Speaking about grammar

*English teachers' perspective on inductive and deductive teaching in upper secondary education.*
Abstract

English is the most widespread language in our society and is realised and represented through language teachers in classrooms all over the world. The content of the subject is concretised through a document called syllabus. As all other languages, English consists of language rules which we call grammar, however, in the Swedish syllabus for English as a second language in upper secondary school, there are no directives that requests or specify grammatical competence for the students. This study aimed to establish an indication of how the notion of grammar is realised into the process of learning English as a foreign language by interview teachers. The study found that teachers in general are more fond of inductive methods when it comes to incorporate grammar during English classes, however, there were numerous suggestions among the teachers that a mixture between inductive and deductive should be present during EFL context. Students previous knowledge and conditions did affect teachers choice of approach in terms of how they apply and teach grammatical aspects.

Keywords

English, EFL, Language, Language teaching, Language didactics, Grammar, L2, Syllabus, Inductive, Deductive, Pedagogy, Upper secondary School,

Thanks

I would like to thank all the teachers who gave me their time to participate in this study and share their views and experiences in this subject. I would also like to thank my wife Emilia Ingemarsson for being so supportive during my work.
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1. Introduction

English is a language spoken by millions of people; it is the most widespread of all languages and accounts for most speakers if we include people who speak English as a second language. As for all languages, English has a set of linguistic rules more commonly known as grammar. Grammar ranges from individual words to complete sentences and create structure needed for different situations and contexts. Without the concept of grammar, the language can not deliver essential meanings. As exemplified by Estling Vannestål (2015) “Words are like bricks - grammar is like mortar and to build a wall (language) you need both!”

Every sentence incorporate the concept of grammar, which can be further traced into various named set of rules, for instance, subject-verb agreement, tenses, run-on sentences. There are numerous ways in which a teacher can instruct the concept of the English language but in what ways do teachers establish grammatical awareness among their students? Should students learn English along with the rules of grammar as a starting point or should their language skills simply be practised and improved gradually over time? We will return to these two ways of teaching in the background and refer to them as a deductive and inductive approach. In general, an inductive approach takes place if the teacher let the students practice grammar throughout their education in order to gradually establish an understanding how grammar works. For instance, the teacher might let the students write longer essays and later evaluate their work by giving them feedback about their language. It therefore requires recurring feedback to ensure that the students understand. A deductive approach is represented if the teacher conveys language teaching more through straight-out grammar centered lessons. The teacher might explain the function of adverbials or prepositions, and later on let the students identify different situations where these components apply before continue onto other grammatical forms. We could summarize the two ways of teaching as inductive being student-centered whereas deductive being teacher-centered.

My own personal experience from teacher practice is that teachers tend to use a inductive approach towards the concept of grammar in a greater extent rather than a deductive. In other words, instead of giving students the skills they need to use the language in a proper way from the beginning, they teach the rules of grammar indirectly
as a response if they notice "common mistakes" or other structural inaccuracies over time. All students have different conditions towards their language acquisition, i.e. interest, personal motivation or lexical disabilities. My ambition is that this thesis will provide additional perspectives in teachers' methodology that is associated with grammar, which would also facilitate how teachers might apply formative assessment.

2. Background

2.1 Syllabus for English

In the world of education, teachers who teach English as a second language carry out their profession based upon the content of the syllabus. In the Swedish upper secondary school, the syllabus for English states the aim of the subject (why English is being taught), core content (what each of the courses should contain) and the knowledge requirements, which specify what students are expected to fulfill in order to achieve a certain grade. It is needless to say that the notion of grammar is something that every English teacher applies in his/her teaching in one way or another, however, grammar is not mentioned at all anywhere in the syllabus for English (Lgy2011). There are however certain extracts from the core contents in the syllabus that can be deduced towards an indirect idea goal for students to understand grammar's role in the English language, as stated by the following:

"How words and phrases in oral and written communications create structure and context by clarifying introduction, causal connection, time aspects, and conclusions."

