English Grammar Instruction in English 5
Three Swedish upper-secondary school English Teachers’
Perspectives on Grammar Instruction

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Abstract

This paper presents a qualitative study investigating 1) whether ESL teachers teaching English 5 in Swedish upper-secondary schools take an explicit or implicit grammar approach to grammar instruction in their lessons, and, 2) which aspects they choose to prioritise. My initial hypothesis, based on prior, personal observation was that the ESL teachers sampled in my study would reveal preferences and tendencies more closely indicative of an implicit approach, and that this would be due to their beliefs about grammar and their own experience learning grammar as students. To find out which method ESL teachers use to instruct grammar, and to inform future practice on how to teach grammar and which aspects to prioritise, three ESL teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings show that, contrary to what was hypothesised, they instruct grammar with explicit-deductive approaches, and the teachers prioritise the same grammatical aspects, of which irregular verbs and tenses were identified as being the most important. These findings are discussed, and it is proposed that it is primarily a teacher’s experience from teaching grammar that influences his/her choice of teaching practice, and that it is the students’ specific needs that determine which grammatical aspects to prioritise.
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1. Introduction

When languages were first taught in Ancient Greece, grammar instruction was given a central role, and it kept its dominance in the language teaching syllabus up until the second half of the 20th century. Back in Ancient Greece and later in the Roman Empire, the classical languages, i.e., Classical Greek and Latin, were taught using an approach called grammar translation. According to Yule (2016), grammar translation means that languages are taught through memorisation of grammatical rules and translation of texts into different languages. In other words, this language teaching practice consists of a classroom practice where the students either do drilling exercises to memorise grammatical rules or translate texts into the targeted language (TL). This practice was questioned in the 20th century and additional approaches were created, such as the audiolingual approach and the communicative language teaching approach. However, since the grammar translation approach had been a part of the language teaching classroom for many years, it continued to influence language teachers and their classroom practice. For example, in Sweden, when modern languages, such as French, German, and later Spanish and Italian, first became a part of the language teaching curriculum, the language teaching classroom typically followed the classical approach to teach languages (Teleman, 1992). However, in the second half of the 20th century, the role of grammar instruction itself was questioned. For example, Krashen (1982) argued that languages are not naturally learned through memorisation of grammatical rules but rather acquired through comprehensible input. The idea of comprehensible input is that a language user either understands or does not understand what is said or written. What is said or written is, in Krashen’s terminology, called input, and when the input is understandable, it is comprehensible. Moreover, the fundamental principle of the comprehensible input is that it is only when the language user understands the input he or she can process the information and acquire its linguistic components. Krashen’s ideas on language acquisition influenced second language teaching (SLT) in a way that explicit-deductive grammar instruction was perceived as unnecessary, and there was a gradual shift away from grammar instruction. For some teachers, the shift was so great that they abandoned grammar teaching completely (Zetterberg, 2016).

Krashen’s critique of grammar instruction and the abandoning of grammar instruction seem to be a parenthesis in the history of language teaching. For today, i.e., approximately 20 to 30 years after Krashen’s breakthrough and influence on SLT, it is again generally agreed that
grammar instruction has a natural part in the language teaching classroom and syllabus (see discussion in Richards and Renandya, 2002). However, there is no consensus on what parts of grammar to teach and how these aspects should be instructed. Should teachers present grammatical rules that the students should memorise through exercises, i.e., explicit-deductive grammar teaching, or should the students on their own try to formulate the grammar rules from sentences and texts, that is, explicit-inductive grammar teaching? Should the explicit methods be left for a more implicit approach where the students instead are exposed to comprehensible input with the belief that grammatical structures are internalised automatically, or should the traditional grammar-oriented approach be continued? Furthermore, there is no consensus on which grammatical aspect to prioritise. For example, should the possessive be prioritised over the subject-verb agreement, or vice versa? Thus, English language teachers are confronted with a pedagogical dilemma regarding which method to use and which aspects to prioritise.

In the case of Sweden, which is the subject of the current study, the current 2011 national syllabus for English 5 in upper-secondary school has no clear directives that could help the teachers to solve this problem. Regarding the syllabus, it merely says that the students should work with the following:

Hur ord och fraser i muntliga och skriftliga framställningar skapar struktur och sammanhang genom att tydliggöra inledning, orsakssammanhang, tidsaspekt och slutsats (How words and phrases are combined in spoken and written production to show causality, time, and coherence) (Skolverket, 2011, p. 55)

Teachers of English 5 in Sweden thus face a pedagogical void in which they on their own must decide what to teach, how to teach it, and then motivate their decisions, but where do they find the answers? As argued by Borg (2003), teachers are “active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex practically-oriented, personalised and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (2003, p. 81), and as research has shown, they are likely to use their experience as students in school and teacher education (e.g., Lortie, 1975; Almarza, 1996; Bailey, 1996; Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers, 1997; Spada & Massey, 1992; Borg, 2003) and experience from their own teaching (Thomassen, 2015) to fill this void. However, I hypothesise, based on my own personal experience as a student and a teacher trainee at four Swedish upper-secondary schools, that ESL teachers do not implement grammar into their classroom practice using an
explicit approach, such as explicit-deductive grammar instruction, but rather with an implicit approach because they find any form of explicit grammar instruction unnecessary at this level. The distinction between explicit and implicit grammar teaching approaches is made by Tammenga-Helmantel, Arends, and Canrinus (2014) where an explicit approach means that learning of language structure is a conscious learning process where attention is drawn to grammatical aspects. An implicit approach, on the other hand, means that the learning of a language structure is an unconscious learning process where there is no attention paid to grammatical aspects. That is to say, the idea is that language structure is learned automatically through language exposure which renders any form of explicit grammar teaching unnecessary and redundant.

Even though teachers have experience teaching grammar, it could be difficult to make the appropriate decisions on what grammatical aspects to prioritise, how to teach them, and how to motivate these decisions. Furthermore, if Borg (2003) is correct, they may rely more on their own experiences than on what they were taught in their teacher education. To solve this problem, we must first gain a better understanding of what teachers are actually doing in the classroom in order to inform future practice. One way to do this is to ask teachers whether they include grammar instruction in their lessons, and if so, how they implement grammar into their classroom practice. In the current study, I have chosen to interview three English teachers who teach English 5 with the aim to find out to what degree they implement grammar explicitly with either deductive or inductive instruction into their classroom practice to explore what grammatical aspects are prioritised, how they make those decisions, and what their procedures are for teaching those aspects to help my reader in better understand priorities and pedagogical options for grammar instruction at this level.

2. Theoretical Background

In this section, I will present the theoretical background relevant to the aims of the current study. I will first present the two explicit teaching methods mainly used in grammar instruction, i.e., deductive and inductive grammar teaching, and the effectiveness of such methods as demonstrated by recent research. I will then present two additional teaching methods used in combination with the two previous methods: teaching grammar in context and linguistic theory of humour in grammar teaching. I will end the theoretical background by
presenting research that has investigated the link between teachers’ beliefs about grammar and classroom practice.

2.1. Deductive and Inductive Grammar Teaching

There are two main explicit approaches used in grammar teaching: deductive and inductive grammar teaching. Thornbury (1999) presents deductive grammar teaching and inductive grammar teaching as each other’s counterparts among the explicit teaching approaches; they are both explicit approaches because they draw explicit attention to language form. What differs between them is how grammatical rules are instructed. While deductive grammar teaching is a top-down process in which a rule first is presented then followed by exercises, often drilling-exercises, inductive grammar teaching is a bottom-up process where the grammar rule is extracted from a text sample which tries to illustrate, i.e. draw attention to, a certain grammatical aspect. For these reasons, Thornbury prefers to call the former “rule-driven learning” and the latter “discovery learning”. The difference between Thornbury’s two approaches can be illustrated by the following example: If one is told that the French greet each other by kissing each other on the cheeks before travelling to France, it would be an example of deductive learning. If one on the other hand were to go to France and observe that the French greet each other by kissing each other on the cheeks, it would be an example of inductive learning.

