A Study of the Teaching and Learning of English Grammar with Special Reference to the Foundation Course in the Norwegian Senior High School

by

Tony Burner

A Thesis Presented to

The Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages

The University of Oslo

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the MA degree

Fall Term 2005

List of abbreviations

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
DM	Direct Method
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
GTM	Grammar-Translation Method
iO	Indirect Object
LAD	Language Acquisition Device
LAP	Lektor- og adjunktprogrammet
LDOCE	*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
L1	First language/Mother tongue
L2	Second language (practically any language learnt after L1)
L76	*Læreplan for videregående skole,* 1976
M74	*Mønsterplan for grunnskolen,* 1974
M87	*Mønsterplan for grunnskolen,* 1987
NP	Noun phrase
O	Direct object
PPU	Praktisk-Pedagogisk Utdanning
R94	Reform '94 (*Læreplan for videregående opplæring*, 1994)
S	Subject
SFG	Systemic Functional Grammar
TGG	Transformational Generative Grammar
UG	Universal Grammar
V	Verb
VP	Verb phrase
E	English
N	Norwegian

List of figures

List of tables

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Background

Academic work like writing a thesis is characterized by focusing on one or more fundamental research questions which the researcher is curious about and thus wants to explore. However, before embarking on such work, one has to choose materials (either existing or non-existing) and methods (qualitative, quantitative, or a combination), and in addition become updated on the "state of the art" (i.e. the theoretical part). The present work is of course no exception. In the following, we will turn to the purpose and motivation of writing this thesis.

When I look back at my years in senior high school, I cannot recall that I learned much, if any, grammar during English lessons. But I can remember, and have experienced through working at lower levels, that grammar has a much more central role there than at the senior high level, both as regards the textbooks and in the teaching. Why is that? An answer might be that it is sufficient to teach grammar only at elementary levels, even though the assertion is clearly controversial. One may wonder why it is that English differs from German and French as regards the role of grammar; even though you study German or French three years before senior high, you continue learning a lot of explicit grammar.[1] Another comparison can be made to Norwegian as a second language, where adult foreigners in Norway continue learning Norwegian grammar even at the highest levels. One may argue that Norwegians are much more proficient in English than in any other foreign language, partly for historical reasons, partly because of the tremendous input (especially from the media), and partly because of Norwegians' attitude towards English and the English-speaking world; some people assert that English in Norway is approaching the status of a second language.[2]

However, knowing a language is not the same as *knowing about* a language; indeed, studying English at university level requires knowing *about* English.[3] Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, it is the parts of the English course that have to do with grammar which students are least confident about at higher levels.

It is thus my assumption that it is as important for 16-year-old Norwegians to continue learning about English as it is for them to study civilization and literary texts. Paradoxically, this is also what senior high school teachers whom I have informally talked to say; some of them put aside some teaching time for grammar, but miss general guidelines, both concerning practical issues such as when, how, and if they should devote time to grammar teaching, and theoretical issues concerning for example the curriculum and the textbooks. In addition, as indicated above, it is my assumption that there is little or no systematic grammar teaching in the Norwegian senior high school.

The current situation as regards the teaching and learning of grammar in senior high may be described as analogous to a person driving a car. You might have had no problems in learning how to drive, you may have become a fabulous driver, and in fact have your own car which you use when driving to and from work every day. But what if your car suddenly stops one day while you are on your way to work? Or what if you actually intend to get a job as a long-distance driver and you are expected to have some knowledge of the vehicle you drive so that you can solve any possible problems on the road? I believe this is in many cases what today's 16-year-olds, venturing on their path to the future, will experience, whether they merely desire to study English, or want to make use of what they have learnt in professions like teacher, translator, author and editor.

Even though the main concern of this thesis is the foundation course, it does not necessarily mean that the teaching of grammar that precedes senior high, i.e. elementary and junior high, is uncontroversial. However, what is certain is that there is a good deal of concentration on explicit grammar at all levels preceding senior high and that this more or less vanishes in the foundation course; "more or less" because at some few senior high schools you can find separate grammar books, while at others some of the teachers make sure to concentrate explicitly on grammar despite the absence of a grammar book, and yet at most high schools you neither find a separate grammar book nor teachers explicitly teaching grammar. Secondly, at all levels of education, mostly amongst the learners,[4] there has developed an unfortunate tradition of considering grammar to be something dull, old-fashioned, useless, and meaningless (unless in context!).

I have always been interested in grammar, particularly the teaching and learning of it; thus it was not difficult to choose a suitable topic to write about. Nevertheless, I had to narrow down the study, which I do by focusing on one specific level of education. The choice of the senior high level is mostly due to my interest in this level (and my future place of work), and the main reason for choosing the foundation course is because it is the last year where English is obligatory and thus concerns all learners without exception.

1.2   Aim

It is common to talk about the grammar of a language, but what do we actually mean by grammar? Are there different types of grammar? How do we teach grammar today, and why? These and other related questions will be addressed in this thesis. In addition, for a closer investigation of the current status of the teaching of grammar, we

will aim to find out more closely to what extent grammar plays a role in the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in the General studies' foundation course ("grunnkurs allmennfag"). In the syllabus from 1994 (R94), it is said explicitly that linguistic competence and metalanguage should be taught to the learners:

> Knowing about language and its use, about communication and language learning … (26)

> [The learner should] … acquire sufficient knowledge about the language as a system to be able to understand grammatical explanations and correct errors (26)

The writers of the syllabus also state that the learners' sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, sociocultural, and social competence are to be assessed. Are the aims set in the syllabus just some beautiful words and phrases put together, or are they serious guidelines for the teaching of EFL?

As the theoretical platform of the thesis, we will scrutinize the term grammar, its pedagogical applications, and the way it has been taught according to various influential teaching methods. Studying the grammar sections in learners' textbooks may lead us one step further in our investigation, and is thus one of the aims of this thesis. One of my professors regularly says that "it is a shame that we do not listen more to the teachers", which is very true, and thus one whole chapter is devoted to an investigation of what the teachers say about the teaching of grammar in EFL.

The answers we come up with will naturally prove or disprove the above-made assumptions about the weak position of grammar.

1.3   Previous research

Ibsen (2004) summarizes the main findings concerning Norway of a European project titled "The assessment of pupils' skills in English in eight European countries 2002",

where attitudes to and skills in English by the end of 10th grade were examined. These are some results which might be of relevance for our purpose:

- Norwegian pupils have good receptive skills, but poor spelling skills.

- The articles *a* and *an*, the future tense, unknown words, and cloze tests caused problems.

- Not surprisingly, media (TV) is the main source of English input.

- Not surprisingly, Norwegians and Swedes did best on the tests.

Considerably more research has been done on EFL in Norway at lower levels than in high schools. To give a couple of examples from recent research, Sørensen (2002) has written a thesis on the learning strategies of pupils in connection with vocabulary learning, and Bollerud (2002) has written a thesis on how much Norwegian is used during English classes. When it comes to the high school level, Skaane (2002) has compared textbooks with syllabuses. Furthermore, Mella (1998) has considered the role of grammar in EFL in a thesis which is very relevant for the present study, and which we will become more acquainted with in the following.[5]

In the theoretical part of the thesis, Mella writes briefly about mental, descriptive, and pedagogical grammar; he emphasizes behaviorist and cognitive theories, acquisition (implicit) versus learning (explicit), and consciousness-raising. He also writes about communicative competence and various types of syllabuses. In his field investigation, Mella carried out purely quantitative research, based on questionnaires distributed to 16 different schools in two different periods (resulting in 58 forms in 1993 and 28 forms in 1998), and compared the results. The main questions he sought

an answer to were how teachers teach grammar and their attitudes towards grammar teaching. These are some of the main findings:

- The teachers were generally very experienced.

- Norwegian was the most common subject they taught besides English.

- 1993: half of the teachers used grammar books in their teaching, whereas only a third did so in 1998.

- The main reason given by those who do not use a grammar book was: they use the grammar material offered in text- and workbooks instead.

- A shift from teaching grammar in its own right to seeing it as a "tool".

- Less time spent on grammar in 1998 than in 1993.

- More "communicative" teaching in 1998 than in 1993 – less time spent on teaching grammar explicitly.

Mella (p. 82) concludes:

> It is my impression that teachers generally feel that they have little time to work with grammatical improvement in learner-language apart from traditional exercises. This is especially the case for the compulsory course in English [i.e. the foundation course]. The main focus is on vocabulary, civilization, and literature.

It is my aim to go beyond Mella's study (see the next section).

1.4 Methodology

In Part I, one type of existing material is used, namely syllabuses. The methodology conducted in the study of syllabuses is pretty straightforward: picking out parts that in some way or other have to do with grammar and examining them in relation to our purpose of study.

In contrast, the methodology used in Part II needs thorough explanation. Some of it will be done here, and some where appropriate in chapters four and five. Chapter four is about grammar in textbooks, i.e. a study of existing material. As the reader can imagine, there are a number of textbooks used in the foundation course. Thus the first challenge was to choose which books to study. To do this, I used the Internet to get an idea of which books are used at various schools in the Oslo area. (This was expected to be of help in Chapter five since it is an advantage that the teachers I talk to use some of the textbooks studied in Chapter four.) Secondly, and most importantly, I got in touch with the publishers of the textbooks (Cappelen, Gyldendal, and Aschehoug), who provided me with some helpful information. *Flying Colours*, *Passage*, *Targets*, and *Imagine* are the main books used in the foundation course. *Flying Colours* takes up approximately 10% of the market and *Passage* 40%, whereas *Targets* and *Imagine* together take up 50% of the market. Furthermore, *Troubleshooter* is a grammar book in use, albeit as far as I know only at Ullern and Nordstrand videregående in the Oslo area.

Textbook analysis could have been an MA thesis on its own. It is a huge area of study, and had thus to be narrowed down so as to fit in as part of my study and yet maintain its purpose. *Flying Colours*, *Targets*, and *Imagine* consist of textbooks and workbooks. They all refer to the workbook as an integral part of the English course. The textbooks consist almost only of texts on literature and civilization, and sometimes exercises connected to the texts. Thus the textbooks are of no relevance to our study and are excluded. In contrast, *Passage* claims to be an "all-in-one" book. The workbook that belongs to it, called *Passage to Proficiency*, is referred to as an extra booklet of activities which the learner can use to do extra grammar and vocabulary exercises. Consequently, the workbook is not included in our study. *Troubleshooter* will only be

briefly commented on since it is not widely used. To sum up, four books will be examined for their treatment of grammar: *Passage*, *Flying Colours* workbook, *Targets* workbook, and *Imagine* workbook. The second major challenge was to find a method of studying the books, a point we will return to in Chapter four.

Chapter five differs from Chapter four in that the material is non-existing, i.e. it has to be provided. We want to examine what the teachers have to say about the teaching and learning of grammar. The methodology chosen is qualitative with some quantitative elements. The main body of the investigation will be interviews between individual teachers and myself. A challenge was deciding which schools to go to and how many teachers to interview (more on this in Chapter five).

Mella's (1998) research did not include textbooks and was purely quantitative in investigating the teachers' views. Thus, by doing a study of the grammar in the textbooks mentioned above, and by physically visiting a couple of schools and talking to the English teachers, I hope to go beyond previous research to some extent.

1.5   Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of two main parts and six chapters. Part I, which I have called Theoretical Exploration, is the theoretical part of the thesis, where we will try to define "grammar". Some may find it difficult to see the exact relations between studies in grammar and the actual teaching of it in the classroom; therefore we will try to shed light on possible relations and bring them to the surface. In the second chapter of Part I, the interesting topic of why we teach grammar as we do is explored, i.e. what the legacies are when it comes to what contemporary teachers, curriculum planners and educationalists believe is the "right" method of teaching grammar. We will do this by looking back in time and considering how and why grammar has been taught the way

it has been. One important source of information on the teaching of grammar, which we will look into where appropriate, is syllabus plans.

Part II has to do with grammar in practice. Here we will deal with two practical aspects of grammar teaching and learning. The first is to scrutinize the way grammar is treated in a selection of textbooks used in the foundation course, and the second is a study of teachers' attitudes.

In the very last chapter of the thesis, a synthesis will be attempted, and we will try to provide some answers to our questions posed earlier in this chapter. Since the field we are embarking upon is wide, and since an MA thesis is only one year's work, we will also consider other possible approaches and further investigations which may be conducted in the future.

Notes

---

[1] It may seem awkward to compare German/French with English, but what I mean is the amount of time dedicated to grammar teaching, not the type of grammar teaching.

[2] In the spring of 2004, I wrote a term paper for the course ENG4105 (English in Norway) at the University of Oslo, where I compared English as a foreign language with Norwegian as a second language (including the syllabuses), and concluded that there are several similarities between the two, suggesting that English indeed is *approaching* the status of a second language in Norway, but that the process is far from completed.

[3] English "grunnfag", which after the so-called Quality Reform consists of 6 modules, has a lot of grammar on its syllabus. In fact, 3 of the modules are dedicated to grammar, phonetics and translation. Furthermore, a module called "The English Language. Awareness and Skills" was set up last year for those who need to increase their awareness of English.

[4] The term "learner" is deliberately used as much as possible in this thesis, since it implies an active agent, which I believe is crucial in the case of education (versus for example "pupil").

[5] For more information on these and other theses written since 1999 (when the cooperation on the subject EFL between the Department of British and American Studies represented by Kay Wikberg and the Department for Teacher Education and School Development represented by Aud Marit Simensen started), see the following internet site:

http://www.ils.uio.no/omenheten/publikasjoner/actadidactica/AD0301ma.pdf

PART I   THEORETICAL EXPLORATION

"För blivande lärare bör det vara självklart att koppla den deskriptiva grammatikens invecklade beskrivningar till den pedagogiska grammatikens förenklade." (Linnarud 1993: 102)

"… the profession of language teaching, like so many other professions, is far more preoccupied with where it imagines it is going than with where it actually has been." (Rutherford 1987: 30)

"It now looks as if we are in for a new swing of the pendulum … Perhaps it would not be exaggerating to speak of a new 'grammar boom' …" (Dirven 1990: 4)

Chapter 2: The concept of grammar

2.1 Types of grammar

The term grammar can be defined in many ways. You have grammar as in "mental grammar", meaning a person's subconscious grammatical system; you have grammar as in a reference book, e.g. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (Quirk et al. 1985); and you have grammar as in the "grammar of German". It is the latter type which is the usual denotation of the term. Grammar of German is, however, not unambiguous; there is a "narrow" variant, where one studies morphological and syntactical rules and principles in a language, commonly called formal grammar,[1] and a "wide" one going under the term functional grammar. Formal grammarians do not pay so much attention to meaning and context as they do to form and structures; they subject language to a bottom-up analysis, morphemes being the smallest language component they operate with, and the sentence the largest, and in between there are other levels such as word and clause. On the other hand, we have functional grammarians who deal with language in use. They regard words and sentences not as individual and independent forms, but as part of a whole, getting meaning from their surroundings (either from the rest of the language – semantics, or from the context in which they occur – pragmatics). The distinction between formal and functional aspects is furthermore applicable to the difference between theoretical linguistics[2] and applied linguistics. Another distinction often made within the concept of grammar is descriptive versus prescriptive grammars. In the former type, grammarians describe language as it is used, whilst in the latter type they lay down rules for how language should be used. Descriptive grammarians tend, in addition, to give elaborate descriptions of

grammatical features. In this thesis, we will adopt an "extended" definition of grammar, or what Leech (1994) refers to as communicative grammar, and include aspects of discourse, semantics, and pragmatics as well as syntax and morphology.[3]

2.1.1 Theoretical grammars

Allen and Widdowson (1975) write about several different types of grammars and their possible implications for language teaching. They operate with the following categories of grammar: traditional, taxonomic, phrase structure, transformational, case grammar, and Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG). What they label as traditional grammar is the linguistic studies prior to Ferdinand de Saussure's lectures in 1916,[4] which mark the birth of modern structural linguistics. In the following we will take a closer look at the other types of grammar mentioned above, with the exception of SFG, which is outlined in the next section.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a change from item-centered to structure-centered thinking of language. Words and phrases were to be meaningful only in a linguistic system. This was the start of the period called structuralism, but the name refers both to European structuralism, as represented by the Copenhagen School and the Prague School, and to the American structuralists of the 1940s and 1950s; the latter is also known as the "Bloomfieldian" period, named after Bloomfield's thoughts and ideas expressed in his book *Language* (1933). The grammar developed at this time was a result of grammarians' analysis of sentence components into systems. Fries (1952) did this, followed amongst others by Nida (1966) and Francis (1958). We can say that they "formalized" the grammar by putting it into a system, hence the name taxonomic grammar.

In phrase structure grammar, surface structures of sentences are related to their deep structures, typically illustrated by syntactic trees. The pioneering work here is Chomsky's book *Syntactic Structures* (1957). Thus, a sentence would for example consist of a noun phrase and a verb phrase,[5] and the noun phrase could further consist of a determiner and a noun (head) and the verb phrase of an auxiliary and the main verb. In this way, one can see how language is structured, which may be of pedagogical relevance. This type of grammar was extended to other aspects of language than phrases, and became known as transformational grammar (Chomsky 1965). The ideal was to analyze language as explicitly as possible, merely considering form, and thus not paying attention to functional aspects or aspects of meaning.

In case grammar, grammatical categories like subject and object are said to have various functions, depending on their semantic roles: agentive, instrumental, locative etc. The original ideas on case grammar are to be found in "The Case for Case" (1968) by Fillmore. Case grammar may be viewed as a quasi-functional theory. Halliday went much further, and developed probably the most comprehensive theory of functional grammar, which is what we will turn to in the next section.

2.1.2 Functional grammars

Functional grammars look at language in use. The most fully developed theory of functional grammar is probably Halliday's SFG. We will not attempt to, nor is it feasible to, give a complete account of SFG, but since it is a well-known theory and in addition applicable for many purposes, a brief introduction is in order. According to Allen and Widdowson (1975), Halliday does not, as opposed to transformational-generativists, distinguish between surface and deep structure; rather, all aspects of language are given equal importance. Thompson defines the aims of analysis done

according to functional grammar in this way: "… to uncover … the reasons why the speaker produces a particular wording rather than any other *in a particular context …*" (1996: 8; my emphasis). Context undoubtedly plays a crucial role in a functional analysis of texts. Halliday operates with three main functions, or metafunctions, of language, which are labeled experiential,[6] interpersonal and textual.[7] The first deals with how we experience or interpret the world around us; applying it to grammatical analysis, it is concerned with the concept of transitivity, where processes and participants are interrelated. The processes and participants distinguished in Thompson (p. 102) are given in Figure 2.1.