(Lgy2011, English 5)

2.2 Assessment

As previously mentioned, the syllabus for English is also joined by the knowledge requirements, which demand more from the students as we move up through the grade scale. The knowledge requirements are a fundamental part of the assessment process in which teacher apply and the requirements go from "relatively varied, relatively clearly and relatively coherently" (Lgy2011, Grade E) to "clear, coherent and structured"
"In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in relatively varied ways, relatively clearly and relatively coherently. Students can express themselves with some fluency and to some extent adapted to purpose, recipient and situation. Students work on and make improvements to their own communications."

(Lgy2011, Grade E)

The aspect of expressing oneself coherently, with regards to the knowledge requirements, therefore speaks of a grammatical awareness and usage in relation to what the students produce and their teacher assess. Lundahl (2012) explains how assessment has different purposes and that teachers distinguish between assessment for learning and assessment of learning. Assessment for learning is also known as formative assessment whilst assessment of learning is referred to as summative assessment. Formative assessment takes place when teachers and students document the students' learning process and use that information as support or guidelines in which to follow for future learning and teaching activities. This process is mostly carried out alongside the information which is found in the knowledge requirements, whereas the teacher might explain to the student what he/she needs to work with in order to attain a higher level of English skills. On the other hand, the meaning of assessment should not be confused with the aspect of grading. As Gustavsson et al. (2012) point out, grading is another process in which the teacher relate the material from the assessment and put these into the context of the knowledge requirements E, C, A and thereafter assemble these into a specific grade. To sum up, if a student is to achieve A as final grade in English 5, the teacher needs to point out how the student exhibit his/hers proficiency as, for instance, "clear, coherent and structured" in a long term manner.

2.3 Inductive and deductive teaching

As previously mentioned, there are various ways to teach a specific subject; Abdulmajeed & Hameed (2017) explain how grammar can be taught in an inductive or a deductive manner. During an inductive method, the students are meant to unfold the rules of grammar and make generalizations for themselves. Jean & Simard (2013) explain the notion of inductive teaching as a two-sided spectrum. One end of this
spectrum involves a discovery process in which the students are asked to unfold the grammar rule through guided questions. Once the rule has been generalised, the students rehearsed the rule along with the teacher or textbook. At the other side of this spectrum, the learners work with language samples that gradually get more complexed in which the students establish their own rules regarding the grammar. During this approach the students do not encounter rules that are found in grammar books.

One way to assist independent generalization could be through written or oral feedback from teachers. The deductive approach on the other hand works by giving the rules and generalizations to the students through the teacher or textbook, allowing them to develop their skills in how and where the rules of grammar apply to various situations. One typical example of this involve "fill in the gap in the texts"-exercises. During these tasks, the students have a set of sentences on a sheet of paper in which some words has been omitted. The words themselves usually refer to grammatical rules where students are going to put the right form in each gap, which could be anything from have/has, where/were, which/that. These gap-exercises could also request the students to apply the right tense for a given verb somewhere in the text (grow/grew/grown). Alzu'bi (2015) conducted a study that involved 80 students at university level and 100 students in elementary school. Each group carried out a deductive grammar test and each test and its content was based upon each syllabus. Alzu'bi showed that there was a significant difference in terms of students achievement in favour of the inductive method. This concern participants both in school as well as university level. Alzu'bi state that the result can be explained by the characteristics of the inductive method, which emphasize communication and practising structures. Equally important, as stated by Shaffer (1989) an inductive approach should not be used exclusively through the classroom activities, teachers need to vary their method and be flexible with their choice of approach depending on situation.