The Monitor Theory is a language learning theory that has had a great impact on grammar teaching related to deductive and inductive grammar instruction (Krashen, 1982; VanPatten & Williams, 2015). Krashen (1982) presented the Monitor Theory and its five hypotheses in the 1980s, which are 1) the acquisition/learning hypothesis, 2) the monitor hypothesis, 3) the natural order hypothesis, 4) the comprehensible input hypothesis (which was covered in the introduction of this paper), and 5) the affective filter hypothesis. In the current study, only the first hypothesis will be covered in the theoretical background since it is the only hypothesis that has a direct link between the Monitor Theory and deductive/inductive grammar teaching (see VanPatten & Williams, 2015, p. 24-31 for a full review of the hypotheses and additional critique, and Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 106 for a brief overview). In the learning/acquisition hypothesis, Krashen argues (1982) that there is a difference between learning a language and acquiring a language. One learns a language by formal education where rules are memorised to be used in language production. In other words, learning a language is a conscious process where the learner is aware of the linguistic aspects that are taught and
explicit teaching methods are employed. On the other hand, acquiring a language means that languages are acquired unconsciously, i.e., the language learner is unaware of the specific linguistic items that are “learned” and implicit teaching methods are employed. In this sense, Krashen builds upon Chomsky’s (1977) Innateness Hypothesis (IH), in which it is argued that the ability to learn, or rather acquire (using Krashen’s terminology), is an innate ability that enables humans to learn languages without effort. That is to say, it is an unconscious process. As Williams and Burdens (2015) emphasise, Chomsky’s IH is an attempt at describing first language acquisition (FLA), and he does not claim it also to cover second language acquisition (SLA). Krashen, however, argues that the same principles that govern FLA also govern SLA, and as Lundahl (2012) points out, Krashen’s ideas affected SLT such that there was a shift away from explicit grammar instruction towards a more “grammar-free” classroom practice. However, in recent years, Krashen’s Monitor Theory and its influence on SLT has been questioned, and grammar instruction has regained its place in the language teaching classroom (Ellis, 2002); and even Krashen has recently changed his mind on SLT. For example, Krashen states that there is a place for explicit grammar instruction. For instance, he says that languages are first acquired and that learning of grammatical rules follows the acquisition phase when the learners must focus on their accuracy in order to expand their linguistic knowledge.

There is a considerable amount of research that has investigated explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive grammar teaching (e.g. Jean & Simard, 2013; Tammenga-Helman et al., 2014; Sik, 2015). For instance, Jean and Simard (2013) explored the relationship between explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive grammar teaching, learning styles, and learning outcomes. They hypothesised that there is a link between teaching method and learning outcomes. In a quasi-experimental study, 138 Native English-speaking students of French at a Canadian secondary school were exposed to either explicit-deductive or explicit-inductive grammar teaching. With the experiment, Jean and Simard found no evidence for a link between the teaching methods and learning outcomes. They did, however, find that the students showed a preference for explicit-deductive teaching, as expressed in a questionnaire-survey that they answered after the experiment. However, it remains unexplored why the students prefer explicit-deductive over explicit-inductive teaching. In addition, the findings are interesting since they call into question Krashen’s (1982) argument that languages are best implicitly acquired than explicitly learned.
Tammenga-Helmantel, Arends, and Canrinus (2014) also addressed the issue whether explicit-deductive or explicit-inductive grammar instruction have different effects on learning outcomes. They used a quasi-experimental study in which 981 Native Dutch-speaking students of English, German, and Spanish in lower secondary school in the Netherlands participated. The students came from different classes, and each class was randomly assigned one of the following teaching approaches: explicit-deductive, explicit-inductive, incidental, or implicit instruction. The authors of this study differ between explicit and implicit approaches, where the former approach draws explicit attention to linguistic form while the latter does not. The distinction between them can be understood by Krashen’s (1982) learning/acquisition hypothesis presented above. While the goal of the two former approaches, i.e., explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive instruction, is to learn the structure of a language by memorising grammatical rules, the latter two approaches, i.e., the incidental and implicit approaches, aims at acquiring the structure of a language without any teaching. To that end, explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive grammar instruction aim at making the students to learn a language while incidental and implicit grammar teaching aim at making the students to acquire a language. The experiment was preceded and proceeded by a test in order to see which approach yielded the best results. Their findings partly align with Jean and Simard’s (2013), i.e., that there is no significant difference between explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive instruction and learning outcomes. However, they also found that explicit grammar instruction, no matter whether it was explicit-deductive or explicit-inductive, was more positive for the students’ language development than incidental and implicit instruction, which calls into question Krashen’s statement that second languages are best implicitly acquired than explicitly learned.

Sik (2015) also investigated whether explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive methods have different effects on learning outcomes. She used a mixed-method approach involving a questionnaire and an experiment where the participants were divided into two groups, a control group and an experimental group, that were exposed to explicit-deductive and explicit-inductive grammar instruction. The questionnaire was used to collect data to get a general understanding of the participants’ attitudes towards the two methods. In the experiment, 190 adult learners of English in Turkey participated and were exposed to either explicit-deductive or explicit-inductive teaching. A test followed the experiment to see which method was the most effective. In contrast to Jean and Simard (2013) and Tammenga-Helmantel et al. (2014), Sik found that explicit-deductive grammar teaching was slightly more
effective than explicit-inductive grammar teaching. However, she points out that the difference was not significant enough to be noticed by the students. However, this was only one study, and to give this claim any generalisability, more studies are needed.

2.1.1 Teaching Grammar in Context
In recent years, a number of researches have argued that grammar should not be taught in isolation. For example, Weaver (1996) argues that grammar should be taught in context rather than in a separate module, and she presents several guidelines for the teaching of grammar. Two of them are to “[e]ngage students in writing, writing, and more writing” (p. 141) and “[t]eaching the power of dialects and dialects of power” (p. 143). The first guideline is interesting since it points out the fact that Weaver believes that grammar teaching should be based in texts. That is to say, the teaching of grammar should be integrated in the students’ writing process both during the actual writing but more importantly in the drafting part. The second is of interest since it aligns with the renewed interest in descriptive grammar teaching, and as Garland and Smolkin (2016) point out, descriptive grammar teaching has regained its place in grammar instruction. According to Garland and Smolkin (2016), the aim of descriptive language teaching is to show that there is a link between linguistic context and which language variety to use. In other words, the linguistic context determines which language variety to use, which leads to a perspective on linguistic varieties as equals. In contrast, there is prescriptive grammar teaching that teaches English grammar as if there were one correct language variety, i.e., Standard English. A good exercise for understanding the difference between descriptive and prescriptive grammar teaching is to consider what kind of feedback a teacher would give a student if he or she wrote She ain’t. A descriptive grammar teacher might say that this is a form used in African American Vernacular English which is unusual in school texts. In contrast, a prescriptive grammar teacher might mark it as an error and end the discussion there. This affects grammar instruction differently since in the first case there are no right and wrong grammatical forms – they are only proper and improper, given a particular social context. On the other hand, the latter case involves assumption that grammar is absolute – there are correct and incorrect grammatical forms, and it is only the Standard form which is the correct.

2.1.2 Teaching Grammar with Linguistic Humour
A new pedagogical option made to facilitate explicit-deductive grammar teaching is a linguistic theory of humour in grammar teaching. The use of humour in teaching has been
investigated to a great extent (e.g., Garner, 2006; Banas et al., 2011; Wanzer, Frymier & Irwin, 2010), but the actual use of humour in grammar teaching has been far less explored. Abdulmajeed and Hameed (2017) hypothesised that by incorporating linguistic humour, such as metaphors and puns, learning outcomes would positively improve. To test their hypothesis, they conducted an experiment in which 38 Native Arabic-speaking university students of English in Iraq participated. The participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Both groups were exposed to explicit-deductive grammar instruction, but the experimental group was also exposed to linguistic humour while the control group received traditional “humour-free” grammar teaching. Each lesson ended with a written one-question quiz that asked the participants to answer what inherent and non-inherent adjectives are and give examples. The quiz results showed that the experimental group scored positively higher than the control group’s results. From this, Abdulmajeed and Hameed concluded that by using linguistic humour in grammar teaching, learning outcomes can be positively improved. However, this is only one study, and to claim that linguistic humour facilitates learning of grammar in explicit-deductive grammar instruction, more studies are needed.