Process type	Core meaning	Participants
material	'doing', 'happening'	Actor, Goal
mental	'sensing':	Senser, Phenomenon
perception	'perceiving'	
cognition	'thinking'	
affection	'feeling'	
relational	'being':	
attributive	'attributing'	Carrier, Attribute
identifying	'identifying'	Identified, Identifier/ Value, Token
verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage, Target
behavioral	'behaving'	Behaver
existential	'existing'	Existent

Figure 2.1. Processes and participants

When studying Figure 2.1, we can see that through the experiential function one decides what roles the various elements in a sentence play, where the processes reflect the types of verb (e.g. *to kill* is a material process, whereas *to hear* is a mental one), and the participants reflect the types of subject and object (e.g. a subject in a sentence containing a mental process would be "senser").

The second metafunction, interpersonal, is concerned with mood (the subject and the finite verb of a clause) and modality (modal verbs and adverbs), i.e. the interaction between the sender or writer of a message and the receiver or reader. At the inter-

personal level we find out things such as to what extent a message is true, to what extent it implies the regularity of an activity, to what extent we can expect the speaker or writer to take responsibility for his/her utterance, and to what extent the activity involved is likely to occur.

The textual metafunction, as indicated by the name, has to do with pieces of text. We are then looking at how texts are organized, i.e. the combination of clauses and sentences. There are several things to bear in mind when doing discourse analysis from a Hallidayan point of view: focus, given versus new information, theme versus rheme, cohesion, and coherence. Thompson (1996: 222ff) emphasizes that SFG is particularly applicable to stylistics (analysis of discourse). However, as he points out, discourse analysis is only one way of applying SFG. Insight into grammatical concepts such as cohesion and modality can be helpful for example for educational purposes (see next section). Finally, it is important to keep in mind that the three metafunctions are not independent of each other; on the contrary, they are interdependent and shed light on one another. SFG is a brave theory in the sense that it intends to unify form and meaning, something theoretical grammars miss. The last thirty years or so have seen the growth of pragmatics, and fortunately we have come to appreciate the insight and understanding of social aspects of language (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). Moreover, corpora have enriched our understanding of language use in the last two decades, and have probably had most impact on lexicography[8] and variation studies.

2.2   Pedagogical grammars

When grammar is put to use in some way or other for practical purposes, we speak of a branch called applied linguistics; and when grammar is adopted for the purpose of teaching (didactics), it is referred to as pedagogical grammar. Pedagogical grammar

has thus as its aim to be a grammar especially designed for a particular group of learners, taking into consideration such aspects as the learners' general abilities, their age, other languages they know, their aims for learning the target language, input of the target language etc. Allen (1974) has the following to say about the process: first, the basis is laid by turning to scientific/formal grammar; secondly, this information is converted and presented for quick and efficient learning to the learners. "Converted" is noteworthy, since it captures the essence of pedagogical grammar. Hence, there does not exist one pedagogical grammar, but several types of pedagogical grammars. Corder's (1973) model of the process is illustrated in Figure 2.2 below:

| DESCRIBE (linguistics) | → | COMPARE & SELECT (error analysis & contrastive analysis) | → | ORGANIZE (syllabus) | → | PRESENT (pedagogical grammar) |
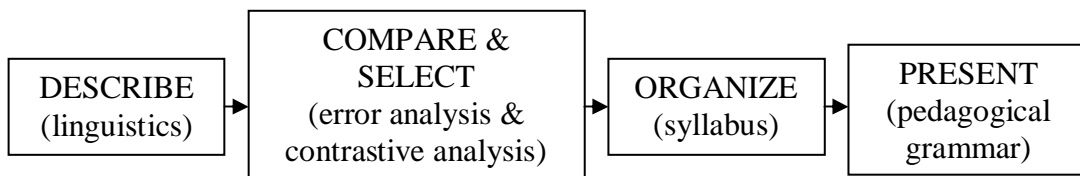
Figure 2.2. The process from pure linguistics to pedagogical grammar

The model is more or less self-explanatory. The main point is succinctly summarized by Corder: "The relation between linguistic theory and the actual materials we use for teaching in the classroom is an indirect one" (p. 143) and McTear: "The linguist's contribution [to pedagogical grammar] is more indirect" (1979: 100). Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964) make a distinction between methodics and methodology. What they name methodics is synonymous with pedagogical grammar: "a framework of organization for language teaching which relates linguistic theory to pedagogical principles and techniques" (p. 201), whereas methodology is understood as "principles and techniques of teaching, with no necessary reference to linguistics" (ibid).

In addition to linguistics, pedagogical grammar draws on other sciences, such as psycholinguistics and pedagogy, as to how languages are learnt, what role our first language (L1) plays when learning a second language (L2), what types of teaching methodologies help enhance learning as compared to others, and so on. It is for this reason that pedagogical grammar is sometimes referred to as a hybrid, or is described as eclectic in nature. In the following, we will review some types of grammars and consider their implications for language teaching, and mention a selection of works on methodics.

Supposedly, traditional grammar is not intended for use in today's schools where authenticity and communication are cardinal pedagogic values. Nevertheless, traditional grammar can be regarded as the foundation of what we know about grammar today, by applying morphological, functional, and notional aspects to words, i.e. inflection, syntactical function and denotation. Consequently, the classifications of and the terminology used in traditional grammar might play a pedagogical role after all, as stated by Allen and Widdowson (1975: 50): "The triple basis of definition may appear complicated, but in the classroom it seems to work quite well".

When we discuss the implication of various theories for language teaching, it is important to bear in mind what the aim of the teaching is. Is our aim to produce learners with native-like competence? Is it to develop fluency, as opposed to accuracy? Taxonomic grammar, with its emphasis on systematized slot-filling, encourages a methodology based on remembering by heart. Thus, it might, as stated by Allen (1974), be best if the aim of the teaching is to develop fluency.

Hubbard (1994) writes about non-transformational grammar theories and their possible implications for language teaching. He mentions three theories: relational, lexical-functional, and generalized phrase structural. Valuable insight from relational

grammar might be to see important relations between the syntactic functions (S, O, iO), linked together by the predicator (V). L1 influence is another dimension of relevance. In lexical-functional grammar, the syntactic functions (as opposed to phrases) are emphasized, but with the lexicon in mind. The learners thus learn to develop their lexical sensitivity by seeing how lexis and syntax are related. Nevertheless, Hubbard underlines the fact that a lexical-functional approach demands more grammatical knowledge, and is as a result best for advanced learners. The last type, generalized structure grammar, stresses the importance of verbs. Learners should be taught the use of verbs in addition to subcategorization, i.e. which words can occur with which (collocations). According to Hubbard, this helps learners in learning new words.

As Allen and Widdowson (1975) point out, transformational-generative[9] grammar (TGG) is intended as a model for describing competence, not performance; thus, particularly the models beyond the simple phrase structure level are not pedagogical. Still, the advanced models are good for the educating of teachers of EFL. Allen (1974) deliberately tones down the relevance of Chomsky's TGG, and expresses some uncertainty about its implications for language teaching. More important, yet debatable, is his assertion that pedagogical grammar should be non-technical. First, it is questionable how one should define "non-technical"; is the presentation of syntactic functions technical? What about phrase structure and clause constituents? Clearly, non-technicality depends on features like the learners' age, motivation and abilities. Furthermore, some research has shown that learners who have been instructed in explicit (technical) grammar teaching have advanced much more than those who were not, while other research has proved the exact opposite. Consequently, it is advisable to be cautious in asserting that pedagogical grammar should be non-technical.

In McTear (1979), aspects of SFG are considered from a pedagogical point of view. When teaching modal auxiliaries, we only tend to teach their syntactic properties, while McTear underlines the importance of teaching meaning. Consider the examples below:

1. She <u>must</u> be rich (= she is probably/as far as I know rich)

2. She <u>must</u> be on time (= she should come on time)

Whereas *must* in 1 is epistemic (modalization), 2 illustrates its root meaning (modulation), something learners should become aware of. McTear continues: "Often inaccurate equations are made with modals in other languages" (p. 107). For Norwegian learners of English, *skal* and its cognate *shall* may be problematic, since they are used differently in the two languages. Obviously, *skal* is much more frequent in Norwegian than in English, and Norwegian learners of English thus tend to overuse *shall*.[10] In addition to modality, transitivity is central in SFG. By teaching learners the concept of processes, for example that a mental process takes only a human subject, they become conscious of how the English language is organized. How detailed the teaching should be depends of course on the learners' age and abilities. SFG also has implications for the teaching of how texts are organized, i.e. cohesion in discourse. Halliday and Hasan give a comprehensive account of this matter in *Cohesion in English* (1976). Cohesion can roughly be divided into grammatical and lexical types. The main subtypes of the grammatical cohesion are reference words, ellipsis, substitution, and conjunctions. And the main types of lexical cohesion are repetition, synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, and collocations. By teaching cohesion, again adjusted with the learner group in mind, learners can more easily comprehend the gist

of a text, understand crucial relations in the text, and develop a more varied language which in turn facilitates their own text production.

Numerous studies have been carried out on how to teach grammar, particularly English grammar. Vocabulary (semantics) has undoubtedly been given most attention by researchers, followed by discourse, whereas syntax and morphology have not been dealt with so much from a pedagogical perspective. An explanation for this might be that syntax and morphology are so intricately bound to the rest of the concept of grammar (i.e. discourse, semantics, and pragmatics) that they inevitably are present in any studies of pedagogical grammar. Another reason may be that there is more disagreement, and consequently more research, when it comes to the abstract nature of meaning and its pedagogical features, in contrast to the certainty associated with purely formal elements such as learning to inflect a verb in its various tenses.

Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) and its implications for language teaching are explored in Cook (1994). In UG, the idea of principles and parameters is essential. One well-known principle is the principle of structure-dependency, claiming that a person innately knows how to syntactically order his/her utterances in the mother tongue. The pro-drop parameter is similarly well-known, and claims that languages not allowing pro-drop in addition allow non-obligatory subject and non-obligatory subject-verb inversion. For example, Spanish allows pro-drop, while English does not. Thus in English you have to say *it is raining* even though *it* is "empty", whereas in Spanish you can drop a pronoun subject. While principles are said to be universal and something we are born with, parameters are language-specific and have to be learnt. As a result, Cook claims that exposure of syntactic examples of the target language can help the particular parameter to be set. Moreover, Cook says that vocabulary learnt with a focus on syntax makes learners aware of how words behave in sentences, something

which confirms the assertion that syntax is inseparable from the learning of vocabulary.

Ooi and Kim-Seoh (1996) advise us not to consider lexis, grammar and discourse as distinct things, but urge for an integration of them in a syllabus. They also state the common belief that vocabulary learning is far from synonymous with the mere learning of the meaning of words, but rather extends to areas like collocation and semantic networks. The *General Service List of English Words* (West 1953) has been an invaluable source for teaching senses of words.[11]

Schmitt (2000) presents much good advice on how to teach vocabulary to L2 learners, based on a great deal of research. The teacher should teach forms (noun, verbs etc.) as well as usage, and s/he should teach regular affixes before irregular ones. Furthermore, focus should be put on suffixes, which in turn help learners learn new word families by guessing their meaning from context. Frequency lists are helpful in language teaching in that they provide us with knowledge about which words are the most frequent and should thus be handled well by the learners, but as Schmitt warns, such lists should be used with caution, since for example function words are very frequent, but learners must know some lexical words before using function words. Schmitt recommends the explicit focus on collocations for advanced learners, who may themselves use sources such as the Oxford *Wordsmith Tools* concordancer to study the phenomenon. In general, Schmitt advocates extensive and repeated exposure as a means of vocabulary learning, where reading is an effective activity.

What role context plays in the teaching and learning of grammar is another important pedagogical subject. Petrovitz (1997) operates with three dimensions of information: lexical (e.g. collocations), syntactic (e.g. S-V agreement), and semantic (e.g. verb tenses). Contextualization is crucial for semantic information. Petrovitz

reports on a study on verb tenses in grammar exercises without context, and concludes that learners may "… judge many acceptable sentences as incorrect" (p. 203). This suggests that teachers ought to either provide sufficient context in such exercises, or if restricted context is provided, make the learners aware of the fact that more than one answer may be correct.

For further exploration of pedagogical grammar, a selection of references are: Sharwood-Smith (1978) on future time reference, Jafapur (1976) on articles, Richards (1977) on yes/no-questions, Leach (1987) on passive voice, Edmonson et al. (1977) on verbs with specific reference to German learners of English, and Jarvis (1977) on modal auxiliaries.

2.3   Summing up

In this chapter, we have seen that the term grammar is multifaceted, and we have reviewed some grammar types, in particular Halliday's SFG which is a functional grammar. Furthermore, we have focused on what grammars have to contribute in a classroom setting. Figure 2.3 sums up the types of grammar discussed in this chapter and the relations between them.

```
┌──────────┐
│  Formal  │
│ grammars │
└──────────┘
```

```
┌────────────┐  ┌────────┐  ┌───────────┐  ┌───────────┐  ┌────────────┐
│ Morphology │  │ Syntax │  │ Discourse │  │ Semantics │  │ Pragmatics │
└────────────┘  └────────┘  └───────────┘  └───────────┘  └────────────┘
```

```
┌────────────┐
│ Functional │
│  grammars  │
└────────────┘
```

```
┌──────────────────┐
│ Psycholinguistics │
└──────────────────┘
```

```
┌──────────┐
│ Pedagogy │
└──────────┘
```

```
┌──────────────┐
│  Pedagogical │
│   grammars   │
└──────────────┘
```
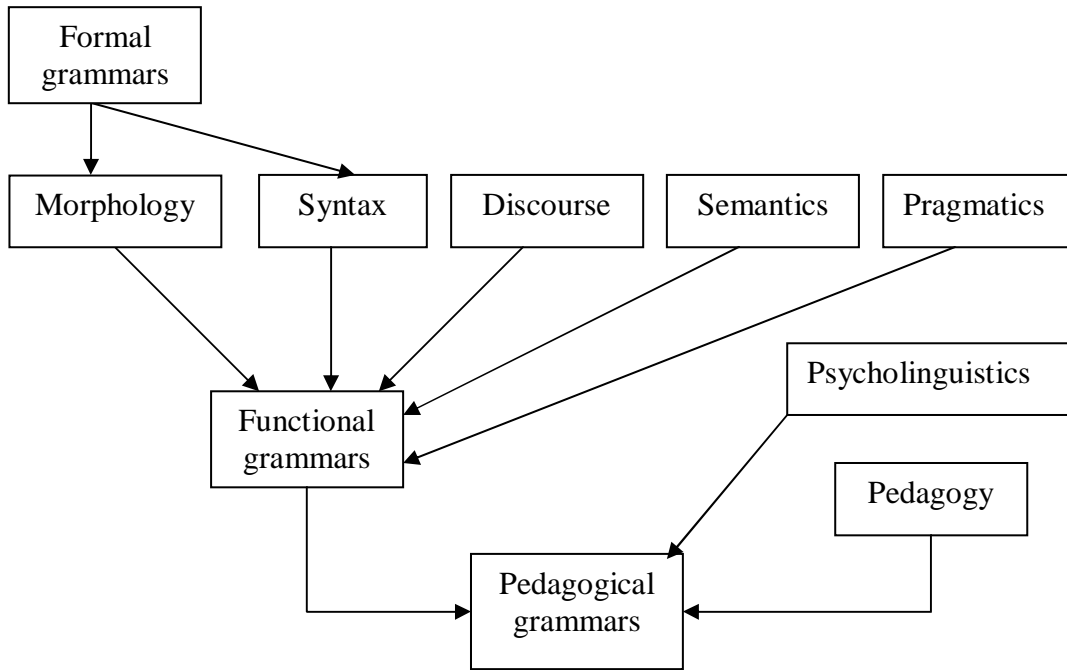
Figure 2.3. A possible way of seeing relations between formal, functional, and pedagogical grammar

In the next chapter, we will try to answer the question why grammar has been taught and learnt the way it has throughout the last century, in other words where the ideas have come from and what they meant in practice.

Notes

1 Also called scientific, or scholarly grammar.

2 Corder (1973) uses "linguistic linguistics" to refer to purely theoretical linguistics.

3 Phonology may also have been included in a definition of grammar.

4 Titled *Cours de Linguistique Générale.*

5 In fact, the primary rule of Chomsky's theory is that a sentence must consist of a noun phrase and a verb phrase to be grammatically acceptable (S → NP VP).

6 The experiential metafunction is also referred to as "ideational".

7 The textual metafunction is also referred to as "thematic".

8 *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and *Collins COBUILD English Dictionary* are two examples of corpus-based dictionaries.

9 "Generative" because one generates sentences by applying transformational theory.

10 Berit Løken, University of Oslo, has done work on modals of possibility in English and Norwegian. Such contrastive work may have important implications for teaching English to Norwegian learners.

11 A revised and updated version of the *General Service List*, where also modern terms are included, is in preparation.

Chapter 3: The teaching and learning of grammar[1]

3.1   Clearing the ground

When reading this chapter, it is crucial to bear in mind that teaching and learning are inextricably bound together, so that writing about one of them automatically involves the other. Stern (1983: 21, his emphasis) offers us the following definition: "Language teaching can be defined as *the activities which are intended to bring about language learning*."

In this chapter we will try to find out how approaches and methods have influenced the teaching and learning of grammar, which in turn sheds light on the legacy of today's English language teaching (ELT), i.e. why do we teach as we do? We will, in addition, attempt to find out where the ideas behind the approaches and methods came from and look at the criticisms they met. Finally, we will draw parallels with respect to the Norwegian school subject.