During some occasions, the students might need initial requests in order to develop their grammatical skills and linguistic variation. This is discussed by Watson (2015) who has shown that teachers may follow what she refer to as a "reciepe", where they actively encourage students to begin written work by using adverbials in order to avoid beginnings like "Then I did... Then I did...", whereas the different adverbials worked as the reciep for a more fluent and varied language. The variation in methodology is
further discussed by Graus & Coppen (2016) who claim that the choice of approach can
differ for different levels; an inductive approach has shown to be preferred by pupils at
secondary level, while deductive instructions are more suitable for pupils in lower
levels. Overall, students' attitudes towards grammar are an important component for the
teacher to be aware of. Al-Mekhlafi & Nagaratnam (2011) suggest that grammar should
be seen as a resource through a generative basis rather than a set of rules for students to
feel discomfort to. That is, instead of regarding grammar as a difficult part of language,
it would be more facilitative if grammar was considered as a useful tool to use during
the learning process.

3. Aim

The aim is to establish a qualitative indication of viewpoints and methodological
choices in terms of grammar teaching in the context of English as a foreign language
under the directives of the Swedish syllabus.

3.1 Research questions

- What kind of ideas and approaches to inductive methods can be identified?
- What kind of ideas and approaches to deductive methods can be identified?
- In what ways can students' grammar skills be assessed?
- What type of common grammar errors are expressed by students?

4. Method

The collection of data took place by carrying out semi-constructed interviews with
English teachers in upper secondary school. The criteria for selecting participants was
that all participants currently taught English at upper secondary level. A total of 13
teachers were contacted through e-mail and asked to participate in the study. Six female
and three male teachers from 6 different schools in Kalmar and Västra Götaland county
agreed to participate. One teacher denied because of workload, another teacher denied
because of limited/irregular work and the two remaining did not reply. The interviews
followed a document that concretised the research questions into viewpoints for the teachers to discuss with the interviewer. Each interview took between 20-30 minutes to carry out. During the interviews, the interviewer could ask additional follow-up questions for the teacher that was not printed in the interview sheet, hence the semi-constructed methodology. This was necessary in order to let the teachers further elaborate their answers, depending on how thorough their each answers were. This methodology therefore requires the answers to be interpreted through the notion of induction, and for a number of reasons. Firstly, Lantz (2014) explains how interviews, in comparison with surveys, require more time and resources but at the same time is necessary in order to sustain the answers' quality. Secondly, Allwood & Erikson (2010) claim that hermeneutic, the art of interpretation, enable us to unfold aspects of knowledge that otherwise is said to be unspoken, which in many ways agree with the common statement that teachers hold onto "tacit knowledge".

4.1 Ethics

The teachers contributed to the study as anonymous participants. Before each and one of the interviews, the teachers were informed that their spoken response was going to be recorded but no names or other personal details would be revealed in the paper. So instead of names, the teachers were given different numbers through the result section. Since there is no gender neutral pronoun in the English language, teachers will be refered to as he/she through the result section.

5. Data

The conversations were recorded into sound files. Thereafter, extracts from the interviews that were associable with the research questions were transcribed and put into the results section along with an analytical explanation. When /.../ is seen in the text, that means that there could have been a brief moment of silence or other disruptive elements for the sentence in general. The teacher might also have given examples for the present topic in an excess extent but seconds later reached concluding words during the current discussion. This formulation of the extract was necessary in order to transcribe them so they could be comprehensive while not being too long.
6. Results

The results are presented in four sections where the research question has been analysed based on the data. Every result part will contain contributive statements from all nine teachers, joined by three extracts from the interviews in each section. The last sentences of each analysis will contain a concluding set of words that summarise teachers' perspective in general.

6.1 Ideas and approaches to inductive methods

Teacher #3 stated that if a lot of students expressed the same grammatical mistakes throughout their work then this issue would be brought up in the class as whole. This ensured that everyone would gain rehearsal of the given common grammatical error. Teacher #6 said that no grammar lessons usually took place during his/her work but would rather put time and effort to unfold any grammatical errors that students expressed mutually. Teacher #7 explained the importance of the inductive approach by comparing one of the characteristics of the deductive method, that is general practice of language rules. The teacher claimed that in order to establish an understanding for grammar, the components of grammar (e.g. genetives or verbs) should be taught alongside and as a part of what the students produce on their own, rather than simply rehearse the rules only as such.