2.2 Teachers’ Beliefs and Their Impact on Classroom Practice

Several studies have shown that teachers’ beliefs affect their classroom practices. However, important questions regarding where these beliefs come from remain unanswered. One such example is Watson (2015) who set out to show that teachers’ beliefs influence their classroom practices regarding that teachers’ beliefs and how the curriculum mentions grammar determines the classroom practice. To support these claims, she conducted a case study in which a participant was observed and interviewed. The participant also undertook a think-aloud protocol where she marked eight anonym student texts and explained her marking aloud. What Watson could show is that there is a link between at least this teacher’s beliefs, the explicit mentioned content of the curriculum, and how these two factors influence the classroom practice. For instance, she found that if a teacher has negative beliefs about grammar, it may hinder him/her to effectively implement grammar pedagogy into his/her classroom practice. She concludes the paper by urging future curricula to take teachers’ beliefs into account when formulating the content. However, due to Watson’s limited sample, her findings do not have any general application until more studies with larger samples have been conducted.
3. The Current Study

To address the question of whether ESL teachers implement grammar instruction into their classroom practice, and if so, which aspects prioritise and how they choose to instruct the aspects in English 5, I conducted a series of qualitative interviews with ESL teachers that have experience teaching grammar in English 5 in Sweden. I have chosen to only make inquiries of grammar instruction in English 5 because it is the only mandatory English course that all students, no matter programme, have to study. This means that my interviewees will have some form of experience of grammar instruction at this level. The interviews are expected to help provide insight as to how ESL teachers reason and operationalise the inclusion of grammar into their classroom practice.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

For this study, I interviewed three English teachers at the same upper-secondary school in Örebro, Sweden. Ideally, I would have liked to have included teachers from a number of different schools; however, on account of low teacher and administration interest in the study, my investigation was limited to a “convenience sample” of teachers at the upper-secondary school where I am currently teaching. In the following section, I will present the teachers. Since they were guaranteed anonymity, they are given pseudonyms in the study. They will be referred to as T1, T2, and T3, and in addition, the teachers’ participatory demographics will be summarised in Table 1 below.

T1 is 36 years of age and has been a teacher for 10 years. He is teaching all courses in English, i.e., English 5, 6, and 7, but also Athletics. He is only teaching at the Social Science Programme with a physical educational profile.

T2 is 26 years old and has been working as a teacher for approximately one year. She is only teaching English 5 at the Social Science Programme with a physical educational profile, but she also teaches History at the Child- and Recreation Programme.
T3 is 48 years of age and has been a teacher for almost 12 years. She is teaching English 5 and 6 at the Child- and Recreation Programme. In addition, she teaches Swedish 1 and 2 at the same programme.

### Table 1

*Teacher Participant Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teaching Years</th>
<th>Other Subject</th>
<th>L1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Swedish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.1.2 Materials

To achieve the aims of this study, I chose to conduct three qualitative interviews. I wanted the interviews to be conversational but at the same time structured, and thus I chose to employ semi-structured interviews. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewee is guided through a set of questions around which he or she can speak freely (Dahlberg & Johansson, 2017). However, it is the interviewer who decides the pace of the interview and which question to cover. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2017) call this form of interview an interview guide approach, and they emphasise the need for a question design that allows the interviewee to speak more freely. For that reason, I created an interview guide with five open-ended questions that would allow the participants to talk more freely.

The initial interview questions were first piloted with the help of a former English teacher and a teacher trainee at Örebro University who were not involved in the actual study. After the two pilot interviews, the interview questions were refined. The final questions are presented in Table 2. The function of the first question was to make the participants feel comfortable with the situation and to introduce the other four questions, and thus, it will neither be analysed nor discussed in the study.
Table 2  
*Interview Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>What made you decide to become an English teacher; was it something specific with the language?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>When I say the word <em>grammar</em>, what is the first thing you think of? Explain your choice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>How do you teach grammar and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>What aspects of grammar do you teach and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>How were you taught grammar as a student?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the questions explicitly asks the teachers whether they teach a particular form of grammar or not. The assumption that they will answer this question indirectly is built into the question design because if they answer what grammatical aspects they include in their classroom practice and how they instruct the aspects, then they will also automatically answer the unstated question.

3.1.3. Procedure

The interviews were conducted over the course of two days in April 2018. Participants were interviewed for approximately 30 minutes, and the following procedure outlined in Nunan (1992) was used where the interviews were recorded so that I could reanalyse the interviews afterwards. This final step allowed me to participate in the interviews and make them as close to an authentic and a natural conversation as possible. Fortunately, all of the participants felt comfortable with the situation, which allowed them to speak in a natural manner.

Even though the participants were able to speak English, the interviews were conducted in Swedish, which is the L1 of all the participants. I decided to conduct the interviews in Swedish because I believe that one can express oneself better and reflect deeper in one’s first language than in a second or foreign language with the condition that one has developed one’s L1 from childhood until the present. Since my participants fulfilled this requirement (see Table 1) Swedish as the intermediary language was a natural choice. To that end, I had to transcribe the recordings and then translate them into English. Following Brinkmann (2014), the interviewees were asked to read the translations to prevent eventual loss of meaning since my translation is in itself a form of interpretation. All participants agreed to read the
translations to comment on and approve of them. The transcribed and approved translations can be found in Appendix 1, 2, and 3.

4. Results and Analysis

In this section, I will present the results of my interviews. I will first present what my informants think of grammar. Then, I will present how they decide to implement grammar into their classroom practice, after which I will present the grammatical aspects they choose to prioritise. I will end by presenting how my informants were taught grammar and explore whether there is a link between the two practices.

4.1 Thoughts on Grammar

When asked of what T1 first thinks when he hears the word ‘grammar’, he says exceptions. It is what he has found to be one of the grammatical aspects with which his students mostly struggle. This aligns with his beliefs that a language user needs linguistic accuracy in order to achieve linguistic fluency, which in turn affects his grammar instruction. For example, he says that the aim with his grammar instruction is to decrease the basic mistakes that the students make, which shows that grammar has a central role in his language teaching classroom. He provided the example of English spelling and pronunciation that Native Swedish-speaking learners of English find difficult because there are for instance many words, which spelling and pronunciation do not correspond. Even though T1’s statement has more to do with phonology and orthography, it connects to the overall arc of linguistics and indirectly creates a bridge between his beliefs about language teaching and the different parts of language teaching and illustrates his point.

T2 expresses similar thoughts as T1 when asked of what she thinks when asked about grammar; however, she also adds that the importance of accurate grammar, i.e., to have linguistic accuracy, varies depending on the context. For instance, she says that accuracy is of more importance in formal situations, such as school. With this in mind, T2’s statement implies that correct grammar is less important in informal situations. As an example, she gives the example of speaking where body language could be used as a communicative strategy to convey a message. She also gives the example of less informal texts, where contractions, such as BRB (‘Be Right Back’) could be used. However, there is a discrepancy between T1 and T2’s views on what part accuracy plays in English. For example, when T1
states the importance of accuracy in English 5, he does not make a difference between grades. For him, accuracy is equally important no matter for which grade the students are striving. T2 presents a different viewpoint when she says that accuracy is more important with the higher grades and that it suffices with fluency with the lower grades. This diverges the two teachers’ viewpoints and affects how they decide to implement grammar into their classroom practice. For while T2 says that “[i]t’s possible to have fluency without accuracy”, T1 on the other hand states that “the fluency is disrupted by the lack of linguistic correctness”, i.e., accuracy. In this study, I will not take a stance on whether one can have fluency without accuracy or whether one cannot have fluency without accuracy, but it is an interesting observation that two teachers who teach the same course at the same school have such different views on language production, which, as we will see below, will have different impacts on their grammar instruction and classroom practice.