A couple of words need clarification before we can set out on our path of exploration, namely "approaches" and "methods". Richards and Rodgers (1986: 15) offer us the following definition based on Anthony (1963):

> … approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language [i.e. linguistics] and language learning [i.e. psychology] are specified; method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught, and the order in which the content will be presented …

Various theories of language and language learning may be linked together to form different approaches. A relevant example is Audiolingualism, which is based on structuralism and behaviorism, its linguistic theory and learning theory, respectively. As we saw, Anthony views method as the practice of an approach; Richards and Rodgers

(1986: 26), however, prefer to refer to the relationship of method to approach as theoretical, and the realization of method as "procedure": "… [procedure] focuses on the way a method handles the presentation, practice, and feedback phases of teaching." For our purpose, this fine distinction is superfluous, and thus the term method will encapsulate the realizations of an approach, whether theoretical as in a syllabus or practical as in the classroom.

Our point of view is clearly diachronic in this chapter, but the difficulty lies in where to draw the line, in other words where the starting point of our study should be. Since the Direct Method (DM) was the first method with a theoretical basis, it seems appropriate as a point of departure; nevertheless, the period before has been important in the history of ELT. Thus we will start with the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM).

3.2   The Grammar-Translation Method

The GTM has its origins in the late 1700s. However, the influence of the approach on ELT can be traced back to a period of approximately hundred years, from the 1840s to the 1940s, albeit it was heavily criticized as early as the 1880s. It is the rule rather than the exception that ideas about language teaching and learning do not replace each other over night, but have a tendency to coexist for some time and often the future method takes up elements of interest from the previous method.

English was taught in the same way as the classical languages Greek and Latin, but of course English as part of the European syllabuses was not accepted before the 1890s. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 5), the GTM is "… a method for which there is no theory."[2] Nonetheless, there are some typical characteristics of the GTM, some of which have survived to this day. First and foremost, abstract grammar

rules were taught deductively, i.e. the rules were presented before practical examples of the rules were given. This method is also referred to as explicit grammar teaching. Lists of words and grammar rules were typically used in the classroom. The point of departure in grammar was the sentence, whereas before the GTM the focus could be on the smaller parts of a sentence. The GTM claimed that, by focusing on the sentence, the process of language learning would be easier. Furthermore, the use of the L1 as the means of instruction was appreciated. Communication in the L2, in our case English, was in fact not a goal at all. Accuracy as opposed to fluency was the aim in language learning. Translation was emphasized, and thus L2 sentences were frequently translated into L1 sentences, and vice versa. When it came to language skills, the written skills (reading and writing) were of primary importance.

Richards and Rodgers (1986: 5) claim that the GTM is "… still widely practiced, [but] it has no advocates." In today's ELT, practices such as translation, using L1 in teaching L2, and the teaching of abstract grammar and technical metalinguistic terms are evidently derived from ideas developed during the period of the GTM.

3.2.1 The Reform Movement paving the way for a new method

As one method lost ground, linguists and educationalists sought new approaches, which in turn would seem so convincing and self-evident that they could form new method(s). We can call this process a shift of paradigm;[3] it has happened to all methods of language teaching, and there is nothing to indicate that it will not continue. Why a method loses ground, allowing the shift of paradigm, is a good question to ponder on. Sometimes new insight through research, and at other times new needs, provide new situations where the "old" method falls short (as we later will see several examples of). The GTM was no exception.

A movement called the Reform Movement provided the impetus needed to considerably weaken the GTM. At the end of the nineteenth century, teachers turned to linguists because they believed the science of linguistics would offer them new ideas needed to develop new methods of teaching. Indeed, linguists started reflecting on children's L1 learning, and questioned whether L2 learning is distinctively different from L1 learning. When we learn our L1, we do not have to get instruction in it; even though we lack any conception of the grammar of the L1, we progress remarkably in learning to speak it fluently. At the same time as these ideas were discussed, the International Phonetics Association was established in 1886, Sweet's book *The Practical Study of Languages* (1899) offered principles on teaching methods, and the German linguist Viëtor promoted phonetics. The time was ripe for an oral approach.

The material used by the proponents of the GTM was criticized as being unauthentic. Hence, sentences were to be presented in context. Moreover, because of the naturalistic view of language learning, abstract grammar learning was considered unnecessary. Grammar was to be taught inductively, i.e. through sentences and text presented to the learner from which s/he would infer grammatical rules. A last important point concerning the Reform Movement is its opposition to translation. Out of this reforming approach, came a new method which was to be called the Direct Method (Richards and Rodgers 1986).

3.3   The Direct Method

Stern (1983) dates the dominance of the DM to the years between 1880 and World War I. Contrary to the GTM, instruction in the DM was supposed to be exclusively in the L2. In addition to identifying L2 learning with L1 learning as outlined in Section 3.2.1, Franke (1884) had laid the psychological foundation for a monolingual approach

to teaching. A strict monolingual approach involved ostensive definitions, i.e. pointing at pictures and objects to explain a word's meaning. As Simensen (1998) points out, this meant that the teacher sometimes had to bring things with him/her to the classroom, which gave the method the nickname "the backpack-method". Another idea, not surprisingly stemming from the Reform Movement, was that of associationism, which meant using the technique of associating words with thoughts and events as a means of learning the new language. Moreover, the teacher was to focus only on common everyday words. Sequences of question-answer were frequently used. Figure 3.1 below shows an example from the teaching material used in 1901 (taken from Simensen 1998: 29):

How many heads have you? I have one head
hau meni hedz häv júw?   ai häv wʌn hed

Figure 3.1. Example of sentence exercise in the DM

Simensen questions whether this type of material is more authentic than its predecessor's, viz. the GTM. How many times in our life are we asked how many heads we have? As the example above shows, phonology had become a central element of the DM. Oral practice with accuracy in mind was crucial, and undoubtedly the teaching of pronunciation was made easier through transcription with the help of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Guidelines for teaching oral language are given in Figure 3.2 (cited in Richards and Rodgers 1986: 10).

Never translate: demonstrate
Never explain: act
Never make a speech: ask questions
Never imitate mistakes: correct
Never speak with single words: use sentences
Never speak too much: make students speak much
Never use the book: use your lesson plan
Never jump around: follow your plan
Never go too fast: keep the pace of the student
Never speak too slowly: speak normally
Never speak too quickly: speak naturally
Never speak too loudly: speak naturally
Never be impatient: take it easy

Figure 3.2. Guidelines for teaching oral language

Furthermore, contrary to the GTM, the DM emphasized the oral skills (listening and speaking). Thus dictation was another favored form of exercise. Longer texts were preferred, through which learners were supposed to infer grammatical rules, i.e. adopting an inductive approach.

As an encapsulation of the ideas developed by the Reform Movement and practiced to some extent in the DM, these are quotations from the well-known linguist Jespersen's classic book *Sprogundervisning* (1935); the quotations comment on L2 learning and L1 learning, argue for the teaching of language in context, and warn against translation, respectively:

> Hvad er *formålet* med sprogundervisning? Ja hvorfor kan man sit modersmål? ... Sproget er ikke formål i sig selv, sålidt som jernbaneskinner er det; det er en forbindelsesvej mellem sjælene, et kommunikasjonsmiddel. (3-4)

> Vi bør lære sproget gennem fornuftige meddelelser; der må altså være en viss sammenhæng i tankerne i det meddelte sprogstof ... Løsrevne ord er stene for brød: der kan ikke siges noget fornuftigt med blotte gloser. Ja ikke engang løsrevne sætninger kan vi bruge ... (8)

> [Oversættelse] er ikke det eneste og ikke det bedste middel; det bør bruges sparsomt, og i hvert fald er det ikke nødvendigt at oversætte hele stykker i sammenhæng, kun av og til et ord eller höjst en sætning. (62)

The DM was well known to Norwegians as early as the turn of the century, albeit not emphasized by linguists such as Knap and Jespersen until later, and not notably practiced before 1925 (Simensen 1998). From around 1925 to 1950, both the GTM and the DM were practiced in Norway. The actual practice was, however, more flexible than in many other countries; "pure" DM teaching was not common.

3.3.1 The Direct Method loses its credibility

The DM had its drawbacks as well. Most importantly, since the aim was teaching in the L2, the teachers had to be very fluent in English, and preferably natives. This was an unrealistic goal in itself, given that the English language had a status far from what it has today and, as a result, the competence of the average non-native English teacher was normally far from native-like. Since it was very teacher-oriented, the method was in addition criticized for its complete neglect of the textbooks. In the DM, the presentation of grammar was totally abandoned, which could have been adequate at elementary levels, but what about more advanced learners? Finally, the DM lacked a systematic and scientific approach to teaching, which as we shall see in the next section was a characteristic of the oral era.

3.4   The Oral Approach

The linguists Palmer and Hornby provided the impetus for the so-called Oral Approach. They wished to approach language teaching from a scientific point of view. Between the years 1920 and 1960, a number of ideas about how best to teach English were presented, and had a huge impact on the actual practice of ELT. In the 1940s, applied linguistics was recognized as a discipline. The Oral Approach was based on work done in connection with the rise of the Reform Movement and the development

of the DM. It was a British approach, but influenced to a great extent the American Audiolingual Method, as we will see in Section 3.5.

As outlined by Schmitt (2000), a movement called the Vocabulary Control Movement tried to limit the vocabulary which was necessary to learn when one wishes to obtain a basic competence in a language, resulting in a list of 850 words (Ogden's *Basic English* from 1930); this appeared to be unsuccessful. The next ameliorating step was to make use of frequency lists, combined with the linguist's introspection, to determine which words are most frequently used and thus are the first that should be learned. The upshot of this was the *General Service List of English Words* compiled by West in 1953. The Vocabulary Control Movement was important because of its systematic approach to teaching material, which affected the teaching of syntax as well. Simple syntactical structures were introduced before the more complex ones. Thus the first stage was to select appropriate material, and then the material chosen was graded, and finally presented to the learners (illustrated in Figure 3.3).

```
┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│  SELECTION  │─────▶│  GRADATION  │─────▶│   PRESENTATION   │
└─────────────┘      └─────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
```

Figure 3.3. The principal approach to language teaching material in the Oral Approach

In addition to the importance of vocabulary, syntax, and their gradation, the Oral Approach emphasized the use of the L2, as did the DM. The written skills were to be introduced after a basic oral competence had been established. Since both methods focused on the oral use of the language, the Oral Approach seems to be strikingly similar to the DM, but as Richards and Rodgers (1986) remind us (and as noted earlier), the main difference between them lies in the fact that the DM lacked a

systematic basis in applied linguistics (cf. the Vocabulary Control Movement). The prominence of language meaning and context were further characteristics of the approach, fueled by ideas from linguists such as Firth and Halliday et al. (1964).

An implication of the emphasis on oral performance was that learners had to repeat utterances. The utterances had to be situational, i.e. occur in their context. This led to the teacher initiating a repetition round with sentences such as "This is a blackboard" and the learners repeating after him/her several times. The situational element gave the approach another name, namely Situational Language Teaching. Syntactic structures were put into so-called substitution tables and made ready for repetition. This gave the practice of language learning a drill-based appearance. The approach was inductive, as Richards and Rodgers (1986: 36) point out: "... the meaning of words [was] to be induced from the way the form is used in a situation." Similar to the GTM and the DM, the Oral Approach stressed accuracy. Furthermore, dictation was valued as a teaching technique, as in the DM.

Questions
1) Is this fountain pen yours? Yes, it is mine.
2) Are these books yours?   Yes, they are mine.
3) Is that your desk?   No, it is not mine.
4) Are those your books?   No, they are not mine.
Commands
1) Point to your desk.   6) Show me some paper.
2) Point to my table.   7) Write your name slowly.
3) Draw a brown square.   8) Write mine carefully.
4) Draw a purple circle.   9) Show me my pen.
5) Bring me something purple. 10) Show me yours.

Figure 3.4. Teaching material from 1933 (taken from Howatt and Widdowson 2004: 239)

According to Hornby, knowing the patterns and structures of the L2 is as important as learning the meaning of words. As a result, he wrote *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English* in 1954, where he systematically describes the syntactic patterns of

verbs, adjectives, pronouns, nouns, and adverbials. Furthermore, instead of approaching grammar in the traditional manner by for instance describing the uses of auxiliary verbs, Hornby starts out with the situation and explains that various expressions in addition to auxiliary verbs may be used to express the same meaning. One example from his book is the situation of obligation and necessity, where of course the auxiliaries *must*, *ought to*, *should* can be used, but also the verbs *have to*, *need to*, *obliged to*, *compelled to*, the nouns *obligation*, *compulsion*, *need*, *necessity*, and the adjectives *obligatory*, *compulsory*, *needless* (Hornby 1954: 216ff).

The British Oral Approach influenced the American linguists, which we now will turn to.

3.5   The Audiolingual Method

Howatt and Widdowson's (2004) book on the history of ELT is very comprehensive; they look back at the history of ELT from medieval times to the present, and offer not only a scientific framework, but also take into consideration political and institutional aspects that have influenced ELT throughout the years. Certainly, World War II played a decisive role in the development of the Oral Approach in America, known under the name Audiolingualism, the dominant method from the mid-fifties to approximately 1970. In a sense, the war made the world more global; American soldiers and personnel got to meet people from new countries face-to-face and thus new languages such as German, Italian, and Japanese. The Army Specialized Training Program, established in 1942, was to take care of the language training needed. The program was extremely intensive and did in fact have impressive results. Thus, an oral-based approach involving intensive drills was to become one of the main pillars of Audiolingualism. Simultaneously, waves of immigrants coming to America had to learn the target

language English. Language programs and institutions, and specialization and re-search, were to revolutionize ELT for years to come.

The American method had a lot in common with the British Oral Approach, but also differed from it in a substantial way; it had strong links to structural linguistics and applied linguistics. Bloomfield's ideas about putting language into a system expressed in his book *Language* from 1933 had a strong impact on the development of structuralism. Nevertheless, Fries (1945, 1952) and Lado (1957, 1964) were the most prominent proponents of the application of structuralism, and the branch of applied linguistics called contrastive analysis, to ELT.[4]

In structural linguistics, attention is paid to sentences and their constituents. Grammar was again open for explanations, albeit shorter explanations, and of course not before the sentences had been practiced orally. "Teach the language, not about the language" was the catch-phrase. Sentences were put into substitution tables and practiced over and over again, preferably in language laboratories, in order to let the learners listen to their own pronunciation as well.[5] In a substitution table, the grammatical functions of words were easily identifiable. As shown in Figure 3.5, after oral practice of the sentences learners could observe for example that *here* has the same function as *on the table*, namely adverbial.

There	's	a	dog	*over there.*	
There	's	a	book	*on the table.*	
There	was	a	book	*in my bag*	*yesterday.*
There	were	some	men	*here*	*two weeks ago*.

Figure 3.5. An example of a substitution table

Dialogues were also a favored form of classroom activity. Thus, the goal was not accuracy, but fluency in the language. Language skills were ranked according to their importance: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The focus was on the differences between the target language and the L1. Differences between the two language systems were predicted to make the process of learning difficult, whereas similarities between the two language systems would simplify learning. In this context, when faced with a different structure in the L2, the learner was likely to make errors (negative transfer or interference), while otherwise the transfer from L1 to L2 would be unproblematic. Making errors was negative and thus had to be avoided at all cost.

The last important component of Audiolingualism was the influence from psychology, more specifically Skinner's behaviorist psychology, where the concepts of stimulus-response and reinforcement were central. In practice, this meant that a language stimulus brought about a response from the learner, and the reinforcement could be positive if the response was right and negative if it was wrong. This psychological basis laid a solid foundation for habit formation through pattern practices and drills. Language was to be practiced until it was automated (see Figure 3.6).

Repetition:	This is the seventh month. – This is the seventh month.
Inflection:	I bought the *ticket*. – I bought the *tickets*.
Replacement:	He bought this *house* cheap. – He bought *it* cheap.
Restatement:	Tell him to wait for you. – Wait for me.
Completion:	I'll go my way and you go…. – I'll go my way and you go *yours*.
Transposition:	*I'm* hungry. (so). – So *am* I.
Expansion:	I know him. (hardly). – I *hardly* know him.
Contraction:	Put your hand *on the table*. – Put your hand *there*.
Transformation:	He knows my address. – He *doesn't* know my address.
Restoration:	students/waiting/bus. – The students are waiting for the bus.

Figure 3.6. Example of drill exercises (adapted from Richards and Rodgers 1986: 54-56, their emphasis)

In Norway, teaching based on oral principles was first implemented after the 1950s. The Norwegian syllabuses *Mønsterplan* 1974 (M74) and *Læreplan* 1976 (L76) clearly reflect structuralist-behaviorist ideas even though they were designed after the peak of Audiolingualism. Some examples of the aims set in M74 are:

> … språket som et middel til muntlig kommunikasjon. … Dette språk-materialet bør være av en slik art at det danner grunnlag for innøving av ord, uttrykk og språkmønstre. [cf. pattern practice] ... Grammatikkmomentene i engelsk bør innføres planmessig. … hver leksjon blir en serie naturlige høre- og taleøvinger. [cf. aural-oral] På denne måten får elevene stadig øving i å oppfatte og forstå engelsk tale. ... spontant å uttrykke tanker og forestillinger på engelsk. Øvingene kan være helt styrt av læreren. … feil så vidt mulig unngås [cf. contrastive analysis]. ... Innlæringen av språkmønstrene skjer ved at samme mønster behandles i ulike variasjoner og i stadig utvidet sammenheng [cf. grading]. (147-149)

At the end of the syllabus, the teacher will find lists of grammar components graded according to level and a list of vocabulary. The focus on exercises was strong in both M74 and L76. Undoubtedly, features of the Oral Approach and the Audiolingual Method have survived and are still widely used today.

3.5.1 The decline of Audiolingualism

Audiolingualism met with criticism from several points of view. Firstly, the techniques used were considered monotonous and hence boring by the learners. In the audio-lingual context, learners were more like parrots than creative and critical language learners. Secondly, learners were not appropriately prepared for communication outside the classroom. They could follow instructions in the classroom without diffi-culties, but when they were faced with real-life situation their language performance was unsatisfactory. As Eirheim (1983) points out, the Audiolingual Method paid little attention to the field of semantics; thus drills and imitative repetitions were of little help in authentic communication when their meaning and their use had been discarded. Finally, developments in both linguistics and psychology led to the rejection of

fundamental audiolingual ideas. Chomsky's language theory[6] (1957, 1965) and Corder's error analysis, to which we now will turn, help explain the main criticisms that Audiolingualism met.

