av 2023.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra UiT har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å vite mer om eller benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med en av mine veiledere:

Veileder 1 Natalia Mitrofanova

Telefonnummer: 777644230

Epost adresse. Natalia.mitrofanova@uit.no

Veileder 2 Kristin Killie

Telefonnummer:777660467

Epost adresse: kristin.killie@uit.no

Du kan også kontakte meg for spørsmål om studien eller intervjuet direkte på 92279923 eller epost hla071@uit.no

Vårt personvernombud: Joakim Bakkevold, personvernombud@uit.no, 776 46 322 og 976 915 78

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen

Hannah Sigrid Larsen

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet [*sett inn tittel*], og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

å delta i intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix 3: Interview Guide in English

Background

1. Which grades do you teach?
2. Do you have a formal teacher's education?
3. Is English your main subject in school?
4. How long have you worked as an English teacher?
5. Was there a focus on grammar teaching during your teacher's education?
6. Has the focus, or lack of focus during your education affected your views on grammar now as a teacher?

Grammar and grammar teaching

7. What is grammar in the English subject for you? How would you define it?
8. To what degree do you think grammar is central in the English subject?
9. Do you think it is easy to include grammar teaching in English class? Why, why not?
10. Do you think it is important for pupils to learn about grammar and grammar rules?
11. Do you think the pupils think it is important to learn grammar and grammar rules?
12. Do you think teaching grammar is as important as other topics in the English subject?
13. Does your school have textbooks in the subject? If yes, how much do you use the textbook in your class?
14. If yes, do you think the textbook covers grammar well?
15. Do you think the new national curriculum in English is clear and easy to follow?
16. If you have experience with older curriculums, what do you think is new in the new one? Is it easier or harder to follow than the older ones?
17. How do you think the focus on grammar in the curriculum is?
18. Do you feel like you get to execute your ideas of grammar teaching in your workplace?
19. Do teachers at your workplace ever plan grammar teaching together, and do you talk about what grammar teaching should include?
20. Do you think there should be more or less grammar teaching in the English subject?

Methods and Practice

21. Do you teach grammar in its own, explicit classes or do you implement grammar when teaching other topics like literature or culture?
22. Do you think grammar teaching should be teacher-centered or student-centered?

23. If or when you teach grammar and grammar rules, do you have to explain the rules (like subject-verb-agreement or word order, tenses) for the students, or do you feel like the students learn the rules themselves through enough input?
24. Do you teach the different word classes?
25. Do you teach subject-verb-agreement?
26. How do you decide or find out what the students need to learn when it comes to grammar?
(Learners needs)
27. Do you think it is important for students to drill grammar rules?
28. Do you think it is important to correct students' grammatical mistakes both written and oral? Why, why not?
29. Do you think it is important to try to prevent students from repeatedly making the same grammatical mistakes? How do you work to do it?

If the candidate says YES to explicit grammar teaching:

30. Could you try to explain in your own words how you teach grammar?

31. Why have you chosen the methods you use?

32. Do you always introduce a grammar topic by explaining the most important rules, or do you let your students find out the rules by themselves?
33. What types of grammar tasks do your students work with? (Fill in, point out, translate, individual work, group work, games, song lyrics, etc.)
34. Are the students active in the grammar classes?
35. Are your classes mostly teacher-led or student-led?
36. Do you think it is important that the students communicate during the grammar lessons?
37. Do your students show understanding and engagement in grammar lessons?
38. Do you see that the students utilize the knowledge they acquire in grammar lessons, in oral and written assignments?
39. What teaching activities or strategies do you use in your grammar lessons?

If the candidate says YES to implicit grammar teaching:

40. Could you try to explain in your own words how you teach grammar?

41. Why have you chosen the methods you use?

42. In what ways, or how, do you implement grammar teaching in English classes about for instance literature or culture?
43. How do you assess the students' grammar knowledge?

44. Do you believe that students do not need to be explicitly taught grammar? Why?

Attitudes and Beliefs

45. Do you think it is challenging to teach grammar? If so, what is challenging?

46. Do you at times feel uncertain or insecure about your knowledge when teaching grammar?

47. What do you feel is the biggest challenge when teaching grammar in lower secondary school?

48. Have the challenges changed during your time as a teacher?

49. Has your view on the importance of grammar changed during your time as a teacher?

50. Is there something that you feel prevents you from teaching as much or the grammar you want to teach?

51. Are there some parts of grammar you chose to not teach?

52. Some research on grammar teaching from the 80s and 90s shows that grammar instruction does not affect students' competence in both grammar and communication. Is this in line with your views on grammar instruction? do you agree with this?

53. Do you think traditional grammar teaching with a focus on form and rules is the most effective, or a communicative approach with a focus on communication and meaning?

54. There have been and still are disagreements about how grammar is taught most effectively. Traditional vs. communicative strategies. Why do you think the views on grammar teaching have changed over the years?

55. Do you think students can learn grammar merely through exposure to the target language, and that explanation of grammar rules is unnecessary?