The difference between T1 and T2 regarding the relationship between fluency and accuracy is also interesting because it gives voice to one of the fundamental struggles between linguistics and language teaching. It could be argued, for instance, that a focus on accuracy in language teaching is an example of prescriptive language teaching while a focus on fluency is an example of descriptive language teaching. However, which approach a language teacher should use is a matter of debate as shown in Garland and Smolkin (2016). They show that before the 19th century, descriptive grammar instruction was employed in the teaching of languages where the aim was to teach as many language varieties as possible and show that there is no variety better than another. They are merely used in different contexts. In the 17th and 18th centuries, however, as pointed out by Teleman (2002) and Baugh and Cable (2013), when languages began to be standardised, prescriptive grammar teaching succeeded descriptive grammar teaching because the standardisation of languages formed the belief that there was one right form, i.e., the standard form, which began to be taught in the language classroom.

Even though language teaching became prescriptive, linguistics, i.e., the study of languages, remained descriptive, and linguistics says, as pointed out by Hornsby (2014), “our linguistic value judgements generally turn out to be arbitrary, spurious and inconsistent” (p. 1). What he means is that language is a descriptive process, and that prescriptive language beliefs often lead to “right and wrong” or rather “good and bad”. This is evident in my findings when T1 says: “I simply don’t find it enjoyable”, and refers to incorrect grammar. However, this is an
arbitrary belief, and to my knowledge, there is no study pointing out that basic grammatical errors deviating from the Standard form disrupt the understanding of an utterance or a sentence. To that end, the question is whether language teachers ought to be prescriptive or descriptive. This is a difficult question to answer, but what my findings indicate is that language teachers should be both descriptive and prescriptive depending on the situation.

When asked about grammar, T3 presented a rather interesting train of thought. In contrast to the other two interviewees, she neither thinks of exceptions nor the relationship between accuracy and fluency. She thinks of texts. The reason why she thinks of texts is because she sees grammar as “a tool to develop texts” and says that “[t]he goal [with grammar] isn’t to learn the names of the different parts of speech but rather how to use grammar to develop our texts”. This mind-set will, as presented in 4.2, frame her classroom practice in terms of how grammar is implemented.

4.2 Grammar Teaching Methods Employed in English 5
The interviews revealed that there were a number of both similarities and differences in the grammar teaching methods employed by the teachers. To begin with, all three teachers use explicit-deductive grammar teaching to a different degree. T1 “usually begin[s] with a short presentation followed by practical exercises”. In these presentations, T1 presents grammatical aspects on the whiteboard which the students are supposed to learn with “practical exercises”. Furthermore, T1 structures his grammar instruction in something he calls blocks in which he focuses “on different grammatical aspects, such as subject-verb agreement, plural forms, and the genitive” and each block is given a set of lessons. He adds for instance that he usually dedicates “four lessons to the subject-verb agreement”.

Different from T1, T2 implements her grammar instruction into an external practice session, which refers to as English support groups. While T1’s grammar teaching mainly focuses on one specific aspect where the students are supposed to “understand the principles behind the rules”, T2’s grammar teaching mainly focus on a method which, for the lack of a better term, I refer to as extendable-grammar instruction (EGI), which is a form of explicit-deductive grammar instruction. EGI means that one takes a simple sentence, such as I write a letter, and then extends it with subordinating clauses and prepositional phrases, to give two examples, where grammatical terminology is presented in the process. T2 phrases it as:
I begin by writing a sentence on the board and the students give their own examples. For example, *I like ice cream*. Then, we learn what a subject, verb, and object are to be able to master the subject-verb agreement. Then, we expand the sentences by adding prepositions and coordinating words, such as *because*.

The idea is to help the students with sentence construction, i.e., syntax, so they can write more complex sentences.

When asked whether T2 uses any other teaching method in her support groups, she says that the students are given a set of correct and incorrect structured sentences. The students’ task is to figure out which sentences are correct and incorrect. Afterwards, they discuss the sentences together. The key word here is ‘together’, since it provides a clue regarding T2’s perspective on learning. For instance, when asked if she lets the students do drilling-exercises in the support groups, she answers in the negative and emphasises that they “work together and learn from each other”. This perspective on learning aligns with the sociocultural perspective on learning, which has been the dominant learning perspective for almost half a century. For instance, Vygotsky (1978), whose ideas partly are the heart of the sociocultural perspectives on learning, argues that learning is a process that emerges in the interaction between learners which takes place in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In the ZPD, the learner is scaffold by a more advanced and more knowledgeable peer, which can be either a teacher or a classmate. This line of thinking correlates with T2’s where she says that they “work together and learn from each other” (my emphasis). However, this could be problematic since it is not always the case that a classmate is more advanced and/or more knowledgeable than another student which could lead to language learning stagnation. In a worst-case scenario, a student may answer wrongly when asked a question by a classmate, which not only leads to stagnation but also to reductive language learning. The point here is that teachers who adopt this kind of grammar instruction ought to ponder which negative consequences this approach might have if instructed unsuccessfully and how they could be avoided.

T3’s teaching aligns more closely with T1’s in the sense that she integrates explicit-deductive grammar teaching directly into her classroom practice, however, she does not have a grammar block. Instead, she integrates the instruction of grammar into the whole course and instructs grammatical aspects whenever the need arises. Such a thing occurred the same day as the interview. She had noticed that the students had not understood the use of the genitive in
English, which they had been working with the previous semester. Then, she chose an explicit-deductive approach where she first instructed the class on how to use the genitive with the use of both whiteboard and PowerPoint as visual aids. After the instruction, the students worked with different types of exercises to practice the grammatical aspect. That is to say, it was a top-down learning process where the rule first was explicitly presented followed by exercises on the specific grammatical aspect.

Another key method used by all three teachers is the use of student texts for instructing grammar. That is to say, the teachers draw the students’ attention to linguistic form with the use of formative text assessment. However, as the interviews revealed, there are different ways to use the students’ texts to help the students to develop their grammatical competence, and each differentially impacts classroom practice and requires different classroom activities. To begin with, T1 says: “I usually underline the errors [in the students’ texts] and write an explanation where I try to refer back to the grammar block”. This method requires a classroom practice that consists of a series of grammar blocks to which the teacher can refer. However, one could question the effectiveness of this method and how many students who are able to use this kind of feedback. For example, Weaver (1996) conducted a review of research on grammar teaching and concluded that “[s]tudying grammar as a system, in isolation from its use, is not in fact the best use of instructional time if better writing (or reading) is the intended goal of grammar study” (p. 179). Even T1 states that “[s]ome students make the connections while others do not”, and from this perspective, it would be better to go the other way around by first writing the text and from that extract which grammatical aspect to instruct.

Unlike T1, T2 does not have a series of grammar blocks and only uses the students’ texts as the basis for her grammar instruction. For example, in the beginning of a course, she both underlines the errors and explains them. She gives the example of prep. for ‘preposition’, where she at first must explain what the contraction means. By the time the students ought to have learned the grammatical aspects, she only underlines the errors because, as she explains, the students were expected to have already learned about prepositions. With this in mind, the classroom practice in which T2 prefers to instruct grammar, is more in line with Weaver’s (1996) idea that grammar should not be taught as an isolated module but rather integrated in the production of texts.
T3 is likewise utilizing the students’ texts as the teaching tool for her grammar instruction, which not only aligns with T2’s choice of teaching method, but also with T3’s beliefs about grammar instruction. For instance, when asked of what T3 thinks when she hears the word ‘grammar’, as presented above in 4.1, she answers ‘texts’, and for her, “the purpose of grammar teaching is to help the student to process their texts”. She lets, for instance, the students process their texts, in the same way as T2, because she thinks that “the students learn more when they use grammar to process their texts”. This also aligns with Weaver’s (1996) belief that grammar should be taught in context, i.e., taught through writing or reading.

A similarity between T1 and T2’s practices that diverges from T3’s teaching is that both present correct and incorrect sentences where the students are supposed to discuss which are correct respectively incorrect. In addition, the students are supposed to point out the linguistic aspects that make the incorrect sentences wrong. This is an example of explicit-inductive grammar instruction used by the two teachers. It is inductive because it is a bottom-up learning process where the students are presented with a set of sentences which draws the students’ attention to linguistic forms which in turn allows them to unravel the hidden grammatical rules. It is explicit because it draws the students’ attention to language form.