3.6   Mentalism[7]

The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and UG are both concepts initiated by the well-known linguist Noam Chomsky. The idea is first of all that all human beings have innate grammar knowledge, which Chomsky called competence, and secondly that there is a universal grammar underlying all languages.[8] The former is based on the argument that learners are indeed able to produce and understand language constructions which they have never heard before. The latter concept relates to Chomsky's principles and parameters, accounting for what languages have in common and what distinguishes them, respectively. When we restructure sentences, how is it that we intuitively know that certain chunks of language belong together grammatically while others do not (the structure-dependency principle)? The attention thus turned from how languages differ (cf. contrastive analysis) to their commonality.

Chomsky's understanding of grammar was purely formal, expressed in *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and later extended to transformational-generative grammar in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). Creativity and rule-learning were important implications of Chomsky's theory for ELT.

In sum, mentalism was a hybrid of transformational grammar and psycholinguistic theory, and offered major contributions to ELT from the mid-sixties. It was a cognitive approach which required a return to the deductive teaching of grammar.

3.7   Error analysis and interlanguage

Error analysis had its heyday in the 1970s and was different from contrastive analysis in that it did not attempt to predict errors, nor did it warn against making errors; on the contrary, it viewed errors as necessary, natural, and as signs of L2 learning. An example from *Mønsterplan* 1987 (M87) (p. 223) is "… develop a constructive attitude towards mistakes when using English. Instead of being afraid to make mistakes, they [i.e. the pupils] must understand that they can learn from their mistakes." Furthermore, Corder made distinctions between errors versus mistakes and input versus intake. Systematic errors were of primary interest, whereas mistakes could be overlooked. Input differs from intake in that intake is the actual amount of input that has become part of the learner's competence (cf. acquisition).

 Error analysis had its limitations. It failed to observe positive aspects of learners' performance, and the question of how it could account for learners' avoidance strategies was raised. A new technique called performance analysis was proposed, which was to look at the whole performance of learners, even perfectly well-formed chunks of language.

Error analysis played an essential role in the development of Selinker's idea of interlanguage. Interlanguage is used to refer to the learners' L2 competence. It is a unique system of language, not a poorer version of the L2; similar to error analysis, it conveyed a positive view of L2 learning. Concepts such as transfer, learning strategies and communication strategies, and fossilization are central in the theory of interlanguage.

In the following, we will look more closely at one of the characteristics of interlanguage concerning the learning of grammar. The learner is believed to go through certain stages when learning aspects of the L2. Several studies have been done

on developmental stages, one of them being the learning of negation. Figure 3.7 shows the stages an L2 learner of English is believed to go through, but of course there are individual differences, for example with respect to how fast one goes through the stages, if there is any backslash, or if any fossilization takes place. This belief in a fixed order of development had implications for the teaching of grammar. Learnability and teachability hypotheses were set forth, claiming that the teaching of grammar should be "tuned" according to the learner's level.

1. External negation	No this book.
2. Preverbal negation	Mary no have money.
3. Modal verb + negation	I can't do this.
4. Auxiliary verb + negation	He didn't want to come.

Figure 3.7. Developmental stages of negation in English

The mentalistic grammar we have described here overlooked functional aspects of the language, which gave rise to the next approach in ELT, namely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Before scrutinizing CLT, we will look at the main concept of CLT, viz. communicative competence.

3.8   Communicative competence

The term communicative competence was coined by Hymes in 1972. Along with functional linguists (particularly Halliday) and pragmaticists, Hymes claimed that Chomsky's linguistic competence missed functional aspects of the language by merely focusing on rules of grammar. According to Hymes (1972: 278), "what is grammatically the same sentence may be a statement, a command, or a request; what is grammatically two different sentences may as acts both be requests."[9] Thus socio-cultural features were intertwined with modern linguistic theory: "… we have to break with the tradition of thought which simply equates one language, one culture, and

takes a set of functions for granted" (Hymes 1972: 289). As a result, learners were considered a heterogeneous group, in contrast to Chomsky's ideal learner who was a native child learning his/her first language in a static environment.

Grammatical competence was just one part of Hymes' communicative competence. He operated with the notions of what is possible, feasible, acceptable, and appropriate in language. What is possible certainly has to do with grammar, whereas appropriateness has to do with cultural and contextual factors. Later, Canale and Swain (1980) extended the concept of communicative competence to include grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse (cohesion and coherence) and strategic (communication strategies) competence. Furthermore, they distinguished between communicative competence and communicative performance, the latter being a realization of the former. Canale and Swain discuss whether the teaching of grammar should be secondary to the teaching of communication in ELT, and they point out that research results are contradictory. Nevertheless, they believe that grammatical competence should be at least as important as sociolinguistic competence in teaching based on communicative goals.

3.8.1 Communicative Language Teaching

CLT has dominated ELT since the 1980s. The threshold level (Van Ek), notional-functional syllabuses (Wilkins), and the Council of Europe have furthered practical manifestations of communicative competence in the classroom. Meaning, authenticity, context, communication, and fluency are some of the cardinal values of CLT.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 66) "There is no single text or authority on it [i.e. CLT], nor any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative". Teaching based on communicative goals has turned out to be very flexible and

inclusive in its methodology. One of the main characteristics of CLT is that it is learner-oriented. The learner's ultimate intention in learning the L2 is communicative competence, and how s/he obtains it is dependent on different parameters like age, aptitude, communicative need(s) etc. However, this flexibility has come to be a burden in an actual classroom setting, where it is practically impossible to meet the needs of a heterogeneous group of 20-30 learners. I believe that another major drawback of CLT, due to its ambiguity as an approach, has been the extreme focus on communication in the oral skills, which in turn might have partly been responsible for less teaching of grammar. Keller (1994) asserts that the most serious misunderstanding has been the belief that communicative competence does not include the teaching of grammar, and reminds us that "Den grunnleggende komponenten i begrepet kommunikativ kompetanse er lingvistisk kompetanse" (p. 149).

In her recent article, Hasselgård (2001) discusses what place grammar has in CLT. She supports the view that the skill of speaking has been emphasized too much in CLT, and that if accuracy in writing was similarly emphasized (including grammar), positive results would carry over to speaking as well. In addition, she proposes interesting methods of how to work with grammar in CLT. According to Hasselgård, grammar exercises can often be artificial because of insufficient context; thus she suggests extracts of longer authentic texts as a basis for teaching points of grammar. Moreover, the importance of possessing a grammar book is underlined; Hasselgård recommends the use of a grammar book as a reference tool or as a prereading/ consciousness-raising tool.[10]

As we have witnessed in our overview of approaches and methods in ELT, no approach is everlasting. Consequently, some people question the validity of CLT as it has developed – maybe communicative goals are reasonable, but has today's CLT

become too communicative and neglected grammar? Dirven (1990: 7) is one who believes so: "… the communicative approach as a whole has, by and large, arrived at the same dead-end as the 'naturalistic' approach, viz. the rejection of formal grammar in the foreign language syllabus." Can we expect a new, less ambiguous, approach to be developed in the years to come? Of course, an answer to the question posed will at best be mere speculation, but what is certain is that "Now that the initial wave of enthusiasm has passed … some of the claims of CLT are being looked at more critically" (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 83).

The Norwegian syllabus *Mønsterplan* 1987 (M87) was the first syllabus based on language functions (e.g. asking for and providing information, getting someone do something). Here are some key concepts from its general aims and methods:

> … dare to use the language, … as much real communication with others as possible (221); Different pupils have different aptitudes …, … coherence and wholeness ... subject matter … a text or a topic … (222); … interpreting unfamiliar words and concepts from the context. … learn to use dictionaries and other reference books … (223)

Under the section "grammar", the following is stated:

> Grammar should be introduced by means of *specific examples and use of the language*. Theoretical explanations and grammatical terms should *suit the pupils' level of achievement* and should be formulated in a way which will give practical benefit. … an understanding of grammar, and the formal basis that this provides, is both useful and necessary. … use of new structures must take place in *meaningful situations. …* elements of grammar should progress *from the simple to the more complex* (226-227; my emphasis).

Thus, we can assert that M87 was partly influenced by mentalism and partly by CLT, hence being partly formal and partly functional in nature. From M87 until today, meaning and context have been of primary importance in teaching English in the Norwegian school.[11]

3.9   Where are we now in grammar teaching?

3.9.1 The 1994 syllabus (R94)

R94 is the English syllabus used in the Norwegian senior high school, in General and business studies, dance and drama, Sports and physical education, and vocational studies. Like M87, R94 is influenced by the "functional movement" of the 70s and 80s. Nevertheless, one finds guidelines which I believe have not been paid sufficient attention to, and which will thus be focused on in this section. The following extract from "attainment targets and focal points" is of interest:

The aims of the pupil's study of English are:
- to be able to use English which is suitable both in informal and formal situations, and to know how the social context affects the use of language [i.e. register]
- to develop a varied general vocabulary, and a specialized vocabulary appropriate to the pupil's area of study
- to acquire good clear pronunciation and sufficient familiarity with the rules of English pronunciation to achieve this
- to be able to grasp the meaning and connections of spoken and written English, and express him/herself so as to bring out intentions and connections clearly [i.e. semantics and pragmatics]
- to acquire sufficient <u>knowledge about the language as a system</u> to be able to <u>understand grammatical explanations and correct errors</u>
- to be able to make use of such aids as <u>dictionaries, grammars, reference works</u> and such information technology as may be available

Figure 3.8. Aims in R94 (R94: 26, my comments/emphasis)

In the part of R94 which concerns testing and assessment, Canale and Swain's four competences (see Section 3.8) are central. But in addition, R94 also includes socio-cultural and social competence. The first three competences specified in R94 are relevant for the teaching and learning of grammar:

En skal vurdere
- I hvilken grad eleven er i stand til å beherske korrekt grammatikk, vokabular og uttale (lingvistisk kompetanse)
- I hvilken grad eleven er i stand til å tolke og å anvende et tjenlig språk i ulike sammenhenger (sosiolingvistisk kompetanse)
- I hvilken grad eleven er i stand til å oppfatte og selv oppnå sammenheng i tale og skrift (diskurskompetanse)

Figure 3.9. Points of assessment relevant for the teaching and learning of grammar (R94: 57)[12]

Thus, we can see that, despite its functional approach, R94 contains quasi-functional and purely formal elements, which should have implications for ELT.

3.9.2 Discussion

In the previous sections, we have seen that the pendulum has swung back and forth, from explicit and abstract grammar teaching to inductive approaches where grammar was regarded as secondary to oral use of the language, to opening for the explanation of grammar but only after oral practice, to a revival of a deductive approach to grammar, and to a learner-centered approach where we are at present. What place the teaching of grammar has in the context of CLT is debatable, since CLT has proved to be an ambiguous method.

I would claim that discord and confusion have characterized the last 35 years or so when it comes to ELT, particularly with respect to the teaching of grammar. In the classroom, we find a blurred situation where concepts from many different methods are merged together, and sometimes even the teacher is not aware of the method s/he is using, which may be advantageous due to the eclectic element, but a clear idea of where we are going when it comes to ELT may seem far-fetched.

The debate continues about how best to teach grammar – inductively or deductively, through what kinds of activities, the relevance of learning vs. acquisition, input vs. output, second language vs. foreign language etc. Personally, I do not believe

in Krashen's claim that learning (i.e. explicit grammar teaching in our case) never becomes acquisition.[13] On the other hand, focus on grammar as a necessary but not sufficient means to learning, or what Rutherford (1987) has named consciousness-raising, has been embraced by several linguists lately. In other words, there is no doubt as to whether we should teach grammar or not, but the discussion concerns the method(s) used to acquire the grammatical knowledge required at the learner's educational level.

Finally, the potentiality of computer corpora for the learning of grammar is yet to be explored, particularly when advancement in computer technology offers us more and more user-friendly programs which the learners themselves may use, such as the *Wordsmith Tools* concordancer, and when more and more learners are equipped with personal computers in the classroom.[14]

3.10 Summing up

In this chapter, we have considered the role of grammar teaching historically through the various major approaches and methods in ELT. We have seen that the various methods and approaches discussed above were generally introduced some years later in Norway than in the countries where they originated. However, as is always the case when one chooses some concepts, others are left out; we have, for example, not scrutinized The Reading Method, Total Physical Response, The Silent Way, and Suggestopedia, or where the ideas behind them came from, just to mention some methods that have been left out.

The historical survey in this chapter reminds us of the fact that there is no one correct or best answer to the question of how best to teach English to learners of other languages. Language theories and learning theories will come and go, influence,

challenge, criticize, and change each other as long as we exist – maybe comparable to empires or superpowers throughout history.

In the next part of this thesis we will consider some of the practical manifestations of grammar teaching and learning.

Notes

---

[1] Sections 3.1-3.5 are based on my term paper (Burner 2005).

[2] I doubt whether the GTM actually is a "method" according to our definition in Section 3.1, since it lacks a theoretical basis; but because it has widely been referred to as a method, we will use the same term here.

[3] The term was originally introduced by the philosopher Thomas Kuhn, meaning common beliefs in a theory and its principles.

[4] In James (1980) a whole chapter is devoted to pedagogical applications of contrastive analysis.

[5] Thus, another name for the approach was the Aural-Oral Approach.

[6] Although Chomsky was only concerned with L1 learning, his ideas have had significant impact on L2 learning as well.

[7] A term often used to refer to this approach is cognitivism. But cognitivism refers to general intellectual abilities, whereas mentalism is the psycholinguistic concept.

[8] Those convinced by Chomsky's cognitive theory are also referred to as nativists.

[9] The concept of speech acts derived originally from Austin (1962).

[10] A relevant point for us to return to in the second part of this thesis.

[11] For more information on CLT in the Norwegian school system, see Helleland (1987).

[12] For some reason, this part of R94 concerning testing/assessment is in Norwegian even though the rest of the syllabus is to be found in English!

[13] This has been criticized by many others, most heavily by McLaughlin (1987).

[14] See Granger et al. (2002).

PART II   GRAMMAR IN PRACTICE

"Textbooks and learning materials of all sorts are the concrete realizations of the syllabus plan." (Corder 1973: 13)

"There can be no systematic improvement in language teaching without reference to the knowledge about language which linguistics gives us." (Corder 1973: 15)

"It would be a shame if language teaching is cut off from exciting developments in syntax because teachers see them as too difficult or too remote from their interest." (Cook 1994: 30)

"The challenge lies in finding some way of incorporating formal linguistic insights into teaching materials without destroying the pedagogic validity of the presentation." (Allen 1974: 92)

<u>Chapter 4: Analysis of textbooks</u>[1]

4.1   Methodology

Our aim in this chapter is to find out how much grammar there is in the textbooks *Passage*, *Imagine*, *Flying Colours*, and *Targets* (cf. Section 1.4). However, a quantitative analysis is not sufficient. We will also attempt to describe the way grammar is treated in the different textbooks, and more interestingly, discuss and compare it with the other textbooks. The results we come up with will hopefully give some idea of the position of grammar in the foundation course, especially since the textbooks chosen are the ones most used. But there are also possible margins of error.

As we know, grammar is multifaceted and cannot be easily categorized. This did not make the study of the textbooks any easier. I had to make certain choices, and I am fully aware of the fact that others might have done things differently. As we saw in Chapter two, from a functional grammarian's point of view, grammar is much more than rules of morphology and syntax. This means that there are many types of exercises that improve learners' grammar, not only exercises of for example inflection. Thus, I had to use my intuition and knowledge to judge what I believe is a task of grammar. I came to the conclusion that I would leave out exercises which I think do not engage the learner's grammatical knowledge, for example pronunciation tasks, proverbs, "explain words" tasks etc. On the other hand, I will include exercises which can indirectly or implicitly improve the learner's grammatical knowledge, e.g. through translation where issues like correct word-order are relevant, or through doing a crossword where for example correct spelling of the words is crucial. The main focus

will however be on the types of exercises which directly activate the learner's grammatical knowledge, for example inflecting irregular nouns.

Another possible margin of error is that normally other sources supplementing the textbooks are used in teaching lessons, e.g. the Internet, handouts, and grammar books. This is something we cannot take into account in this chapter, but in the next chapter we will get an idea of it by asking teachers.

4.2 *Passage*

As noted earlier, in the preface of *Passage* it is said that the book is intended to be an "all-in-one" book, and the workbook *Passage to Proficiency* (which contains grammar exercises) is thus not regarded as an integral part of the English course. This is a pity, especially since the editors justify their point of view by writing that thinking of *Passage to Proficiency* as an extra booklet allows the pupils to carry one book less with them and gives them a stronger sense of unity. I believe that this decision not only makes *Passage* unnecessarily long, but it may also lead the learners to think of grammar as something "extra" which they may do if they want or if the teacher asks them to do so.

Under the heading "activities", the following types of exercises are present throughout *Passage*: "Understanding the story/song/text", "Speak your mind", "Improve your language", "Pen to paper", and sometimes "Act it out", "Funnybones", "Research", "Improve your geography". Evidently, I have focused on the exercises "Improve your language", but it is obvious that the learners may improve their grammar by writing essays, letters, doing research etc. through some of the other types of exercises. Though it is practically impossible to include all types of exercises

improving the learners' grammar, the point is important to bear in mind. This margin of error concerns the other books as well.

Table 4.1 is a survey of the "Improve your language" exercises which I believe in some way or other have an effect on the learners' grammatical knowledge. Translating English sentences to Norwegian tops the list with a number of four, whereas semantic fields and "fill-in from given words" are given three times each in *Passage*. What I have called fixed phrases or prefabricated units of language is particularly interesting from the perspective of fluency. There has been done research to uncover what it is that improves learners' fluency in order to sound more native-like (cf. Wood 2001). Prefabricated chunks of language are one essential aspect of fluency, and they are frequently used. By memorizing inseparable strings of words such as *As far as I know* and *How do you do?*, the learner gains time to plan other, often challenging, parts of the utterance, and as a result speaks more fluently. It is my belief that these chunks of language also aid the learner in speaking more correctly by inductive rule-learning, and rather than spending time on making the chunks right, more time is spent on making the rest of the utterance more grammatical.