56. Is there something about your grammar teaching that you want to change?

57. Is there something else you want to add or comment on that we have not talked about?

Appendix 4: Interview Guide in Norwegian

Bakgrunn

1. Hvilket trinn jobber du på?
2. Har du formell utdanning som lærer, eller innen pedagogikk?
3. Har du engelsk som ditt hovedfag?
4. Hvor lenge har du undervist i engelsk?
5. Var det stort fokus på grammatikkundervisning der du tok din utdanning som engelsklærer?
6. Har fokuset på grammatikk i din utdanning påvirket ditt syn på grammatikk nå som lærer?

Grammatikk og grammatikkundervisning.

7. Hva er grammatikk i engelskfaget for deg? Hva legger du i grammatikkundervisning?
8. I hvor stor grad synes du at grammatikk er sentralt i engelskfaget?
9. Synes du det er lett å inkludere grammatikkundervisning i engelsktimene? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
10. Synes du det er viktig at elevene lærer grammatikkregler i engelsk?
11. Tror du elevene synes det er viktig med grammatikkundervisning?
12. Synes du det er like viktig å undervise i grammatikk som i de andre områdene i engelskfaget?
13. Har din skole lærebøker i Engelsk? Hvis ja, i hvilken grad bruker du dem i engelsktimene?
14. Hvis ja: synes du læreboka i Engelsk du/dere bruker på skolen dekker grammatikkundervisning på en bra måte?
15. Synes du den nye læreplanen i engelsk er tydelig og lett og følge?
16. Hvis du har erfaringer med eldre læreplaner, hva synes du er nytt med den nye? Er den lettere eller vanskeligere å jobbe med?
17. Hvordan synes du fokuset på grammatikk i læreplanen er?
18. Føler du at du får gjennomført dine ideer om grammatikkundervisning på din skole?
19. Planlegger engelsklærere på din skole grammatikkundervisning sammen og snakker dere om hvordan undervisningen bør foregå?
20. Synes du det bør være mer eller mindre grammatikkundervisning i engelskfaget?

Metoder og praksis

21. Underviser du rene, eksplisitte grammatikk øker, eller legger du opp til at grammatikken skal integreres implisitt i øker med fokus på f.eks. litteratur eller kultur?

22. Synes du grammatikkundervisning bør være lærerstyrt eller elevstyrt?
23. Hvis/når du underviser i grammatikk og grammatikkregler, må du forklare reglene (som f.eks. subject-verb-agreement, word order, gradbøying) for elevene, eller føler du at elevene tar til seg reglene selv gjennom nok input? (gjennom f.eks. arbeid med tekstforståelse eller skriving)
24. Underviser du i de ulike ordklassene, substantiv, verb, adjektiv osv?
25. Underviser du i samsvarbøying, altså subject-verb agreement som he is, they are, you are, everybody is?
26. Hvordan bestemmer du deg eller finner ut av hva elevene trenger å lære i forhold til grammatikk? «learners' needs»
27. Synes du det er viktig for elevene å pugge grammatikkregler?
28. Synes du det er viktig å fokusere på å rette grammatiske feil hos elever? Hvorfor, hvorfor ikke?
29. Tenker du at det er viktig å forsøke å forhindre at elevene legger seg uvaner i form av visse typer grammatiske feil? Hvordan jobber du med å forhindre at dette skjer?

Spørsmål hvis lærer sier JA til eksplisitte grammatikktimer:

Utgangspunkt for diskusjon. Andre spørsmål blir tillegg om lærer ikke svarer på dette.

30. Kan du prøve å forklare med egne ord hvordan du underviser i grammatikk.
31. Hvorfor har du valgt de metodene du har valgt?
32. Introduserer du alltid et grammatikkemne ved å forklare hovedreglene, eller lar du noen ganger elevene finne frem til reglene selv?
33. Hvilke typer grammatikkoppgaver gjør elevene dine? (Fyll inn/strek ut-oppgaver, oversettelse, individuelt arbeid, gruppearbeid, lekbaserte oppgaver, oppgaver med bruk av musikk og sangtekster)
34. Er elevene aktive i grammatikktimene?
35. I hvor stor grad er grammatikktimene dine lærerstyrt eller elevstyrt?
36. Synes du det er viktig at elevene kommuniserer mye muntlig i grammatikktimene?
37. Viser elevene dine forståelse og engasjement i timene med ren grammatikk?
38. Ser du at elevene bruker kunnskapen de tilegner seg fra grammatikktimene i muntlige og skriftlige oppgaver?
39. Hvilke læringsaktiviteter bruker du i grammatikktimene dine?

Spørsmål hvis lærer sier JA til implisitte grammatikktimer:

Utgangspunkt for diskusjon. Andre spørsmål er tillegg hvis lærer ikke svarer på det.