A final similarity between the practices of the three teachers is the usage of contrastive analysis called contrastive linguistics (Afolayan, 1971). Contrastive linguistics means that the structure of at least two languages are compared to facilitate the learning of a language structure. All three teachers compare Swedish and English grammar to make the students in better understand English grammar. T1 says that he utilises contrastive linguistics because “[d]ifferences and similarities facilitate language learning” and gives word order as an example. For Native Swedish-speaking students of English often tend to use the inverted word order after an initial adverbial phrase in English because Swedish uses this word order since it is a V2-language. However, English is not a V2-language and when the students transfer the Swedish word order into English, the sentence structure becomes ungrammatical. By using contrastive linguistics and comparing English and Swedish word order, it becomes, according to all three interviewees, much clearer for the students which word order to use in English.

T2 also uses contrastive linguistics but in a different way by adding a translational approach. She says that the students have difficulty in constructing sentences so they begin by first
writing Swedish sentences and then translating them into English. T3 gives the same reasons for her use of contrastive linguistics, but she also adds that she herself has always found that this method has helped her in her SLA, which connects to Borg’s (2003) idea that teachers rely on methods that worked for them as students. In addition, T3 also tries to connect her grammar instruction in her Swedish and English classes, which is possible since she often teaches the same students in both subjects. This enables the students to connect more easily their grammatical knowledge in Swedish with English. However, this is only possible since she teaches the same students in both subjects, which shows that depending on which classes and subjects one has, different pedagogical options are available.

My findings also reveal that T1, similar to T3, teaches Swedish grammar as a way to help the students to better comprehend and learn English grammar. He does so because he has found that students tend to have “bad grammatical knowledge in Swedish”, and according to him, one has to have a basic understanding of the structure of one’s L1 in order to be able to comprehend the structure of a second or foreign language. This belief is apparent when he continues by saying that he has to “first teach them [the students] Swedish grammar because they’d not be able to understand English grammar otherwise”. It is also apparent that T3 also holds this belief since she tries to mirror her grammar instruction in her Swedish and English classes, however, this approach might be problematic for two reasons. For one, it might not be obvious for the students why they have to learn Swedish grammar during English classes to understand the latter. For another, it might be too much for the students to process. The first problem arises if the teacher holds the belief that in order to understand the language structure of a second or foreign language, one first has to understand the structure of one’s L1. I do not hold this belief since there are plenty of examples of language learners that acquire a language without metalinguistic knowledge in one’s L1, and in addition, to turn to the second problem, there might be too much information for the students to process. Students tend to find English grammar in itself difficult to process, and by adding another element they must process, it may hinder the learning process. Furthermore, language teaching has to, according to me, be natural, and by incorporating Swedish grammar into the English classroom might be confusing for the students. However, if a teacher has the same classes in two languages, such as T3, it becomes more natural to have English grammar instruction in English classes and respectively Swedish grammar instruction in Swedish classes and then contrast the two language structures. Although, this could be problematic for many English teachers since the
pedagogical grammar instruction option would only be available for those who teach the same students in both Swedish and English.

T3’s classroom practice differs in one respect from the other two’s practices because she uses an alternative teaching approach which is her own invention. She lets the students to play a grammar game, which is constructed such a way that the students must teach grammatical aspects to each other. When asked how she got this idea, she answered that it comes from the general belief that the person who learns the most is the one who teaches. The game consisted of the students own questions and definitions and the game, according to T3, was a success since the students enjoyed it. There were “several students who wanted to play it again”. However, if each student learnt all grammatical aspects is unclear, and it would be of interest to pursue this line of investigation to see to what extent it affected the learning outcomes. Moreover, it aligns with Abdulmajeed and Hameed’s (2017) idea that grammar is best taught with humour and the grammar game could be another component of the theory of linguistic humour in grammar teaching.

4.3 Grammatical Aspects Prioritised in English 5

The interviews revealed that that there are 14 grammatical aspects that are explicitly prioritised in English 5. They are presented in Table 3 bellow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Aspects</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The plural</td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The genitive</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular verbs / Tenses</td>
<td>T1, T2, T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-verb agreement</td>
<td>T1, T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax / Sentence structure</td>
<td>T2, T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>T2, T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word order</td>
<td>T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliaries</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The do-constructions</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is evident from Table 3, is that there are four grammatical aspects that are prioritised by more than one teacher: the genitive, irregular verbs/tenses, syntax/sentence structure, and pronouns, which indicates that these are the aspects they find most important to focus on. In addition, there is one aspect that all three teachers prioritise: irregular verbs/tenses, which indicates that they find this aspect to be the most important aspect with which their students need to work.

When asked why they prioritise these aspects, there are similarities and differences in the teachers’ responses. For instance, T1 says that his goal is “to reduce the basic grammar mistakes that the students do that [he] think[s] they should’ve been taught in primary school”. Here, he implicitly points out his opinion that English teachers in primary school do not teach grammar sufficiently enough. In addition, he focuses on these aspects to prepare the students for future English studies. For in the next course, English 6, he says that these basic mistakes, such as forgetting to add a plural suffix or using tenses inconsistently, are not acceptable and students who have not mastered these grammatical aspects will have difficulty in passing the course. None of the other informants gives this explanation to why they prioritise these aspects, but what is interesting is the fact that the teacher who most strongly emphasises the fact that she does not teach grammar, i.e., T2, is the teacher who prioritises most grammatical aspects (12 out of 14 aspects). For example, when asked on which grammatical aspects she focuses, her initial response is: “I don’t teach that much grammar in my English classes because the students should’ve a basic grammatical competence when they reach upper-secondary school”, which contradicts T1’s beliefs. One could wonder if this discrepancy is due to the teachers’ different experience of teaching English. One could also wonder whether her initial response is something I call surface beliefs, i.e., beliefs that are adopted to accommodate to the surroundings, in contrast to deep beliefs that are beliefs that may be hold but kept to oneself. In the case of grammar, from personal experience as a language teacher, there is a common-held belief amongst teachers and students alike that grammar and its teaching are boring and unnecessary, but is this what teachers and students actually believe? From my limited findings, T2’s initial response is contradicted by her own presentation of which grammatical aspects she prioritises, which indicates that she in fact teaches grammar.
However, to prove or disprove my claim of surface and deep beliefs related to grammar and grammar instruction, more research is needed.

Tenses are a grammatical aspect that all three teachers prioritise, and T2 gives the following reason why she focuses on tenses:

For at times, they [the students] need to be able to refer to the past in order to write about things that have happened. Also, they need to be able to switch to the present tense to talk about their thoughts and opinions. If they can’t do that, they mix tenses in the same sentences, which makes them unclear.

This reason is connected to Weaver’s (1996) claim that grammar should be integrated into reading or writing. By drawing the students’ attention to language form in their own writing, in this case their usage of tenses, it facilitates their understanding of tense use, which aligns with T3’s beliefs when she says that “students learn more when they use grammar to process their texts”. In addition, T3 prioritises tenses since she finds that the students have “great difficulty with them”, which could be because the students have not been instructed enough in primary school, to connect it with T1’s reasons.

Even though my findings show that there are 14 specific grammatical aspects on which these three English teachers focus, another pattern emerged from the findings. All three teachers said that it is the students’ needs that determine which grammatical aspect to prioritise. As an example, T3 states that she “can’t say that [she focuses] on the same aspects each year. It depends on the class”. Here, she gives voice to the fact that it is the students’ need that is an important factor in the decision-making of which grammatical aspects to instruct. This aligns with the overall aim of the current 2011 national syllabus for upper-secondary school which states that “[u]ndervisningen ska anpassas till varje elevs förutsättningar och behov” (the education should be adopted to the student’s specific conditions and needs) (Skolverket, 2011, p. 6). That is to say, it is the student’s specific grammatical needs that determine which aspects that are of need for instruction, which means that the aspects may differ each year. However, since the teachers have noticed a recurrent pattern of aspects that they need to instruct, it is both of interest and importance for the teaching of English why these aspects, e.g., irregular verbs/tenses and the genitive to mention a few, return each year. Is it because they are not instructed in secondary school? Is it because they are difficult to learn/acquire?
No matter the answer, ESL teachers who instruct grammar in English 5, have to decide how best to instruct these aspects, and what the interviews reveal is that explicit-deductive grammar instruction is the best approach to employ at this level.