Table 4.1. Indirect exercises of grammar in *Passage*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Translation E → N	4
Semantic fields	3
Fill-in from given words	3
Fixed expressions/prefabricated units	2
Punctuation	2
Match synonyms + make sentences	1
Translation N → E	1
Fill-in appropriate words (cloze test)	1
Give synonyms to given words	1
Match idioms with their explanations	1
Capital letters	1
Crossword	1
Word grid	1
Distinguish words from non-words	1
Difference between see/watch/look	1
Total	**24**

As for Table 4.2 which sums up the direct exercises of grammar in *Passage*, it is noteworthy that only 10 different types of direct grammar exercises are offered in *Passage*. One main reason is naturally that we have not included *Passage to Proficiency* in our study. Thus the crucial question is how much *Passage to Proficiency* is used in addition to *Passage* in Norway. It is impossible for us to know the answer, but I would guess that it is not much used at all. *Passage* is so comprehensive, full of texts and exercises, and in addition refers to the exercises in *Passage to Proficiency* as "extra".

Table 4.2. Direct exercises of grammar in *Passage*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Fill-in prepositions	2
Adjectives vs. adverbs + make sentences	1
Form vs. meaning sentence pairs	1
Direct speech vs. indirect speech	1
Compound nouns	1
Inflection: singular → plural nouns	1
Homophones + make sentences	1
Homonyms + make sentences	1
Give verbs for nouns + make sentences	1
Fill-in: change of word class	1
Total	**11**

Preposition exercises top the list. One of the preposition exercises is fairly open in the sense that it allows the learners to think creatively. An advertisement text where the prepositions are left out is provided and the learner is asked to fill in appropriate prepositions. Such exercises must be much more useful than the ones giving learners alternatives, e.g. different prepositions, to choose from. When alternatives are given, much of the work is done for the learner already. As we shall see, creative/open exercises of grammar are unfortunately a rarity in all the textbooks.

One of the exercises I particularly noticed because of its grammatical awareness-raising potential was what I have called "Form vs. meaning sentence pairs". The learner is asked to study pairs of sentences which at first may seem alike, but after a closer look s/he will observe that a slight grammatical change has altered the meaning of the second sentence. A couple of examples from this type of exercise are:

1. *He stopped to look at the shop window*

2. *He stopped looking at the shop window*

> *1. We're very proud of this painting of our daughter.*
>
> *2. We're very proud of this painting of our daughter's.*
>
> (*Passage*: 87)

In my opinion, learners should be given more exercises of this type. Unfortunately, this was the only one I could find in *all* the textbooks!

When it comes to language work, two aspects of *Passage* are easily noticeable; throughout the book learners are encouraged to use the dictionary and work in groups. I believe there is much to learn from dictionaries in addition to a word's meaning, e.g. if you look up *certain* in LDOCE, you will be given its word class, formal vs. informal usage, and its frequency and collocates (based on two large corpora). This is indispensable grammatical knowledge which can effortlessly be retrieved from a dictionary. Group work, which is the second aspect encouraged in *Passage*, is a phenomenon connected particularly with the age of communication and CLT. I believe it can be beneficial if stronger learners are grouped together (discussing on a more advanced level), or also if a stronger learner works together with a weaker one (where the weaker learner may benefit most). On the other hand, the purpose of group work may be spoiled if weaker learners are asked to work together. Then the teacher should involve him-/herself in the group work more than normally is the case.

In general, I miss a justification for the authors' choice of exercises. Their choices seem rather arbitrary. Just to give an example, we know that the verb and the verb phrase are important aspects of English grammar, but no exercises on verbs are offered at all. It is unfortunate that learners in classes where *Passage to Proficiency* is not a part of their English lessons may leave the foundation course without having done verb exercises.

4.3 *Imagine*

"Language file" in *Imagine* is what corresponds to "Improve your language" in *Passage*. From Table 4.3, we can see that translation is very frequently given as an exercise in *Imagine*; in fact, over half of the indirect grammar exercises are translation exercises. It is also noteworthy that a separate exercise is devoted solely to how to use a dictionary. In the dictionary exercise, the learner is asked amongst other things to look up different words from a text in the textbook. Each word is referred to by a line number so that the learner can look it up in its context. This is very important in understanding grammar, since words can be context-dependent. Finally, in the exercise on idioms, metalinguistic explanation is offered. This is something I generally miss in the textbooks as opposed to grammar books.

Table 4.3. Indirect exercises of grammar in *Imagine*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Translation N → E	4
Translation E → N	2
Translation N → E text	2
Semantic field	2
Match incomplete sentences	1
Idioms: explanation + fill-in exercise	1
Informal/formal language + make sentences	1
Dictionary use	1
Total	**14**

Table 4.4 shows the direct exercises of grammar we find in *Imagine*. There are various types of exercises, but all except one occur only once in the whole book. A couple of the exercises are followed up by an extra task asking the learners to make sentences, i.e. put the words in an appropriate context. This is generally a fruitful way of checking if the learner really knows the meaning of a word. It is, however, difficult to judge how many aspects of the word are known by the learner, in other words how

many *different* contexts the word can occur in. Furthermore, the verb is given much attention in *Imagine*; over half of the direct exercises have to do with verbs. Metalinguistic explanations are not common in *Imagine*, but the exception is the exercise on antonyms where half a page is used to explain what antonyms are and how they are formed. Finally, I would like to give a couple of examples from the exercise I have called "Correct wrong spellings":

She didn't no what to were, therefore she desided to stay at home.

It is a spesial night and every girl wants to look beutiful.

(*Imagine*: 68)

I think such exercises are useful in raising the learners' awareness of the English language, and should thus be given more attention. Another type of this exercise would be to focus on grammatical mistakes such as wrong word order or inflections.

Table 4.4. Direct exercises of grammar in *Imagine*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Choose correct form of given verbs in a text	2
Inflect given words: irregular verbs + make sentences	1
-ing form	1
Fill-in have/has: concord	1
Fill-in is/are, was/were: concord	1
Inflect given words: irregular nouns	1
Inflect given words: simple present tense	1
Choose one of two: adjective vs. adverb	1
Place correct relative pronoun in given sentences	1
Rewrite text: present → past	1
Rewrite text: past → present	1
Correct wrong spellings	1
Definite article *the*	1
Antonyms: explanation + exercises	1
Nouns → verbs + make sentences	1
Fill-in appropriate prepositions in text	1
Apostrophe	1
Total	**18**

In sum, *Imagine* contains fairly varied types of exercises with an emphasis on translation and verbs. Yet the grammar exercises seem sporadic rather than systematic. A key to the exercises would also have been an improvement. Finally, it would have been preferable to use more natural sentences in context rather than unauthentic sentences.

4.4 *Flying Colours*

Language exercises are generally found under the heading "work it out" in *Flying Colours*. Almost half of the indirect grammar exercises are translation exercises (see Table 4.5). "Fill-in from given words" is also a common exercise.

Table 4.5. Indirect exercises of grammar in *Flying Colours*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Translation N → E	10
Fill-in from given words	9
Translation E → N	3
Fill-in and explain: idioms	3
Translation E ↔ N	1
Semantic field	1
Match synonyms used in sentences	1
Match synonyms	1
Fixed expressions/prefabricated units	1
Total	**30**

From Table 4.6, we can see that there are many more, and more varied, direct grammar exercises in *Flying Colours*. In fact, there are thirty different types of exercises. Verb exercises are fairly common. The eleven most common exercises make up more than half of all the exercises. One of these is a spelling exercise where the learner is asked to circle the correct alternative given:

Maybe/mabye he is not so smart after all.

Who is responsible/responsable for this mess?

(*Flying Colours*: 24)

The question is whether the misspelled alternatives are too obvious, and if it would not be better if the learner had to correct misspellings without being given the correct alternatives. Another example of an exercise that maybe could have been improved is the exercise on phrasal verbs. The book treats the whole category of multi-word verbs – prepositional, phrasal, and phrasal-prepositional – as phrasal verbs. Would consciousness of grammar have been raised further if the learner was introduced to and given exercises in all the types? S/he might wonder why some of the multi-word verbs can be split by an object, while others cannot, e.g. *count in* as in *You can count me in* versus *laugh at* as in *You can laugh at me/*You can laugh me at.*

As recommended by Leech (1994), teachers should encourage their learners to observe and think critically about grammar. They should be made aware of the fact that grammar rules are not watertight. It is not always either-or; most of the time one grammatical observation may be *better* than another, and the learner should learn how to account for various grammatical choices. This brings me to one such exercise which I found in *Flying Colours*. The instruction is as follows:

Complete the following sentences, using the words in brackets and one of the tenses or constructions expressing <u>a future action</u>. **If there are several alternatives, you should discuss what they express.**

(*Flying Colours*: 168; my emphasis in bold)

This exercise thus allows a discussion of nuances of English grammar.

Finally, another exercise from *Flying Colours* which ought to be mentioned is the one called "Find Norwenglish mistakes". Here is a sample from the exercise:

Work in pairs. Find one typical Norwenglish mistake in each of the sentences below. Explain to each other what is wrong and correct the mistakes.

    1. *We moved to Toronto for a few years ago.*

    2. *One of my new friends learned me Swahili.*

    3. *The boys had it very nice in Australia last summer.*

    4. *Most Norwegians love going for long walks out in the nature.*

(*Flying Colours*: 200)

Table 4.6. Direct exercises of grammar in *Flying Colours*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Fill-in/inflect is/are, was/were, has/have: concord	6
Fill-in appropriate prepositions	3
Apostrophe	2
Place the given adverbs in sentences: position of adverbs	2
Correct wrong sentences	2
Fill-in appropriate prepositions in the text	2
Fill-in from given verbs	2
Redo sentences: past tense → present tense	2
Passive vs. active voice	2
Spelling	2
Verb: gerund	2
Fill-in appropriate articles	1
Fill-in/inflect from given words: nouns	1
Add correct prefix to make antonyms of given words	1
Inflect given adjectives: comparing adjectives	1
Fill-in from given words: adjective or adverb?	1
Fill-in: it/there	1
Fill-in: some/any	1
Fill-in: relative pronouns	1
Fill-in the correct preposition: verb + preposition	1
Verb → noun	1
Positive sentences → negative	1
Fill-in from given prepositions	1
Fill-in from given verbs: simple present vs. present continuous	1
Fill-in from given verbs: simple past vs. past continuous	1
Phrasal verbs	1
Fill-in/inflect from given verbs: infinitive vs. –ing form	1
Direct speech → indirect speech	1
Future tense	1
Find Norwenglish mistakes	1
Total	**46**

Flying Colours is the only one of the four books studied that dedicates approximately fifteen pages to a "mini-grammar". In those pages, to be found at the very back of the book, grammatical phenomena are explained and examples of usage are given. For each grammar exercise in the book testing a new grammatical property there is a reference to its grammatical explanation in the mini-grammar.

4.5   *Targets*

Grammar exercises in *Targets* are mainly to be found under the headings "Language work" and "vocabulary". The indirect grammar exercises are listed in Table 4.7. As the reader may have noticed, *Targets* does not contain any translation exercises (the only exception is on page 158, where the learners are asked to translate their own timetable into English). The most common indirect exercise of grammar is "fill-in from given words", followed by semantic field exercises. Another common type of exercise is a cloze test, which requires more from the learner since the words to be filled in are not provided. Further down the list follow tasks that concern synonyms, antonyms, and collocations.

Table 4.7. Indirect exercises of grammar in *Targets*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Fill-in from given words or expressions	24
Semantic field	4
Fill-in appropriate words (cloze test)	3
Match synonyms	3
Collocations	3
Match words with their antonyms	2
Fixed expressions/prefabricated units	2
Match synonyms + make sentences	1
Capital letters	1
Crossword	1
Total	**44**

More interesting are the direct grammar exercises, which are surveyed in Table 4.8. First of all, the number of exercises is fairly high; secondly, they vary to a great extent. Verbs, adverbs, and adjectives are all covered in different exercises. Furthermore, other types of exercises like passive/active voice, direct/indirect speech, and question tags are given too. But *Targets* does not stop there; it takes the learner one step further, i.e. beyond the sentence, by for example giving three exercises on relative clauses.

Table 4.8. Direct exercises of grammar in *Targets*

EXERCISE DESCRIPTION	NUMBER
Complete sentences, fill-in/inflect given verbs: simple past tense	4
Modal verbs	4
Match grammatical collocates: noun + verb, adverb + verb/adjective	4
Questions/answers, negation: simple present tense	3
Fill-in/inflect verbs	3
Fill-in creatively + make sentences: future tense	3
Relative clauses	3
S-V concord	2
Verb → noun	2
Fill-in appropriate prepositions	2
Identify from text, fill-in from given words: gerund	2
Fill-in from given adjectives	2
Passive ↔ active	2
Inflect verbs in text	1
Inflect verbs in sentences: present continuous	1
Inflect verbs in sentences: past continuous	1
Question tags	1
Correct wrong sentences: word order	1
Conditional sentences	1
Fill-in where appropriate the definite article *the*	1
Noun → adjective	1
Direct speech → indirect speech	1
Fill-in in sentences: relative pronouns	1
Underline correct alternative: adjective or adverb?	1
Underline adverbs in the text	1
Make sentences: adjectives and adverbs	1
Fill-in correct alternative: it/there	1
Total	**50**

The penultimate type of exercise in the table is about adjectives and adverbs, and differs from the other exercises in a creative manner. First, the learner is briefly introduced to how adjectives and adverbs are formed in the English language. Secondly, and this is the distinguishing part, the learner is asked to make sentences containing the word classes introduced and is not given any alternatives at all. This type of exercise is open and creative and puts the learner in a situation where s/he has to think and consider several things, e.g. come up with words which qualify for the word class

required, know its inflections, know its meaning(s), and create an appropriate context where the word can be used.

Finally, whenever a new grammatical feature is introduced in *Targets*, you find a gray box with grammatical explanation (rules and examples). The explanations are generally of good quality; one example is the exercise on passive/active voice where not only an explanation is given as to how the passive is formed grammatically (change of verb form etc), but in addition other aspects are mentioned that follow the transformation from active to passive, such as the change of focus, style, and the motivation for use.

4.6 A comparison of the textbooks

There are surprisingly few exercises in *Passage* and *Imagine* compared to *Flying Colours* and *Targets*. As for *Passage*, the learners may be introduced to many more exercises if they make use of *Passage to Proficiency*. Moreover, all the textbooks offer more or less varied types of indirect grammar exercises; *Imagine* has an extra focus on translation exercises, whereas you find a lot of "fill-in from given words" exercises in *Targets*.

In Figure 4.1 the books are compared with respect to the number of direct grammar exercises. As can be seen from the diagram, there is a big difference between the first two books, *Passage* and *Imagine*, and the last two, *Flying Colours* and *Targets*. A small number of exercises means that little or no attention is given to certain grammatical features. In *Passage*, for example, verb exercises are almost totally absent. In *Imagine*, passive/active voice, direct/indirect speech, and exercises on clause level are totally absent.
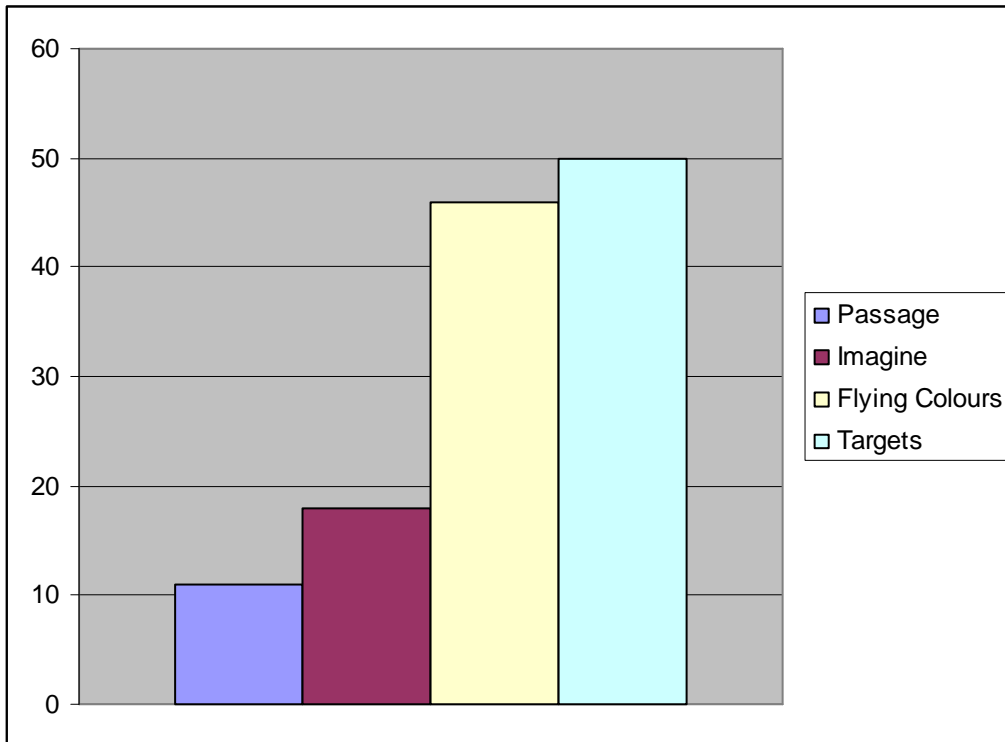
Figure 4.1. Direct grammar exercises in the textbooks

The larger number of exercises does not imply that grammar in *Flying Colours* and *Targets* is handled perfectly. There are always things to improve. I would like to explicate three possible aspects that could be improved, and they apply more or less to all the books studied. First of all, the grammar may seem unsystematic, and this is exactly the problem of not including a grammar book in the English lessons. If grammar is only to be studied in the textbooks, one must be more systematic. Clearly, *Flying Colours* and *Targets* take this task more seriously than the other books. Although a more comprehensive indexing of grammar is to be preferred, in their table of contents *Flying Colours* and *Targets* provide the learner with information on what aspects of grammar are practiced chapter by chapter. The bottom line is that a systematic approach to grammar gives the learner an overview and a sense of progress.