40. Kan du prøve å forklare med egne ord hvordan du underviser i grammatikk.

41. Hvorfor har du valgt de metodene du har valgt?

42. På hvilken måte inkluderer du engelsk grammatikk i engelsktimer om f.eks. litteratur eller kultur?

43. Hvordan vurderer du elevenes grammatikk kunnskaper?

44. Mener du at elever ikke trenger eksplisitt opplæring i grammatikk på engelsk?

Holdninger til grammatikk

45. Synes du det er utfordrende å undervise i grammatikk?

46. Føler du deg noen ganger usikker på din kunnskap i grammatikk når du underviser?

47. Hva føler du er de største utfordringene med å lære vekk grammatikk på ungdomsskolen?

48. Har utfordringene forandret seg i løpet av årene du har jobbet som lærer?

49. Har ditt syn på viktigheten av grammatikkundervisning endret seg i løpet av din karriere?

50. Er det noe du føler forhindrer deg i å lære vekk så mye eller den grammatikken du ønsker?

51. Er det noe grammatikk du velger å ikke undervise i? Hvorfor?

52. Studier på grammatikkundervisning fra 80 og 90 tallet sier at grammatikkundervisning ikke har noe effekt på elevers kompetanse innenfor kommunikasjon eller grammatikk. Er du enig i dette?

53. Synes du tradisjonell grammatikkundervisning med fokus på form og regler er mest effektiv, eller undervisning med fokus på kommunikasjon og mening? Focus on form and focus on meaning. (Bør grammatikkundervisning fokusere på å kommunisere eller lære seg regler?)

54. Det er mye uenigheter om hvordan grammatikk bør undervises i. Hva tror du er en viktig faktor i at synet på grammatikkundervisning har forandret seg gjennom årene? Tradisjonell vs. Kommunikativ undervisning

55. Trur du elever kan lære grammatikk bare gjennom eksponering av språket, og at forklaring av grammatikkregler ikke er nødvendig?

56. Kunne du tenke deg å endre noe i forhold til din engelskundervisning?

57. Til slutt, er det noe mer du ønsker å kommentere på som vi ikke har vært innom?

Appendix 5: Questionnaire

Obligatoriske felt er merket med stjerne *

1. Har du formell utdanning som lærer? *

Ja

Nei

2. Har du engelsk som et av dine undervisningsfag? *

Ja

Nei

3. Hvilken type skole jobber du på som lærer nå? *

Barneskole

Ungdomsskole

Videregående skole

Annet

4. Hvor mange år med erfaring har du som engelsklærer? *

0-5 år

5-10 år

10-15 år

15-20 år

Mer enn 20 år

5. Hva er grammatikk i engelskfaget for deg?

Beskriv med egne ord, i korte trekk. Bruk enten stikkord eller hele setninger.

6. Hvor ofte underviser du i grammatikk i engelsk?

Ofte, opp til flere ganger i uka

En eller to ganger i uka

Månedlig

Sjelden

Aldri

7. Hvor enig er du i følgende påstand om grammatikkundervisning?

Jeg underviser i rene, eksplisitte timer med grammatikk i engelskfaget.

(Dette betyr at du setter av egne hele timer, ukentlig eller månedlig i engelskfaget, til grammatikk eller arbeid relatert til grammatikk).

- Svært enig
- Enig
- Verken enig eller uenig
- Uenig
- Svært uenig
- Ingen formening

8. Hvor enig er du i følgende påstand om grammatikkundervisning?

Jeg implementerer grammatikkundervisning implisitt inn i timer jeg underviser om andre temaer.

(Dette betyr at grammatikk ikke er fokuset i hele timer, men at det blir inkludert inn i timer der du underviser i andre temaer).

- Svært enig
- Enig
- Verken enig eller uenig
- Uenig
- Svært uenig
- Ingen formening

9. Jeg synes det er utfordrende å undervise i grammatikk i engelskfaget.

- Svært enig
- Enig
- Verken enig eller uenig
- Uenig
- Svært uenig
- Ingen formening

10. Synes du det er viktig at elever får grammatikkundervisning i Engelsk på skolen?

Ikke viktig

Veldig viktig



Verdi



11. Jeg føler meg ofte usikker på egen kunnskap når jeg underviser i grammatikk.

Svært enig

Enig

Verken enig eller uenig

Uenig

Svært uenig

Ingen formening

12. I hvilken grad er du enig i følgende påstand?

	Svært enig	Enig	Verken enig eller uenig	Uenig	Svært uenig	Ingen formening
Jeg må alltid forklare grammatikkregler for elevene for at de skal forstå dem.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elevene tar til seg grammatikkregler gjennom nok input og gjennom arbeid med engelskfaget.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Elevene trenger ikke lære seg grammatikkregler.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Fokuserer du på å rette grammatiske feil hos elever i arbeid de gjør, både skriftlig og muntlig?

Ja, alltid

Ofte

Noen ganger

Sjelden

Aldri

14. I hvilken grad er du enig i følgende påstand:

Svært enig Enig Verken enig eller uenig Uenig Svært uenig Ingen for-
mening

Jeg synes at tradisjonell grammatikkundervisning med fokus på form og regler er effektiv.

Jeg synes at grammatikkundervisning med fokus på kommunikasjon og mening er effektiv.

Jeg synes at grammatikkundervisning bør ha et fokus på både form/regler og kommunikasjon/mening.

15. Har du noen kommentarer til noen av spørsmålene eller rundt tema generelt?