4.4 Teacher Experience with English Grammar from Their Own Education

It is generally agreed upon that not only teachers’ experience from teaching help them in their pedagogical reasoning (e.g. Thomassen, 2015), but also their experience as students (e.g. Borg, 2003). However, my findings partly align with the latter statement and shows that it is more complicated than the statement entails. For instance, the first informant, i.e., T1, states that he has a liking for the classroom practice that his English teacher employed. His teacher used the board, which T1 prefers because “it [the grammatical aspect] grows forth and there’s time for the students to think”. For this reason, T1 has adopted his English teacher’s teaching method, which was presented previously in 4.2 where he says that “the grammatical aspect that we’ve covered is still visible for the students when we go on to the next aspect, which enables me to easily go back to previous aspects” (my emphasis) where the usage of the first personal pronoun “me” entails that T1 uses the board as his presentation technique. This shows that this teacher at least uses his experience as a student to help him in his pedagogical reasoning which correlates with Borg’s claim.

T2, however, does not show the same enthusiasm as T1 when asked how she was taught grammar as a student. Where T1 says that he enjoyed it, T2 expresses a dislike that is close to loathing. For instance, she says that “it was not fun”. This, from a logical point of view, would mean that T2 would remove grammar instruction from her SLT since she would not want her students to experience the same boredom as she did. Interestingly enough, as shown in previous sections, T2 is the teacher who prioritises the most grammatical aspects and who has even created an extra class devoted to grammar. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that most of the explicit-deductive grammar instruction she engages in, excluding her grammar instruction through texts, occurs outside of her regular English classes. This suggests that she does not want to teach grammar at the expense of the other parts of the core content in English 5. Moreover, T2 has created her extra grammar instruction classes, her “English support-groups”, because her schedule allows it due to the fact that she has no lessons on Tuesdays. However, a thought of importance and interest is whether she would make room for this form of grammar instruction if her schedule were less flexible. Alas, this question remains unanswered in the current study.
When T3 was asked how she was taught grammar, she answered that they had “a grammar book and we read it and worked with it from cover to cover” and continues by saying that they had “grammar each week”. From the information presented in previous sections, e.g., 4.3, it is apparent that she has not adopted her English teachers’ instruction methods. This shows that Borg (2003) is partly right. He is right in the sense that English teachers, but also teachers in general, are governed by their experiences as students in their pedagogical reasoning. However, it is vital to add that depending on whether these experiences form pleasant or unpleasant experiences in the sense of how beneficial they were for language development, it will determine whether teachers will use the same methods they themselves were taught in their own classroom practice. Moreover, the interviews, and especially the interview with T2, shows that at least this ESL teacher, sets the students' needs in front of her own personal beliefs about grammar partly based on her experience as a student, which proves Borg’s (2003) claim that teachers rely more on their experience as teachers than students.

5. Conclusion

To summarise, my findings show that English teachers teaching English 5 in Swedish upper-secondary schools do teach grammar using an explicit-deductive approach, which is contrary to my initial hypothesis. There seems also to be a consensus amongst the teachers that it is the specific students’ grammatical needs that is the most important factor that determines which aspects to instruct. However, the teachers have noticed a recurring pattern with a set of aspects that seem to return each year: pronouns in different forms, verbs in the form of tenses, especially irregular verbs, and syntax in the form of sentence construction.

My findings also indicate that there is a consensus amongst the teachers that grammar should be taught explicitly, in a deductive manner, rather than implicitly. That is to say, the teachers seem to hold the belief that grammatical structures are not internalised by themselves, i.e., automatically and subconsciously on their own, but instead require some form of explicit, deductive grammar instruction followed by some form of practice where attention is drawn to language form is needed to help the students to improve their accuracy. This is a crucial finding since it shows that English teachers in training ought to be trained in explicit-deductive grammar teaching, which leads to the question whether how much preparation English teacher trainees get in this approach. Moreover, it also shows that the teachers do not
align with Krashen’s Monitor Theory and that his influence on SLT has had no impact on my informants’ classroom practices.

Even though the three teachers seem to agree that grammar is best instructed with an explicit-deductive approach, my findings show that there are different deductive methods employed at this level. Three dominant teaching practices have emerged: traditional instruction used by T1 and partly by T3, semi-traditional instruction utilised by T2, and innovative instruction employed by T3. The traditional instruction consists of an explicit-deductive approach with a teacher centred classroom practice where the teacher stands in front of the class and writes grammatical rules and examples on the board followed by some form of practice, normally drilling-exercises. The semi-traditional instruction means that both teacher and students are centred and together write on the board where the aim is to expand on a simple sentence to make it more complex. This method is explicit and deductive since the grammatical aspects are introduced by the teacher to expand the simple sentence. The innovative instruction means that the teacher employs a method that he or she has invented. In this case, it is a grammar game with the aim to both allow the students to learn grammatical rules and to have fun in the process which might facilitate the learning.

All three teachers also used the students’ texts to instruct grammar. In other words, when the students are supposed to process their texts, the teacher can instruct grammar, which is called ‘teaching grammar in context’. This approach is a good option since it allows the individual student to practice on the specific grammatical aspects that he or she finds difficult. In addition, it is more plausible that the students find this form of grammar instruction meaningful since they more easily can see why they need grammar, and when something becomes meaningful, a student is more opt for learning. They also make the students to compare language structures, Swedish and English in this case, as a method, or rather strategy, to help the students in better grasp English grammar. However, as discussed in 4.2., there are both advantages and disadvantages with this teaching method/strategy, and I would urge the teacher who uses contrastive linguistics to make sure that it actually benefits the students, and is not only utilised because it is the teachers’ beliefs that the students benefit from it.

An interesting finding is the fact that even though T2 has negative beliefs about grammar instruction due to her negative experiences form her time as a student of English, she
nevertheless successfully implements grammar into her classroom practice (although it is in an additional practice). This contradicts Watson’s (2015) finding that teachers with negative beliefs about grammar tend to unsuccessfully instruct grammar. This indicates that Borg (2003) is correct in stating that language teachers rely more on their experience as teachers more than their experience as students in school and teacher education. However, to what extent her instruction is beneficial is not explored in the current study, and my findings cannot neither to a full extent disprove or prove Watson and Borg’s claims.

In this study, I have presented how three ESL upper-secondary school teachers of English 5 instruct grammar and on which aspects they focus in order to inform future practice. Which method a teacher decides to use and which aspects to prioritise are determined by both the students, but also the teachers’ experiences as a working teacher and as a student. However, due to my limited material, there is need for further research to create a better and more informative picture of the situation of grammar instruction in English 5. I have pointed out several proposed topics for further research in this study, which will be summarised and presented bellow in section 5.1.

5.1 Further Research

Due to my limited sample, it would be interesting to read a study conducting the same investigation but on a large scale. It would also be of interest for future practice to see studies set to explore to what extent Krashen’s ideas on SLT still have on grammar instruction. Just because my findings show that he has no influence, does not mean that he does not. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate further to what extent teachers rely on their experience as students and/or as teachers to see whether there is need for addressing from where teachers draw their inspiration in their pedagogical thinking in teacher education programmes. A last topic of interest for further research would be to see a study devoted to investigating ESL teachers’ beliefs about grammar and their origin in order to explore whether there is a link between them and the teachers’ current classroom practice.
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Appendix 1: Interview 1 with T1

I: What was it that made you to become an English teacher? Try to be as specific as possible.

T1: It was mere chance. As a start, I wanted to study something that I was good at and I chose to take a course in English as university. I chose to study English A, which was not a part of any teacher trainee-programme. I thought it was fun and it went well so I continued with English B. After that, I wondered what I was going to do with my education, and there were many different options, but I found teaching most compelling and so I decided to become an English teacher. To sum up, it was mere chance that made me an English teacher.

I: You said that you found English fun; what was it that you thought to be fun?

T1: I found and still find English to be a fun language to study. It is very complex and it’s because many language have influenced English because English has borrowed many words from other languages. I didn’t know that in the beginning, but I soon learnt that and I have found it interesting ever since.

I: You say that English is a complex language, and so I wonder what you think of when I say the word ‘grammar’...