Secondly, grammar should be brought to the surface and thus serve to raise the learners' metalinguistic competence by being presented where appropriate. It should not be felt that grammar points pop up randomly here and there or that it "drowns" in

other types of activities. Again, *Flying Colours* and *Targets* pay more attention to explaining grammar points than do the other textbooks.

Thirdly, grammar beyond the sentence level is not so common in the textbooks studied. As we saw, *Targets* was the most obvious exception of the books studied. Chalker (1994: 41) reminds us that "… what is grammatically correct out of context may be virtually unacceptable in context". Discourse may not only provide sufficient context, but it may as well make the learner aware of how grammar interacts with other textual features, such as coherence. A suggestion here is for the authors of the textbooks to actively use literary texts for grammatical purposes (cf. Hasselgård 2001). If so, it would be an advantage if the learner is already acquainted with the material.

4.7   Grammar books

In this section a couple of grammar books, *Troubleshooter* and *Going for Grammar*, will be commented on. We will not attempt to analyze these books as we have done with the other textbooks so far. One reason is the very restricted use, or lack of use, of grammar books in the Norwegian school. Another reason is that including more analysis of books would be beyond the scope of an MA thesis. The point of mentioning grammar books at all is to give the reader an idea of what possible alternatives there are to ordinary textbooks.

Troubleshooter is a grammar book which is in use in the Norwegian senior high.[2] Nevertheless, at least in the Oslo area, its use is very limited. The book is supplemented with a CD containing extra grammar exercises. The authors claim in the preface of the book that it is not meant to be a complete grammar book with a lot of grammatical explanations, but that the emphasis is on exercises. The book consists of six chapters followed by keys to all the exercises. According to Chalker (1984), there

are three ways of organizing a grammar book: by word class, functional elements in sentences (e.g. NP, VP etc), or communicatively.[3] The first option is the most common, and is the case with *Troubleshooter* as well. Furthermore, the division of grammatical concepts is traditional in the sense that it goes from the less complex/ more teachable to the more complex/less teachable (James 1994). The six chapters are (my translation):

- Nouns and articles
- Pronouns
- Adjectives and adverbs
- Verbs
- Prepositions
- From word to text

Necessary grammatical explanation is given throughout the book. Different colors and pictures make the book interesting as well.

In contrast, *Going for Grammar* is not in use in the Norwegian school today. On the publisher's website it is not recommended under the section for books to be studied at the senior high level. The book was written ten years ago, so the question is why it still is not in use. I can think of possible reasons. The first is the comprehensiveness of the book, not only for the learners but for the teachers as well; it consists of ten fairly long chapters. Teachers have to feel confidence in their own knowledge of English grammar to be able to emphasize it in their teaching, and since my personal view is that grammar teaching has been more or less neglected in the last twenty to thirty years, *Going for Grammar* may seem to go against the trend. Moreover, for the learners, the book may seem too difficult and possibly also too dull. There are no stimulating colors and pictures as in *Troubleshooter*. On the top of that, if you want a key to the exercises, you have to buy it in a separate book. The division of grammar is

fairly similar to *Troubleshooter*, i.e. a traditional division (my own paraphrasing of the chapters):

- Nouns
- Pronouns
- Verbs
- More verbs
- Adjectives and adverbs
- Prepositions
- Sentences
- More about sentences
- Writing English
- Speech acts

Finally, as noted by Chalker (1994), it is common to use a textbook with some grammar and reinforce the grammar through more exercises. Thus I recommend all teachers to at least look for more exercises or more explanation of grammar in grammar books such as those commented on in this section. At best, a grammar book can help improve and supplement the presentation of grammar in the textbooks, not replace it. *Troubleshooter* has only been on the market for one year, thus it remains to be seen if it will be widely used in the schools in the future.

4.8   Summing up

In this chapter we have looked more closely at how much grammar there is in four different textbooks from the foundation course. In addition, we have considered the type of exercises given, and compared the textbooks to each other. Finally, we have reviewed a couple of grammar books and shed light on the difference between introducing grammar through textbooks versus grammar books.

We discovered that the amount and quality of the grammar sections differ to a great extent between the textbooks. This could be a problem since it can result in a

noticeable diversity in learners' knowledge of grammar. Books are, however, not the only source of grammar teaching and learning. This is one of the issues we will turn to in the next chapter.

Notes

---

[1] The term "textbooks" is here used as a general term referring to all four books studied even though they are both textbook and workbooks (see Section 1.4).

[2] Another book I have come across and which I know is in use in the Norwegian school, is *Arbeidsgrammatikk – engelsk* (1994) by Halvor Tesen. But *Troubleshooter* is by far the most used grammar book currently.

[3] *A Grammar of Contemporary English* (Quirk et al. 1972) is organized according to functional elements in sentences, and *A Communicative Grammar of English* is organized communicatively (Leech and Svartvik 1975).

Chapter 5: Field investigation

5.1   Methodology

The methodology used in this chapter is interviews (cf. Section 1.4). There are several types of interviews, and according to Robson's (2002) categorization of interviews the interview type made use of in this chapter is a semi-structured face-to-face informant interview. Predetermined interview questions, explanation and elaboration of the questions where required during the actual interview, and the possibility of omitting irrelevant questions while interviewing are the main characteristics of a semi-structured interview.

As discussed in Robson (2002), there are both advantages and disadvantages with choosing interviews rather than other enquiring techniques. Interviews are more flexible and adaptable as opposed to for example questionnaires. The interview questions can be adjusted to fit the interviewee's situation; if I ask the interviewee whether s/he has read the forthcoming syllabus and s/he answers no, I have to inform him/her and then ask for an opinion or drop asking any more questions about the forthcoming syllabus. Furthermore, it is possible to follow up interesting responses during an interview and thus go more in depth. In addition, the interviewee's non-verbal signals may be observed. Finally, interviews provide one with rich material, such as explanations, discussion, and nuances. On the other hand, the most problematic aspect of interviews is that they are extremely time-consuming; you have to make arrangements, get permission, confirm arrangements, make the actual interviews etc. Another possible disadvantage occurs when the time is ripe for the analysis of the

material, because open-ended questions provide qualitative data in a form which cannot easily be put into tables and figures as is the case with quantitative data.

The red thread in the interview questions presented to the teachers is their ideas, beliefs, and attitudes to the teaching of grammar in the foundation course (see Appendix). They have been asked about what role grammar plays and should play in their teaching lessons, what they think about the textbooks they use, what they believe their pupils think about grammar teaching, their opinion about the syllabus etc.

Before doing the actual interviews, I took care to test the interview questions by presenting them to a couple of friends who are into language studies. In that way I got an idea of how the questions were perceived by an "outsider" and how long the inter-view would take. Moreover, I had to decide whether to tape record the interviews or take notes. I chose the latter since the transcription of tape recorded material is very time-consuming; according to Robson (2002), one hour's material takes ten hours to transcribe.

During my work with the interviews, I learned to be patient because of all the waiting and arranging. I started out by sending e-mails to the vice principals at a couple of schools informing them about my project. They conveyed the information to the English teachers in the foundation course. I contacted those who showed interest and made appointments. Originally, I thought of going to two to three schools and interviewing five to six teachers from each school, but I ended up with five schools and fourteen teachers. Almost half of all the teachers contacted were willing to be interviewed. They were assured anonymity and the interviews took place in undis-turbed circumstances. Each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes.

5.2 The informants

Three criteria were decisive as regards the choice of schools: that the main branch of study the school offers is General and Business Studies, that they have an internet site, and that they are geographically located in the Oslo area. This restricted the informant group to teachers at the so-called "vestkantsskoler", which are usually considered the "better" schools of Oslo. The schools and the number of informants are listed below:

- **Berg videregående**, General and Business Studies and International Baccalaureate Studies, approximately 430 pupils and 50 teachers, situated in Tåsen, 3 informants.

- **Grefsen videregående**, General and Business Studies, 430 pupils and approximately 40 teachers, 3 informants.

- **Nordstrand videregående**, General and Business Studies, 350 pupils and approximately 40 teachers, 3 informants.

- **Fagerborg videregående**, General and Business Studies and music/dance/ drama studies, approximately 560 pupils and 60 teachers, situated at Pilestredet, 4 informants.

- **Ullern videregående**, General and Business Studies and media/IKT studies, 480 pupils and 40 teachers, 1 informant.

One of many perspectives of analysis could have been the difference between men and women, but since twelve of the informants were women, the gender distribution is unrepresentative. Otherwise, the group of informants was pretty heterogeneous. The average age of the informants was forty-eight, the youngest being twenty-nine and the oldest sixty-two. Moreover, seven of the informants were "adjunkt

med opprykk", four were senior high school teachers ("lektor"), two were "lektor med opprykk", and one had a master in Business Administration in addition to English "grunnfag" and PPU (Praktisk Pedagogisk Utdanning). Furthermore, the average seniority as a teacher was sixteen years, the least being three years and the most thirty-seven years. Six of the teachers taught English at other levels in addition to the "grunnkurs", i.e. VKI and VKII. On average 43 % of the teachers' teaching schedule is spent on teaching English, i.e. nine school hours per week.

5.3 Findings

First and foremost, it is important to emphasize the fact that this study is not meant to be representative of the whole country. On the contrary, it is meant to show tendencies or give an idea of teachers' attitudes and their practice of grammar teaching. Most probably, the results would have been somewhat different if I had chosen other types of schools, e.g. vocational schools, or the so-called "østkantsskoler", e.g. Bredtvet videregående. As mentioned earlier, the schools I have chosen are good schools where for example the entrance requirements are much higher than at "østkantsskoler", which might have implications for the way grammar is taught.

5.3.1 Opinions and attitudes

There was most agreement between the teachers regarding the definition of grammar (Question 1 in Appendix). Half of them said explicitly that grammar is the structure of a language, but all of them in some way or other define grammar along the same path. Other types of related responses were "knowing how to combine sentences", "a way of explaining the structure of a language", "a normative and systematic description of a language", "rules of language put into system", and "the system language is based on". Some also reflected on the function of grammar, which is aiding the learner in

communicating correctly and thus avoiding misunderstandings. One of the teachers differentiated between two types of grammar, sentence grammar and text grammar, where the former type of grammar was defined as that which shows the relations between words while the latter includes cohesion and coherence. The person concerned also underscored that the learners have had too little text grammar before they enter senior high. In addition to defining grammar, the informants were asked to give a few examples of grammar exercises. Various word classes were mentioned, most frequently verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Inflections, modals, singular/plural, apostrophe, compounds, and Norwenglish were other grammar points the teachers associated with grammar exercises. Furthermore, as we shall see later, teachers tend to focus on grammar points which learners have problems in coping with. Therefore, since most of them agree that subject-verb concord, adjective versus adverb, and *it* versus *there* are the most difficult areas for learners, these were also the most commonly associated grammar exercises.

The teachers' attitudes towards grammar may play a role in their teaching of it (Question 3 in Appendix). In general, they have a positive attitude, closely connected to their idea of what grammar is. They believe grammar is useful and important for understanding the structure of the English language and for getting utterances right. Indeed, working with grammar is considered to be something that is fun and interesting. Grammar makes learners understand that language is not haphazard, but on the contrary systematic. "If I had a choice, I would only teach grammar" was the reply of one of the teachers. Moreover, particularly amongst those with lower education and/or low seniority, there is the common belief that learning grammar should not be a goal in itself, but a means to learning the language. And since Norwegian pupils show great confidence in their knowledge of English, some may

consider the teaching of grammar to be unnecessary. On the other hand, teachers with *hovedfag* and/or high seniority seem to view grammar differently, like a discipline of its own similar to the civilization and literature parts of the English course. Furthermore, the more educated and experienced teachers were also the ones who seemed to have reflected much more on the issue of the teaching and learning of grammar. The teacher who did not have the traditional teacher training was in fact the only one who said that s/he has a negative attitude to grammar since it hinders one in using the language.

The same tendency goes for the current position of grammar teaching in the foundation course (Question 8 in Appendix). Almost all the teachers with *hovedfag* say that grammar has a marginal position in the foundation course, and they believe that it is sufficient but unsystematic. The other teachers believe that the current situation is satisfactory, but underscore the fact that it all depends on the group of learners and on teachers' practices.

It is one thing how the current situation as regards grammar teaching is, and another is how it ought to be, i.e. a normative and hypothetical aspect (Question 6 in Appendix). The teachers were split evenly into two categories: a view supporting minimal teaching of grammar with instrumental purposes (i.e. not grammar *per se*, but as a tool), and a view favoring more teaching of grammar as an independent discipline. Again, the former view was held almost exclusively by those without *hovedfag* and the latter by those with *hovedfag*. The arguments against more grammar teaching were that learners get enough grammar input through working with civilization texts and literature texts, particularly when reading a lot; furthermore, there is the belief that before they enter senior high, learners have the fundamental grammar knowledge needed; finally, the syllabus (R94) was referred to, where these teachers believe they

cannot find any special points proposing grammar teaching. On the other hand, the pro arguments were that the learners' level of grammar knowledge has decreased drastically during the past years, they write much more incorrect English, and vocabulary and expressing oneself is much more emphasized today at the expense of formal aspects of the language than for example ten years ago. Suggestions about the amount of grammar teaching varied from one school hour per two weeks to one fifth to one third of the total teaching time. In addition, teachers emphasized the importance of differentiation ("tilpasset opplæring") according to the learners' level and background, which they admit is very challenging. Once more, the exception from all the other replies came from the teacher without traditional teacher training, who thought that grammar should not play a role in the teaching at all.

The disparities outlined above are noteworthy, especially since some of the teachers expressed their desire to actually learn more about grammar in order to be able to convey their knowledge to their pupils.

5.3.2 The teachers' perception of the learners

It was also interesting to find out what the teachers' impressions are as regards their pupils' view of grammar (Questions 2 and 7 in Appendix). As opposed to teachers who think of grammar as putting language into a system, learners tend to associate grammar with isolated categories like the inflection of verbs and concord rules. According to the teachers, aspects connected to grammar beyond the sentence are absent in the pupils' picture of grammar. Moreover, again as opposed to teachers, learners think of grammar as something boring, rule-oriented, and old-fashioned. Most of them are indifferent to grammar and regard it as a necessary evil which they would, if they could, exclude totally from the lessons. Grammar is also felt to be difficult,

particularly by weaker pupils. Nonetheless, the exception seems to be when learners get tasks right, which gives them a feeling of achievement and progress. At the beginning of the school year they tend to reject grammar, but when they see results after hard work they change their minds. Fill-in tasks seem to be popular amongst learners. What they expect if their teacher announces a school hour exclusively dedicated to grammar is a brief explanation of a grammatical phenomenon followed by task activities, particularly fill-in tasks. Doing grammar tasks tends to become an on/off procedure, where it is "on" when learners make a lot of grammatical mistakes in their writing and the teacher wishes to focus on those mistakes. Teachers deplore this practice and urge for a more systematic one. Furthermore, they believe their pupils tend to overestimate their knowledge of grammar, particularly since they have been introduced to grammar during all the years preceding senior high. What is more, learners think sufficient knowledge of grammar is obtained through vast amounts of reading and writing, something some teachers disagree with and refer to those who read and write a lot but who actually make as many grammatical mistakes as the others. A final point mentioned by the teachers is that learners in the Norwegian school have been brought up to believe that the word "grammar" is a dirty word and should be avoided (maybe comparable to "nynorsk", as suggested by one of the teachers), which in turn may have reinforced learners' negative attitudes towards grammar. The teacher without traditional teacher training once more represented the response which was totally different from all others, which was that learners are positive to grammar teaching and view it as a key to understanding civilization texts and literature texts. Finally, almost all the responses ended with the remark that the learners' attitudes etc. vary from learner group to learner group.

5.3.3 Grammar teaching

Should grammar be taught in the foundation course? (Question 4 in Appendix) Those who answered an unconditional yes were almost exclusively teachers with *hovedfag*. Some believe grammar teaching should have a repairing function since learners make a lot of grammatical mistakes even though they have studied a lot of grammar before senior high, while others believe the purpose of grammar teaching at senior high should be to brush up what they already have learned earlier. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of formal features, especially written standard English, which they consider to be closely connected to the teaching of grammar. Moreover, they more or less agree that grammar teaching is neglected in today's senior high.

Other teachers distinguish sharply between knowing rules of grammar and being able to apply those rules in actual language use. They believe the best thing to do is not to teach more grammar rules, but let their pupils read and write a lot in order to apply the rules they already have learned. Yet others say that grammar should only be taught according to learners' needs, i.e. when learners produce incorrect language. The teacher without traditional teacher education was once again the one representing a unique answer. S/he said that grammar should not be taught in the foundation course, but the use of it should. According to him/her, reading would enhance the learners' use of language. S/he also believed that learners should learn more about how to write coherent passages of language, but that grammar could not be of any help (!).[1]

Besides, teachers were asked about their actual practice of grammar teaching, i.e. if they deliberately put aside time for it (Question 5 in Appendix). Half of the informants thought that grammar teaching should be based on the grammatical mistakes learners produce, especially in written production (essays). Thus my follow-up question was how much written production and grammatical mistakes there are, in

other words to what extent there is a need for teaching grammar. The answers varied, but something like one school hour per month is not unusual. Many of the teachers said they would like to extend this time, but according to them two main reasons restrict their wish: the time and the syllabus. There is already more than enough civilization and literature "pensum" they have to go through, and secondly the syllabus (R94) does not specify the teaching of grammar. Any time set aside for grammar teaching is at the expense of something else. Thus lack of time in the classroom and lack of guidance in the syllabus lead to a meaning/fact-oriented content of teaching.

It is common to focus on frequent mistakes in class, whereas more rare mistakes are commented on individually, e.g. by referring to a section in *Troubleshooter* that deals with the grammar rule concerned. However, not all teachers see the value of teaching grammar, at least not doing so explicitly. Some believe in "the more input the better" hypothesis, preferably great amounts of reading (as noted earlier).

At the other extreme, you have those who attach almost the same importance to grammar as to other parts of the English course. Some of the teachers say they deliberately teach grammar one school hour per week in addition to when it is required (i.e. more than 20-25 % of the total amount of teaching time). It seems that time pressure does not cause any difficulties for this group.

Clearly, the teachers' responses to the interview questions surveyed above depend on their definition of grammar, but since they were unanimous in their understanding of the concept (cf. Section 5.3.1), this has not caused any problems. Furthermore, as is the case with all teaching, the amount of time earmarked for grammar teaching varies according to the group of learners.

5.3.4 Teaching material

My hope was to meet teachers who use different textbooks in their teaching, so as to cover the four main books analyzed in Chapter 4. Unfortunately, none of the informants used *Flying Colours* or *Imagine. Passage* is used by seven of them, *Passage* and *Passage to Proficiency* by three, and *Targets* by four. Interestingly, the grammar book *Troubleshooter* is used actively by four of the fourteen teachers. In addition to copied material like articles from newspapers and grammar exercises from other books, a couple of the teachers use a magazine called *Current*, where longer texts can be used for grammatical purposes. A couple of others are even more creative. One of them puts together his/her own grammar exercises based on the learners' needs/problems. The other one makes use of a book called *Grammar Games*, where learners can have fun by doing grammar exercises through, for example, drama activities. The Internet also seems to be a useful source, albeit not amongst all the teachers. Some believe they are amateurs, and some have found it unsatisfactory to let their pupils sit and work on the Internet individually. Finally, it is common for nearly all learners to have their own dictionaries; yet the question is whether they know how to use them properly.

Half of the informants neither use the workbook nor a grammar book (Questions 9 and 10 in Appendix). There seem to be three reasons for this. The first one, which only applies to workbooks, is discontentment on the part of the teachers regarding the activities in the workbooks and the treatment of grammar. Often the activities are considered to be too simple or superfluous. Secondly, since one has to buy the books needed in today's high school (as opposed to borrowing, which was the case earlier), there is an economic aspect to take into consideration on behalf of the learners and their parents.[2] Teachers solve this by copying from workbooks and grammar books, or turn to their own creativity and make up grammar exercises themselves. And thirdly,

some schools decide beforehand and sometimes on behalf of the teachers which books the pupils should buy and which not. Another interesting aspect is that none of the users of *Targets* turn to its workbook or any grammar book. In addition to the general reasons outlined above, the users of *Targets* have a specially designed Internet site with activities, including grammar tasks.[3] This may have minimized the need for owning a workbook or a grammar book. On the Internet, in contrast to books, learners can do grammar activities at different levels, which is in harmony with individualized instruction ("tilpasset opplæring").

Of the ten informants who use *Passage*, three in addition use *Passage to Proficiency* and four also use *Troubleshooter*. As expected, *Passage to Proficiency* was not considered to be a workbook belonging to *Passage*, but rather an extra book of activities (cf. Section 4.2). Those who, despite this belief, recommend their pupils to buy *Passage to Proficiency* give two reasons for their choice. Firstly, they say *Passage* does not cater for grammar at all, and secondly, *Passage to Proficiency* is considered to be a useful book of grammar activities – a kind of "survival-kit". Furthermore, you have those who want more, and systematic, treatment of grammar. They tell their pupils to purchase *Troubleshooter*, which seems to be a book that is well liked by the teachers. Layout, colors, pictures, clear structure, suitable level, applicability and grammatical explanations given in Norwegian are some factors teachers emphasize as advantageous in *Troubleshooter*. Nonetheless, as opposed to when the teachers themselves attended senior high, a grammar book is seldom used today. Making *Troubleshooter* part of the teaching material is new to several of the teachers, even though they have been teaching for years; thus it was difficult for them to say anything about what their pupils' impressions are (an older edition has been on the market, but it

seems that the new edition from 2004 with colors and illustrations is selling more and more).

5.3.5 Linguistic competence in R94

Although interpreted differently and sometimes forgotten or overlooked, linguistic competence is as much present in R94 as the other types of competence (cf. Section 1.2 and 3.9.1). I was very curious about how the informants actually understand the linguistic aspects of R94 (Question 11 in Appendix). When it comes to whether teaching of grammar is connected with linguistic competence, nearly all replies were an indisputable yes. A few of the informants admitted they did not know how to interpret linguistic competence, but supposed it has to do with the teaching of grammar.

Learners are supposed to develop and practice their linguistic competence. What is more, linguistic competence has to be assessed by the teacher. Obviously, when the term "linguistic competence" per se is ambiguous amongst teachers, so are the pedagogical features connected with it. Teachers frequently mention training in the four skills (writing, reading, listening, speaking) and the two modes (written, oral) as a crucial step towards increasing one's linguistic competence; other suggestions are working with texts, getting as much input as possible, studying authentic language, learning idiomatic English, and learning grammar. A couple of the teachers were very upset about the situation in today's school. They proposed that pupils entering senior high should start by learning basic grammatical terms, e.g. what a "noun" is, and how to use a dictionary. Then they may move on to learning idiomatic English. Yet other teachers thought that the separation of the various types of competence is awkward. After all, one may assert that "linguistic competence" is synonymous with command of the "language", and thus grammar is just one of many components making up

"linguistic competence". Or one may consider all the competences to comprise a whole, so that linguistic competence is merely a part of the whole – in other words, you have to develop all the competences simultaneously (and some of them clearly overlap!) to be able to develop a foreign language. Partly, I agree with these points of view, and realize the complications that may arise. Another interesting observation is that the teaching and learning of grammar as one of the ways of developing linguistic competence is pointed out solely by the teachers with *hovedfag*.

Regarding the assessment of linguistic competence, traditional testing methods are emphasized, e.g. written tests where vocabulary, grammar, and textual cohesion are assessed, and oral tests or oral presentations where learners' pronunciation, vocabulary, and ways of expressing themselves (strategic competence) are assessed. Nevertheless, it was asserted that in today's school communicative competence is the number one goal, and thus making oneself understood is the primary ability learners are to be assessed for. In turn, this means that grammatical mistakes should be tolerated as long as they are not so frequent that they seriously hinder communication. In this context, it was interesting to see that only one of the informants uses the assessment criteria recommended by the Council of Europe (2001), which puts great emphasis on communicative competence. Moreover, the informants could remember that grammar was assessed earlier in connection with all-day exams. Today, on the other hand, only factual knowledge is assessed.

Half of the informants thought that linguistic competence is currently too little prioritized. The other half was pretty much split. Some said the situation is satisfactory, some thought it depends on the learner group concerned, and others believed linguistic competence is justly prioritized less as for example social competence is more important.

5.3.6 The forthcoming syllabus

This thesis was prepared in a transitional period between R94 and the forthcoming syllabus; thus it was appropriate to ask the teachers about any possible future changes as regards the teaching of grammar, which brings me to the last interview question (Question 12 in Appendix).

All the informants except two had read or seen the drafts for the new syllabus and could thus express their thoughts and impressions. It was stated that linguistic competence is even vaguer in the new syllabus. Thus, generally, the informants did not have the impression that the position of grammar would be altered drastically. The points surveyed in the following may, however, have implications for the teaching of grammar.

Many stressed the vagueness of the new syllabus; it does not state explicitly what the learners should learn (e.g. "learners should learn the appropriate terminology" was given as an example by one of the informants; s/he questioned the meaning of "appropriate"), and nothing is said about assessment criteria. Nevertheless, as mentioned by one of the informants who saw the paradox in this, when L97 entered the schools teachers disliked it because of its detailed regulations, and now it seems to be the opposite situation. The extreme lack of specific guidelines in the new syllabus worried many of the informants. They believe it will lead to a situation where teaching will vary to a great extent from school to school and from teacher to teacher, which is in sharp contrast to the Norwegian principle of equality.

Furthermore, there was the belief that aspects of civilization studies are less present in the new syllabus than for example aspects of language. However, only a very few said that the position of grammar will be strengthened. Rather, "learning to learn" and "learning to calculate" were ridiculed. The teachers questioned the possi-

bility of assessing how a learner has learnt to learn, and the absurdness of including mathematic studies in the English course. The international tone of the new syllabus, talking about English as an international language and looking much more toward other English-speaking countries than the USA and the UK, was also brought up. And so was the technological side, where ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is much more stressed in the forthcoming syllabus. According to the informants, one thing that might get better with the new syllabus is the new sense of continuation and progress as the foundation course, junior high, and the elementary levels are viewed as a whole.

5.4   Discussion

Mitchell (1994) claims that EFL teachers' perception of grammar is biased towards morphology, and their teaching of it towards topic-based, inductive, and communicative approaches. Our findings, however, suggest that there is a difference between teachers with *hovedfag* and teachers without *hovedfag*. Teachers with *hovedfag* would by some people probably be called old-fashioned, but nevertheless they are the ones who have most education and most seniority. During the interviews, I also sensed that they were the group who had the clearest and most thoroughly thought-out answers.

Teachers and learners hold opposing views as to what grammar is, what its role is and should be in teaching. I believe teachers have a challenging but important task here. To a much greater extent than before we have to be able to convey a view of grammar to our pupils which does not make them prejudge grammar as boring, old-fashioned etc. As we saw, most learners change their opinion as soon as they master grammatical tasks. Maybe grammar is more like mathematics in this context than for example history. According to cognitive psychologists, we use the right side of our

brain for analytical purposes; grammar and mathematics are analytical disciplines, where pupils very soon get discouraged if they feel they cannot manage it, but on the other hand show a growing interest the more they understand the underlying patterns involved.

Even though there are different opinions about how much grammar should be taught to senior high pupils, a deduction from the interview responses is that lack of guidelines, overemphasis of factual knowledge, and no time or too little time dedicated especially to grammar teaching are hinders for most teachers who wish to raise their pupils' awareness of grammar. This is where I think the forthcoming syllabus can offer alternatives, but also possible hitches (as noted by the interviewees; see further Section 6.4). Moreover, there seems to be a diagnostic approach to current grammar teaching, i.e. grammar is talked about explicitly only when pupils have problems with their language, as also stated by Mitchell (1994). In other words, grammar teaching is in most cases not pre-planned, which must be closely, but not only, connected with the problems outlined above. Another reason, as I see it, is that it may be a leftover from a strong version of CLT.

When it comes to the teaching material, at least the use of workbooks and grammar books, practices seem to be more or less arbitrary. This arbitrariness may be much more common in English than in other school subjects, partly due to the rich selection of teaching material offered, partly because of the changing status and knowledge of the English language (for example, the more English reaches the status of a second language in Norway, the more grammar may be considered superfluous), and partly because of the syllabus guidelines and the teachers' various interpretations of them.

It is especially noteworthy that some teachers claim grammar is not mentioned in R94, while others say it is present to a great extent. The truth is, as we have seen earlier, that linguistic competence and grammar are explicitly referred to in R94; they are to be developed by the learners and assessed by the teachers (cf. Section 3.9.1). Some teachers do not know what is meant by linguistic competence in R94, but assume it must be related to the teaching of grammar. It is legitimate to wonder why teachers can be unsure at all as linguistic competence is clearly defined in R94: "I hvilken grad eleven er i stand til å beherske korrekt grammatikk, vokabular og uttale" (R94: 57).

5.5   Summing up

This chapter reports on a limited field investigation where teachers in the foundation course have expressed their opinions about and attitudes to the teaching and learning of English grammar. This is a field that has been surprisingly little studied before. Grammar is part of one's linguistic competence, and this was discussed with the interviewees on the basis of the main source of guidelines for teaching, namely the syllabus. The most striking findings were the difference between teachers without *hovedfag* and teachers with *hovefag*, the arbitrariness of using the workbook or a grammar book, and the random practice of teaching grammar. The two groups of teachers view grammar and its position in the foundation course in a different way, and also interpret linguistic competence in R94 differently.

Notes

---

[1] It is widely acknowledged that cohesion enhances coherence.

[2] The new socialist government (in power from October 15th 2005) promises to reintroduce free teaching material for senior high schools.

[3] www.lokus.no

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1   **Looking back**

In the theoretical part of this thesis we have taken a closer look at relevant research in the area of study, defined grammar and shed light on its pedagogical aspects, investigated how grammar has been taught since circa 1840 and in that way showed the connections to current grammar teaching. On the practical level, we have attempted to break new ground by analyzing the books which are currently most used in the foundation course, and by interviewing teachers in the foundation course, with the aim of finding out how grammar is treated and teachers' attitudes to it. (For summaries of the chapters, the reader is referred to the Summing Up sections at the end of each chapter.)

6.2   **Synthesis**

In the following I will try to synthesize the main findings of this thesis by turning to the point of departure, as specified in the Introduction. What I mainly hope to have achieved is to show the relationship between grammar and grammar teaching, and that current practice is closely connected with the history of grammar teaching. Theoretical grammars and functional grammars are both exploited in pedagogical grammars. At the same time, ideas and theories in the domains of language and learning, which as we saw change over time, have had particular influence on the way grammar is perceived and taught. Thus, from the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) from the 1840s to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) of the 1970s/1980s, various approaches and methods have succeeded each other and left traces which can be seen

in contemporary grammar teaching. With respect to Norway, grammar points in the syllabuses M74, L76, M87, and R94 have been altered accordingly, yet somewhat later than international tendencies. Regarding today's situation, my claim is that important formal points in R94 have been more or less overshadowed by stronger versions of CLT, leading to the negligence of grammar in the teaching of EFL.

Moreover, I hope to have come up with evidence indicating that the type of grammar exercises and their quantity in the textbooks that are most used in the foundation course vary greatly, at least between *Passage* and *Imagine* versus *Flying Colours* and *Targets*. Another objection is that the treatment of grammar in textbooks is unsystematic. Finally, through the field investigation, I hope to have revealed that workbooks, and particularly grammar books, are rarely used in current teaching; that linguistic competence is too little emphasized in the teaching and often interpreted differently by the teachers; and that the practice of teaching grammar, both quantitatively and qualitatively, varies to a great extent from class to class. Another hypothesis of mine which has been verified is that learners think that grammar is dull, judging by comments from the teachers.[1] The most striking finding was the difference between teachers with *hovedfag* and those without when it comes to attitudes to grammar and the teaching of grammar. According to the teachers, if the forthcoming syllabus leads to any changes at all in grammar teaching, the guidelines will be even vaguer; this thesis is probably one of the first, if not the first, to bring forth teacher's views on the forthcoming syllabus.

My qualitative field investigation has put flesh on Mella's (1998) quantitative study. Some of Mella's findings are verified to a certain degree. Norwegian was the most common subject taught besides English by the teachers in Mella's investigation, but in my informant group French, German, and history were as frequent as Nor-

wegian. Only one third of Mella's informants used grammar books, but less than one third (four out of fourteen) in my study do the same. While Mella's informants were very experienced, most of my informants had less teaching experience. This may indicate an ongoing shift of the teacher generation.[2] Some of my findings provide more explanation than Mella's, which is the great advantage of interviews as opposed to questionnaires. Two of his conclusions, decreasing time spent on teaching grammar explicitly and a view of grammar as a "tool", seem to be true with respect to teachers without *hovedfag* in my study. Furthermore, other significant reasons given for not using a grammar book in addition to teachers using the material offered in the text- and workbooks are that they do not see the demand in R94, the Internet offers grammar activities, the school makes the decision on behalf of the teachers, and, last but not least, there are economic reasons.

Is it right to say that Norwegian learners today have such good English skills that grammar teaching is unnecessary? Only if grammar is considered to be merely a tool for learning a new language. But if improving and raising one's awareness of the language are seen as further goals, then explicit grammar teaching should be a natural part of the teaching. As pointed out by Mitchell (1994), explicit grammar teaching helps students notice features of language (cf. consciousness-raising), including what is <u>not</u> possible, and it highlights contrasts between the target language and the L1. Williams (1994) distinguishes between constitutive and communicative grammar. The former, which can be characterized as a "narrow" view, if not observed, results in a non-English utterance, e.g. with respect to word order: *Visited he me yesterday*. In the latter, on the other hand, you ask what the difference is between utterance X and utterance Y, e.g. *This is easy for the students who enjoy grammar* versus *This is easy*

for the students, who enjoy grammar. Williams (1994) underlines the importance of teaching communicative grammar to non-native speakers of English.

In conclusion, we can assert that the position of grammar in today's foundation course is weak, though it varies depending on the teacher's education, the learner group concerned, and the teaching material used.

6.3   A critical view

Questions could be raised as to what could have been done differently and what could have been done more extensively in the practical part of the thesis. Any choice with respect to methodology is of course my own, and other researchers may have chosen to focus on other aspects.

A more comprehensive comparative approach in the analysis of course books could have been interesting, e.g. comparing the grammar in the books in the foundation course with a selection of books from the lower, compulsory, levels. Another interesting approach could have been to compare the grammar in text- and workbooks used at "vestkantsskoler" with those at "østkantsskoler" in Oslo. Moreover, it might have been fruitful to do a thorough analysis of grammar books in use, e.g. *Troubleshooter*, and thus find out to what extent the various exercises stimulate learners' grammar. Finally, carrying out a similar study *after* the implementation of the new syllabus and the introduction of new books[3] should indeed be of great interest, both to sense the changes over time, and to get an idea of the status quo.

Even though it has been essential to bring forth teachers' views, the other vital party in the context of teaching and learning of grammar is definitely the learners. They could be interviewed about their attitudes to grammar. Or, more interesting, learners' written productions could be analyzed with the aim of finding out what types

of grammatical mistakes are the most common, and maybe comparing the results with the syllabus and/or the textbooks' treatment of grammar.

This thesis has focused on linguistic competence. What about the other competences? As suggested in Section 3.9.1, sociolinguistic and discourse competence are related to the teaching and learning of grammar. One could study the extent of grammar involved in these competences and do a practical investigation connected with it.

Nevertheless, what is certain is that these and other related questions are outside the scope of this study, and are thus left for others to investigate in the future.

6.4   Looking forward

We will try to predict the future of the teaching and learning of grammar by referring to the forthcoming syllabus and discussing a couple of major recent changes in the educational system.