T1: Exceptions.

I: Would you like to elaborate?

T1: English has borrowed many aspects from other languages and it has changed a lot over the years, which has led to spellings and pronunciations of words that don’t correspond, which I find to be one of the biggest problems for my English students. The grammar of English is also full of exceptions. If you were to compare English grammar with German grammar, you would find much clearer structures, which makes German grammar easier to learn. For in the English grammar, there are many exceptions to the rules. For instance, if there is a grammatical rule, that often works, then there are 15 exceptions, of which at least five are necessary to know of to be able to communication on a daily basis without sounding too ignorant.

I: So, one could say that you see a link between accuracy and fluency?

T1: Yes, I think clarity or rather the fluency is disrupted by the lack of linguistic correctness. It is to say ‘Det där bilen’, to give a Swedish example. It just bothers me, and it disrupts the flow, the fluency, when I’m listening to a speaker. I simply don’t find it enjoyable.

I: You mentioned that there are many exceptions in English, but besides those, there is a lot in the English grammar, and it would be impossible to cover everything in English 5. What do you prioritize and why?
T1: What a difficult question. I try to reduce the basic grammar mistakes that the students do that I think they should’ve been taught in primary school. For example, the plural, verb forms, the genitive, and irregular verbs. We practice these aspects a lot because the students will pay for it in English 6 if they don’t know them. For the National test and the grading criteria don’t allow basic mistakes such as putting the apostrophe in the wrong place or forgetting the plural suffix. In addition, the linguistic flow, the fluency, becomes much better with fewer grammar errors. In other words, with better accuracy, the language becomes better.

I: For how long have you been a teacher?

T1: For ten years.

I: Have your prioritisations changed over the years?

T1: Both yes and no. I’m rather pragmatic when it comes to grammar teaching and we practice the grammatical aspects needed in order to reduce the basic grammatical errors. I don’t do advanced grammar in English 5, only pragmatic competence to be able to write correct sentences.

I: How do you teach grammar and why?

T1: I usually have grammar blocks and in each block I focus on different grammatical aspects, such as subject-verb agreement, plural forms, and the genitive. I usually dedicate four lessons to the subject-verb agreement.

I: What do you do in the blocks?

T1: I usually begin with a short presentation followed by practical exercises. So, I maybe speak for 20 minutes and show examples on the board and let the students come with their own examples. Then I can with ease see which students that understand and those who don’t. For those who do raise their hands and tell me what is correct and what isn’t. I often present correct and incorrect sentences that the students are to discuss whether they are correct or not. One example of an incorrect sentence would be ‘Andrea and Tom has a dog’ where we would focus on the verb form. The students are also given a grammar book each in which they can work if there are holes in the lesson plan. Then they work individually depending on their specific needs. When the students understand the principles behind the rules we’ve worked with, I usually hand them back an uncorrected text where they themselves are to correct the text. After that, we continue to practice the rule even more to make sure that it sticks.

I: Do the students at times correct their own texts?

T1: Yes, that is what I referred to when I said that I give them uncorrected texts. At times, I’ve corrected half the text so that they see what they have to search for in the rest of the text. I usually underline the errors and write an explanation where I try to refer back to the
grammar blocks. Some students make the connections while others do not. They’re at least given the opportunity to develop their grammatical competence. Even if you at times feel that you are in need of more time or should prioritize differently to thoroughly go through English grammar, it’s not possible. For they’ve most often too bad grammatical knowledge in Swedish, which means that I have to first teach them Swedish grammar because they’d not be able to understand English grammar otherwise.

I: So, you work a lot with contrastive grammar teaching?

T1: Yes, I really do. Differences and similarities facilitate language learning. The Swedish and English word order is one example. However, practice is the best method.

I: Have you always taught this way or has it changed over the years?

T1: It has changed little because I am actually an athletics trainer and I’ve brought much of my trainer skills with be into my English classroom. For example, athletics is rather formative. The athletes get feedback on every movement. I’ve tried to incorporate this thinking into my English teaching, and I think it’s rather successful. Although, it’s quite hard for me, and it’s taking its toll. I always have to be mentally present. The content of the blocks, on the other side, to return to my prioritizations, have probably changed. I usually begin with a diagnostic test to see what grammatical aspects that the class as a whole needs to practice, which might differ from year to year. However, some aspects always return, such as subject-verb agreement and the plural.

I: Alright, let’s then go to the last question: How were you taught grammar in school?

T1: I had a teacher from the old school. A qualified schoolteacher who was very knowledgeable and good, which I’ve come to understand afterwards. We were given a lot of responsibility to do what we were meant to do. We’d to read toolboxes in different books and do grammar exercises. He also had presentations where he wrote on the board. That is a practice that I really like instead of PowerPoint presentations. For if you use a PowerPoint, what you’re showing for the moment disappears when you change slides. When you use the board, it grows forth and there’s time for the student to think. In addition, the grammatical aspect that we’ve covered is still visible for the students when we go on to the next aspect, which enable me to easily go back to previous aspects and for the students to make connections more easily.
Appendix 2: Interview 2 with T2

I: What made you decide to become an English teacher; was it something specific about the language?

T2: When I moved to Sweden from Syria, I was eight years of age. Then, I’d to learn Swedish and English. I thought they were quite similar, but during my childhood I watched a lot of English TV and listened to English music, and I’ve always wanted to know what they were saying or singing. So, I’ve taught myself instead of imitating what was being said or sung like most kids do. That made me interested in English, and I learned a lot of words. I’ve always found Swedish and English easy to learn, and I’ve always wanted to learn more. As an example, I switched Spanish for Advanced English in primary school because there’s always been something particular with the language.

I: What is perhaps something with the structure of the language?

T2: It was rather something with the English culture that I found interesting. It wasn’t how to express myself in the language, or hang on, maybe it was just that. How to express myself that I found interesting. I’ve always found it easier to express myself in English than in Swedish. It feels as if the meaning is much better when you say it in English. Do you know what I mean?

I: Can it be because there are many more nuances in English than in Swedish that allows the speaker to be more precise?

T2: Yes, exactly! I think that was one of the things that made me to decide to become an English teacher. I’ve always found it easier to speak in English. We’ve for instance always used English in my home to clarify something.

I: But as you know, English has a structure, its grammar, and when I say the word ‘grammar’, what is the first thing you think of?

T2: Structure. Sentence structure. Right and wrong. How to express yourself.

I: How important is grammar for you?

T2: It depends on the situation. In social situations, it’s still possible to be understood with incorrect grammar. You can use body language. But, when you write an essay, it’s still possible to be understood when using contractions, such as BRB, which means Be right back, but it’s ungrammatical. That’s it. It depends on the situation. If it is a school situation, you’ve to be more formal and so grammar is more important.
I: There’s something called accuracy and fluency, and there’re those who argue that you can have fluency without accuracy whilst there’re those who argue that you can’t have one without the other. What’s your opinion?

T2: It’s possible to have fluency without accuracy, but it [accuracy] is also important.

I: Could you give an example when it would be important with accuracy?

T2: In social situations where English is not that formal, accuracy is less important. Do you know what I mean?

I: Yes, but what about in school?

T2: Then, it depends on which grade the students’ are aiming at. If they want to achieve the higher grades, it’s important with both accuracy and fluency. Then, it’s very important with accuracy.

I: Because . . .

T2: Because to get the highest grade, both fluency and accuracy are needed to express yourself in a nuanced sort of way. Then, just fluency isn’t enough. However, just fluency is enough for the lower grades.

I: If we turn to your grammar teaching then, it would be impossible to teach all grammatical aspects. For that reason, I wonder which grammatical aspects you prioritize in English 5 and why.

T2: For me, it’s very important for the students to make themselves understood. So, I don’t teach that much grammar in my English classes because the students should’ve a basic grammatical competence when they reach upper-secondary school. Of course, there are students that don’t have it, and if I notice that the whole class lacks a certain grammatical aspect, then I instruct it. But if there are just some students who lack one, I don’t instruct it. But on Tuesdays, I don’t have any classes so I’ve created a support group in English where I instruct grammar. There, we work with things such as pronouns, sentence structure, where to place commas, you know, basic stuff. We also work with tenses. That’s very important.