The forthcoming syllabus is a result of the government's school reform called Kunnskapsløftet (2006-2008). The main intentions are to replace L97 and R94 by giving schools and teachers more responsibility and more autonomy,[4] by focusing more on individualized instruction, by being more clear as to what the learners should learn (especially the basic skills of speaking, reading, writing, and calculating) and at the same time be less detailed, and by viewing the common subjects in the foundation course, e.g. English, as an integrated part of the compulsory school. In the general part of the syllabus, the following is particularly relevant for the teaching and learning of grammar: "... utvikle ordforråd og ferdigheter i å bruke språkets lyd-, grammatikk-, setnings- og tekstbyggingssystemer (p. 65; my emphasis).[5] Furthermore, the main goals of the syllabus are arranged under the following headings: "Language learning",

"Communication", and "Culture, society and literature".[6] The first two deal with linguistic aspects and have to do with the learning of and the use of the language, respectively. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 specify attainment targets particularly relevant for the future of grammar teaching:

Language learning (general; p. 66)
- ... <u>kunnskap om språket</u>, språkbruk og innsikt i egen språklæring.
- ... se sammenhenger mellom engelsk, morsmål og andre språk.

After Vg1 (the foundation course; p. 71)
- drøfte likheter og forskjeller mellom engelsk og andre fremmedspråk ...
- bruke <u>relevant og presis terminologi for å beskrive språkets formverk og strukturer</u>.
- bruke ... <u>ettspråklige ordbøker</u> ...

Figure 6.1. Points from "Language learning" in the forthcoming syllabus relevant for the teaching and learning of grammar (p. 66 and p. 71; my emphasis)

Communication (general; p. 66)
- ... kunnskaper og ferdigheter i å bruke ordforråd og <u>idiomatiske strukturer</u>, uttale, intonasjon, <u>rettskriving, grammatikk og oppbygging av setninger og tekster</u>.

After Vg1 (the foundation course; p. 71-72)
- bruke språkets formverk og tekststrukturer ...
- uttrykke seg skriftlig og muntlig på en nyansert og situasjonstilpasset måte, med <u>flyt, presisjon og sammenheng</u>.
- skrive formelle og uformelle tekster med <u>god struktur og sammenheng</u> ...

Figure 6.2. Points from "Communication" in the forthcoming syllabus relevant for the teaching and learning of grammar (p. 66 and p. 71-72; my emphasis)

As the reader can observe, much more is stated concerning the teaching of grammar than in the former syllabus R94 (cf. Section 3.9.1). In this respect, we can claim that grammar is strengthened in the new syllabus. Learning grammatical terminology and learning to use a monolingual dictionary are major and important steps towards increasing the learners' metalinguistic knowledge.

A situation of *laissez-faire* with extended teacher autonomy can be beneficial if teachers have the necessary competence and experience, both at a theoretical level, i.e. the subject(s) they teach, and at a practical level, i.e. various teaching methodologies.

Simensen (2005: 6) takes up this discussion in her recent article, and claims that "Det som er helt sikkert, er at denne type læreplan [the forthcoming syllabus] vil komme til å stille store krav til læreren". If teachers manage this great task they are being given in a sensible way, both they and their pupils may benefit from it.

However, we have witnessed a tremendous change in teacher training as a result of the Quality Reform in higher education (introduced in 2003). Earlier, teacher training for "lektor" consisted of a six year degree (e.g. *Cand. Philol.*) plus one year of practical-pedagogical training (PPU). After the Quality Reform, it only takes five years to become a "lektor" through the so-called LAP program (Lektor- og adjunkt-programmet). The new master programs consist of one and a half years of study (90 credits) as opposed to the traditional two-year master (120 credits). The reformers have taken away 30 credits (or one semester's studies) at the expense of the time allotted to thesis writing, which is thus half a year shorter. I believe thesis writing, where students are expected to do critical, analytical, and insightful research, is the most central part of a master's degree. Therefore it is unfortunate that teachers in the future will lack this specialty. What is more, PPU is included in the five years of the LAP program, whereas earlier one studied PPU after finishing a six-year degree. In sum, high school teachers in the future will have five years of education, in contrast to the present or retiring teachers who have seven years.[7] These changes are of special interest since the interviews in this thesis confirm differences in attitudes, teaching methods etc. according to the teachers' level of education. Thus it remains to see whether the new teacher training program will have any consequences for the teaching and learning of English grammar. In my view, an alternative to the LAP program could have been an ordinary five year master plus PPU, i.e. a total of six years study for becoming a "lektor".

I realize the advantages of the Quality Reform, e.g. greater internationalization and study programs with clearer progression, but not in the case of teacher training, which requires a broad and deep foundation in the subject.

Notes

[1] As far as the European project from 2002 is concerned (see Section 1.3), the teachers interviewed confirmed to some extent their pupils' poor spelling skills.

[2] A very large group of teachers will reach their retiring age in the next few years.

[3] As a consequence of a new syllabus next year, the course books will have to be revised.

[4] A change in harmony with the proposals of the Council of Europe, most recently through the *Common European Framework* (2001) (Simensen 2005).

[5] http://www.odin.dep.no/filarkiv/255552/Lplan_260805.pdf

[6] Under "Culture, society and literature", English as an international world language is mentioned. The question is whether the change in focus from American/British English to other English-speaking countries will have anything to say for the future of grammar teaching. An assumption is that English grammar will be less "rule-oriented" and include more variation, e.g. allow the dropping of third person singular -*s*.

[7] But as we saw in Chapter five, many teachers who are not "lektor" are employed in today's high schools, which is connected with, or at least encouraged by, the last government's market economic understanding of education (former Minister of education, Kristin Clemet, has in fact got a master in Business Administration). It is thus cheaper for the school administration to employ teachers who are not "lektor" (this was also confirmed by some of the schools I visited). (Another ramification of the right-winged education policy is for example that universities receive financial support according to the amount of credits the students produce. Recently I read an article in *Aftenposten* (24.10.05) where it is said that professors have become more reserved in failing teacher trainees since you have this economic "punishment".)

References

Primary sources:

Syllabuses

Læreplan for videregående skole. 1976. Oslo: Kirke-, utdannings- og forsknings-departementet: Gyldendal.

Mønsterplan for grunnskolen. 1974. Oslo: Aschehoug.

Curriculum Guidelines for Compulsory Education in Norway. 1987. Oslo: Aschehoug.

Curriculum for Upper Secondary Education. English. Common General Subject for All Areas of Study. 1993. Oslo: The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs.

http://www.odin.dep.no/filarkiv/255552/Lplan_260805.pdf – the new syllabus, passed August 15th 2005, in force from 2006 (for English from p. 65, for English in the foundation course from p. 71).

Books

*Arbeidsgrammatikk – engelsk.*1994. Universitetsforlaget.

Flying Colours workbook. Engelsk grunnkurs for allmenne og økonomiske/adminis-trative fag. 2000. Gyldendal Norsk Forlag.

Going for Grammar. Engelsk grammatikk med oppgaver for den videregående skolen. 1995. Aschehoug.

Imagine workbook. Engelsk grunnkurs. 2000. Oslo: Cappelens Forlag AS.

Passage. Engelsk grunnkurs. 2003. Oslo: Cappelens Forlag AS.

Passage to Proficiency. 2003. Cappelens Forlag AS.

Targets workbook. Engelsk grunnkurs. 1998. Aschehoug & Co.

Troubleshooter. Engelsk aktivitetsgrammatikk for den videregående skolen. 2004. Cappelen.

Secondary sources:

Allen, J.P.B. 1974. "Pedagogic Grammar". In J.P.B Allen & S.P. Corder (eds.), *The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics. Techniques in Applied Linguistics*, Vol.3, 59-92. London: Oxford University Press.

Allen, J.P.B & H.G. Widdowson. 1975. "Grammar and Language Teaching". In J.P.B Allen & S.P. Corder (eds.), *The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics. Papers in Applied Linguistics*, Vol.2, 45-98. London: Oxford University Press.

Anthony, E.M. 1963. "Approach, Method and Technique". *English Language Teaching*, 17, 63-67.

Austin, J.L. 1962. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bloomfield, L. 1933. *Language*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

Bollerud, R. 2002. Teaching English as a Foreign Language: To what Extent is Norwegian Used in our English Teaching Today – and why? *Hovedfag* thesis. Oslo: University of Oslo, Department of British and American Studies.

Burner, T. 2004. "On English as a Foreign Language in the Norwegian Compulsory School: A Comparative Approach". Term paper for ENG4105 – English in Norway. University of Oslo, Department of British and American Studies.

---   . 2005. "Influential Approaches, Methods, and Ideas in English Language Teaching (circa 1840-1970) with Specific Reference to the Teaching and Learning of Grammar". Term paper for EDID4010 – Fundamental Concepts of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. University of Oslo, Department of Teacher Education and School Development.

Canale, M & M. Swain. 1980. "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing". *Applied Linguistics*, 1: 1, 1-47.

Chalker, S. 1984. Why Can't Someone Write a Nice, Simple Grammar? *ELT Journal*, 38: 2, 79-85.

---   . 1994. "Pedagogical Grammar: Principles and Problems". In M. Bygate, A. Tonkyn & E. Williams (eds.), *Grammar and the Language Teacher*, 31-44. Hartfordshire: Prentice Hall.

Chomsky, N. 1957. *Syntactic Structures*. The Hague: Mouton.

---   . 1965. *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.

Collins COBUILD English Dictionary. 1989. London: HarperCollins.

Cook, V. 1994. "Universal Grammar and the Learning and Teaching of Second Languages". In T. Odlin (ed.), *Perspectives on Pedagogical Grammar*, 25-49. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Corder, S.P. 1973. *Introducing Applied Linguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Education.

Council of Europe. 2001. *Common European Framework of References for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dirven, R. 1990. "Pedagogical Grammar". *Language Teaching. The International Abstracting Journal for Language Teachers and Applied Linguists*, 23: 1, 1-18.

Edmondson, W., J. House, G. Kasper & J. McKeown. 1977. *A Pedagogic Grammar of the English Verb: A Handbook for the German Secondary Teacher of English*. Tübingen: G.Narr.

Eirheim, K.T. 1983. *Engelsk: fra studiefag til undervisningsfag: Et kort kurs i fag-didaktikk*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Fillmore, C.J. 1968. "The Case for Case". In E. Bach & R.T. Harms (eds.), *Universals in Linguistic Theory*, 1-88. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

Francis, W.N. 1958. *The Structure of American English*. New York: Ronald.

Franke, F. 1884. *Die praktische Spracherlernung auf Grund der Psychologie und der Physiologie der Sprache dargestellt*. Leipzig: O.R. Reisland.

Fries, C.C. 1945. *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

--- . 1952. *The Structure of English: An Introduction to the Construction of English Sentences*. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Granger, S., J. Hung & S. Petch-Tyson. 2002. *Computer Learner Corpora, Second Language Acquisition and Foreign Language Teaching*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Halliday, M.A.K., A. McIntosh & P. Strevens. 1964. *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. London: Longman.

Halliday, M.A.K. & R. Hasan. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

Hasselgård, H. 2001. "Grammar in Communicative English Teaching". *Språk og Språkundervisning*, 1, 7-12.

Helleland, H. 1987. Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in Norwegian Schools. *Hovedfag* thesis. Bergen: University of Bergen, Department of English.

Hornby, A.S. 1954. *A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English*. London: Oxford University Press.

Howatt, A.P.R. & H.G. Widdowson. 2004. *A History of English Language Teaching*. (2nd ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hubbard, P.L. 1994. "Non-transformational Theories of Grammar: Implications for Language Teaching". In T. Odlin (ed.), *Perspectives on Pedagogical Grammar*, 49-72. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hymes, D. 1972. "On Communicative Competence". In J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings*, 269-293. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Ibsen, E. 2004. *Engelsk i Europa – 2002*. Acta Didactica 2/2004. University of Oslo: Department of Teacher Education and School Development.

Jafapur, A. 1976. "A Contextual Approach to Teaching English Articles". *English Teaching Forum*, 14: 4, 40-41.

James, C. 1980. *Contrastive Analysis*. Longman: London.

--- . 1994. "Explaining Grammar to its Learners". In M. Bygate, A. Tonkyn & E. Williams (eds.), *Grammar and the Language Teacher*, 203-214. Hartfordshire: Prentice Hall.

Jarvis, R.A. 1977. "A Pedagogical Grammar of the Modal Auxiliaries". *English Language Teaching*, 26, 238-248.

Jespersen, O. 1935. *Sprogundervisning*. (2nd ed.) København: Gyldendal.

Keller, S.L. 1994. "Grammatikk og grammatikkundervisning". In E. Ibsen, S. Johansen & S.L. Keller (eds.), *Veiledning i fremmedspråk / Senter for lærerutdanning og skoletjeneste*, 149-163. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Lado, R. 1957. *Linguistics Across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

--- . 1964. *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Leach, P. 1987. "Passive Resistance". *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 3, 51-68.

Leech, G. 1994. "Students' Grammar – Teachers' Grammar – Learners' Grammar". In M. Bygate, A. Tonkyn & E. Williams (eds.), *Grammar and the Language Teacher,* 17-30. Hartfordshire: Prentice Hall.

Leech, G. & J. Svartvik. 1975. *A Communicative Grammar of English*. London: Longman.

Linnarud, M. 1993. *Språkforskning för språklärare*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. 1995 (3rd ed.). London: Longman.

McLaughlin, B. 1987. *Theories of Second Language Learning*. London: Edward Arnold.

McTear, M.F. 1979. "Systemic Functional Grammar: Some Implications for Language Teaching". *IRAL*, 17: 2, 99-122.

Mella, A. 1998. On the Role of Grammar in English Language Teaching: with Specific Reference to Upper Secondary Education in Norway. *Hovedfag* thesis. Oslo: University of Oslo, Department of British and American Studies.

Mitchell, R. 1994. "Foreign Language Teachers and the Teaching of Grammar". In M. Bygate, A. Tonkyn & E. Williams (eds.), *Grammar and the Language Teacher*, 215-223. Hartfordshire: Prentice Hall.

Nida, E.A. 1966. *A Synopsis of English Syntax*. 2nd ed. The Hague: Mouton.

Ogden, C.K. 1930. *Basic English: A General Introduction with Rules and Grammar*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trubner.

Ooi D. & J.L. Kim-Seoh. 1996. "Vocabulary Teaching: Looking Behind the Word". *ELT Journal*, 50: 1, 52-58.

Petrovitz, W. 1997. "The Role of Context in the Presentation of Grammar". *ELT Journal*, 51: 3, 201-207.

Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech & J. Svartvik. 1972. *A Grammar of Contemporary English*. London: Longman.

--- . 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.

Richards, J.C. 1977. "Answers to yes/no Questions". *ELT Journal*, 31: 2, 136-141.

Richards, J.C. & T.S. Rodgers. 1986. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching: A description and analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Robson, C. 2002. *Real World Research*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Rutherford, W.E. 1987. *Second Language Grammar: Learning and Teaching*. New York: Longman Inc.

Searle, J.R. 1969. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmitt, N. 2000. *Vocabulary in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sharwood-Smith, M. 1978. *Aspects of Future Reference in a Pedagogical Grammar of English*. Frankfurt/Main: P.Lang.

Simensen, A.M. 1998. *Teaching a Foreign Language: Principles and Procedures*. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.

--- . 2005. "Fremmedspråklærerens nye rolle: Frigjort og med store faglig og undervisningsmetodisk myndighet ved målstyring?". *Språk og Språkundervisning*, 2, 4-6.

Skaane, K.D. 2002. The Foundation Course in English: A Comparative Analysis of Syllabuses and Textbooks. *Hovedfag* thesis. Oslo: University of Oslo, Department of British and American Studies.

Stern, H.H. 1983. *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sweet, H. 1899. *The Practical Study of Languages: a Guide for Teachers and Learners*. London: Dent.

Sørensen, C.T.L. 2002. Learning English Vocabulary: A Study in the Use of Learning Strategies. *Hovedfag* thesis. Oslo: University of Oslo, Department of British and American Studies.

Thompson, G. 1996. *Introducing Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.

West, M. 1953. *A General Service List of English Words*. London: Longman.

Williams, E. 1994. "English Grammar and the Views of English Teachers". In M. Bygate, A. Tonkyn & E. Williams (eds.), *Grammar and the Language Teacher*, 105-118. Hartfordshire: Prentice Hall.

Wood, D. 2001. "In Search of Fluency: What Is It and How Can We Teach It?". *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57: 4, 573-589.

Appendix: Interview questions for the teachers

Mann ☐   Kvinne ☐

Alder:

Tittel/utdanning:

Ansiennitet:

Skole/trinn:

Timer/prosent lærer i engelsk:

Læreverk: tekstbok? Arbeidsbok? Grammatikkbok? Ordbok? Internett? Andre?

1. Hva mener du grammatikk er? Eksempler på grammatikkoppgaver?

2. Hva tror du dine elever tror grammatikk er? Hva forventer de?

3. Hva slags holdning har du til grammatikk? Tørt? Viktig? Nyttig? Kjedelig? Hvorfor?

4. Mener du grammatikk bør undervises på grunnkurset? I så fall hvorfor ja/nei? (**hvis nei, hopp over spørsmål 5, 6, og 9**).

5. Setter du bevisst av tid til grammatikkundervisning? I så fall hvor mye/ofte?

6. Hvilken plass mener du grammatikk bør ha i undervisningen, f.eks. i forhold til kulturkunnskap og litteratur?

7. Hvilken plass tror du elevene dine mener grammatikk burde ha i undervisningen? Hva tror du er deres holdning til grammatikk?

8. Mener du grammatikkundervisningen på grunnkurset er passe, for lite, eller for mye? Hvorfor?

9. Hvis læreren bruker egen grammatikkbok: hvordan brukes den? Hva synes du om den? Hva synes elevene?

10. Er du fornøyd med grammatikken i tekstboka og arbeidsboka? Hvorfor?

11. I R94 er lingvistisk kompetanse én av kompetansene elevene skal oppøves og prøves i; mener du det kan ha sammenheng med grammatikkundervisning? Hvordan kan lingvistisk kompetanse oppøves og måles? Hvordan mener du den er prioritert i forhold til de andre kompetansene, f.eks. sosiolingvistisk.

12. Har du gjort deg kjent med arbeidet som er gjort i forbindelse med de nye læreplanene? Hvis ja, mener du det vil ha noe å si for undervisningen av grammatikk i fremtiden?