I: Why is it important that the students can handle tenses?

T2: For at times, they need to be able to refer to the past in order to write about things that have happened. Also, they need to be able to switch to the present tense to talk about their thoughts and opinions. If they can’t do that, they mix tenses in the same sentence, which makes it unclear. What else do we work with? Hm, we work a lot with verbs and their conjugations. The students have much difficulty with auxiliaries.

I: Do you refer to the modal auxiliaries then?
T2: Well, yes, but also verbs that differ between Swedish and English. For example, when the students want to use *learn* and *teach*, they say *This movie learns me*, where it should be *The movie teaches me*. The reason is because this distinction doesn’t exist in Swedish. We also work with verbs that change form completely in the past, such as teach and taught. This is an aspect that we have to work with during my regular classes. That’s something I’ve seen that many students struggle with. They just translate it into English from Swedish without thinking of the fact that the two languages have different ways of expressing things. We also have to work with the do-construction. They often use the ing-form of the second verb.

I: So, you use a lot of contrastive grammar teaching where you compare Swedish and English . . .

T2: Yes, I do that a lot in my English support groups. Then, we work with Swedish sentences that we translate. For, I’ve noticed that many have difficulties with constructing sentences in English.

I: Let’s then focus on your support groups. How do you teach English there and why?

T2: I first teach the most basic grammatical aspects: the parts of a sentence.

I: How do you do that?

T2: I begin by writing a sentence on the board and the students give their own examples. For example, *I like ice cream*, could one. Then, we learn what a subject, verb, and object are to be able to master the subject-verb agreement. Then, we expand the sentences by adding prepositions and coordinating words, such as *because*. The students also work with exercises where they are supposed to choose the right constructed sentences from some alternatives. Then, we discuss them.

I: Do you use any form of drilling exercises?

T2: No, we work together and learn from each other. I don’t test them or anything. They come to my support groups to learn, not to be tested.

I: Are your students given any grammatical feedback on their texts?

T2: Yes, if they hand in a text, I underline and write for instance *prep.* for preposition, and they’re suppose to figure it out on their own. At first, I wrote which preposition to use, but after a while, when they should’ve learned the preposition, I just underline the incorrect grammatical aspects and let the students process their texts on their own.

I: Let’s go to the final question: How were you taught English grammar in school?

T2: It was not fun. I wasn’t interested in grammar or structure. English was so easy and grammar was unnecessary for me. So, when the teacher had grammar instruction, I didn’t listen that much.
I: Do you remember how the teacher instructed?

T2: Presentations on the board and exercises in textbooks which we’d to do both in secondary and upper-secondary school.
Appendix 3: Interview 3 with T3

I: What made you decide to become an English teacher? Was it something specific with the language?

T3: Mm. I’ve always liked languages, but before I decided to become a teacher I worked as a secretary where I worked a lot with both Swedish and English. So that made it natural for me when I decided to change profession. Swedish and English just felt right.

I: But was it something specific with English that made you to decide to become an English teacher?

T3: No, I can’t say that. It was just the language as a whole.

I: Alright, but as I told you before the interview, the interview is about grammar teaching, and I wonder what you think when I say the word ‘grammar’.

T3: I don’t think of parts of speech. I think of texts because grammar is a tool to develop texts, which becomes the aim of my grammar-instruction. The goal isn’t to learn the names of the different parts of speech but rather how to use grammar to develop our texts.

I: Have you always reasoned like that?

T3: Hm, difficult. I don’t know if I always have thought like that, but I’ve thought like that during my education. We actually talked a lot about the purpose of grammar teaching in my teacher education and perhaps it was there that I developed this grammatical mindset.

I: Were you alone to think that?

T3: No, we were several, but we’d different teachers who taught us different teaching methods and mindsets. Some teachers thought that we only should teach grammatical terminology, and that’s it, while other teachers thought that we should ponder how we can use grammatical terminology, and then teach that.

I: How do you teach grammar and why?

T3: I’ve done differently throughout the years. I started working as a teacher in 2006, and in the beginning, I taught rather traditionally. All students were supposed to do the same thing, but I’ve left that teaching practice. Although, there are aspects that I instruct, but since I think that the purpose of grammar teaching is to help the student to process their texts, I prefer to focus my grammar teaching on those aspects that I see the students need to work with.

I: Why were you more traditional at first despite your beliefs about grammar teaching?

T3: It was because the teachers were expected to teach traditionally at the school I began working at. There were for instance books that we’d to work with, but I stopped doing that that.
I: Why did you stop doing that?

T3: I changed schools and at the new school I got to do as I wanted. Then, I began to only instruct the most necessary grammatical aspects that the whole class need to work with, such as tenses. That is something that I usually instruct in English 5. The students write some texts where they’re supposed to use different tenses. Then, we begin with a presentation in class and then they write their texts where I often see which students that need more practice. The students also process their texts in terms of grammar.

I: So, you could say that your grammar teaching is integrated into your lessons?

T3: Yes.

I: If you were to compare a more traditional teaching practice with a more text oriented practice, would you say that there is a difference in learning outcomes?

T3: I think that the students learn more when they use grammar to process their texts. I don’t see the point with learning grammatical terminology for the terminology’s sake. Then, I find it more rewarding to give the students other challenges.

I: You said that you start by instructing the whole class in grammar. Which aspects do you focus on and why?

T3: If find tenses very important because the students’ve great difficulty with them. They switch tenses in one sentence and use them incorrectly. However, I can’t say that I focus on the same aspects each year. It always depends on the class. But, tenses are something that return each year. And syntax. I wish there would be a better feeling amongst the students on how to create a correct sentence, such as word order, but there’s not. Something else that always return are pronouns and the genitive. That’s about it.

I: How do you instruct the genitive?

T3: I’ve actually instructed that today. Then, we’d a rather traditionally practice because I felt that many had to revise it. It is so frustrating because it seems completely new even though we worked with it last autumn. So, apparently, it was not successful then. So, I gave a presentation where I wrote on the board and used a PowerPoint. Then, the students worked with different exercises. For example, they worked with some exercises on the Webb where they chose the right alternative. There were also exercises where they produced their own sentences. Rather traditional exercises. But, we also made a grammar game, which was very good since the students then had to explain grammatical aspects to each other. That idea comes from the notion that the person who learns the most is the one who teaches. So, the students divided themselves into groups. Then, they got to choose which grammatical aspect to focus on from a list. After that, they’d to read in grammar books about the chosen aspect to
understand it. Then, they made their own exercises and explanations. At the end, I collected all explanations and gathered them into the class’s own grammar book. All of this, plus some questions the student had made, were put into a grammar game. So, my idea was that when they played, each student was an expert on something. Something to strengthen the self-esteem. Some students were very successful while others were less successful, but with my guidance they came through. When we played, our own-made grammar book was consulted frequently, which in itself was a victory since I think that they should learn how to use a grammar book in language studies.

I: What do the students think of the game?
T3: I’ve played the game with two classes and it went well. Both classes found the game fun and several students wanted to play it again.

I: Alright, let’s then go to the final question of the interview: How were you instructed in English grammar?
T3: Then, everyone had a grammar book and we read it and worked with it from cover to cover. It was grammar each week. It may of course just be my memory that says so, but I remember that we’d a lot of grammar.

T3: But I’d like to return to my own grammar teaching and say that I teach both Swedish and English and when I’ve the same class in both subjects I try to incorporate them into each other, and especially with grammar. I try to show differences and similarities between English and Swedish grammar. I think that’s good.

I: Because . . .
T3: Because then the students’ have something to compare with and to see that each language has a structure. English and Swedish are similar in many ways, but they also differ, and when you compare, the structure becomes much clearer.

I: Have you always compared languages’ structures?
T3: Yes, I’ve always done that. Once, when I was a young and eager teacher, I also drew parallels between German and English, but I’ve stopped doing that. No one of my students study German anymore.

I: Where does that idea come from?
T3: It comes probably from my interest into the history of languages and the notion that all languages are connected in some way or another, but it isn’t a teaching practice that I was taught at university. It’s just something that has always helped me when I’ve studied languages.