"When they write, or speak for that matter, I always point out and make them work with their own mistakes, because I think that is the most important thing. You can go through genetives, verbs or whatever but if you don't work with them in the ordinary things you do in English I think it will not work out anyway. So go through them more theoretically and then work with them." (Teacher #7)

Teacher #1 said that his/her students did not write grammatical tests or had grammar centered lessons. The teacher explained that grammar instead was a component that was incorporated into the studies. Teacher #4 said that his/her students were given time to rewrite and improve their texts. When the students handed in their texts, they would recieve marks and thereafter be let to discover for themselves what need to be changed. Teacher #2 vouched for the inductive manner in a sense that students need the aspect of
time to go from "thinking it sounds right" into actually knowing with confidence what makes the text or speech correct.

"In the beginning they just say: 'Because I think it sounds better'. That's like they haven't really thought about why it is. And then after a while, when we do this a couple of times, for at least three times during one course of the year, they sort of get better at knowing, not just what the mistake is but also why it's a mistake." (Teacher #2)

Teacher #8 said that there were very few grammar lessons in general throughout his/her English courses but highlighted the importance of repetition in order for the students to fully grasp grammar rules. Teacher #9 stated that students should practice grammar along with the rules explained by the teacher and apply this acquired knowledge in their own written production in order to get a context of the language. Teacher #5 explained that the students understanding for grammar has revealed to be most prominent through long term feedback from teachers, also with emphasis towards earlier years in school.

"When I get the students they already have, you know most students at least, they already have a basic flow and understanding of grammar from their experiences earlier, and I suppose that it's happened through reading and speaking and getting corrected over the time. And I agree that it should be, you know, worked in to the lessons so that it's not such a major event." (Teacher #5)

Teachers in general were more fond of inductive methodology in comparison with deductive, mainly because it puts focus towards students' own written and spoken production. This approach was therefore considered to be more representative in terms of how English is used and gradually improved.

6.2 Ideas and approaches to deductive methods

Teacher #3 said that no grammar centered lessons took place during his/her courses. The input of grammar rehearsal was instead based on what the students would need in terms of their expressed language in general. However, the teacher had experienced a gradual change in terms of the syllabus in favour of the deductive approach. Teacher #4 explained that grammar rules has been taught seperately where their function has been explained. Afterwards, the students would discuss them and talk about what they already know about it before carrying out an exercise on that particular rule. However,
the exercice itself would not be assessed. Teacher #2 stated that students in general appreciate the concept of rules since rules clarify what is regarded as correct or not. The teacher elaborated this idea and explained that language teaching with elements of rules can help the students to be further aware of how their language proficiency progresses, since they would be able to check whether or not they grasp different grammatical aspects.

"Students overall, doesn't matter where, they like rules. They like the fact that you just tell them 'This is correct, this is how you should do it.' cause otherwise... It is difficult for them to see the small improvements in a language, but if you go from your text and you see that 'Today I've actually learned that /.../ you shouldn't write 1-12 in numbers, that's a way to get your text more fluent. 'Okay, I've never heard that' some say." (Teacher #2)

Teacher #5 said that, depending on the students' ability to make their own generalisations, a mixture of both approaches was to be preferred. However, in similar agreement with teacher #3, teacher #5 claimed that there seemed to be a change in terms of the syllabus where deductive approaches would be more prominent in English teaching in comparison with earlier years of experience. Teacher #6 stated that it is difficult to give students grammatical rules in advance since their previous knowledge about grammar could differ in a great extent. The teacher said that some students might not even know what a noun is, whilst other could be at English 7 level already in the first grade. Teacher #8 reflected upon both approaches towards grammar teaching and explained that one could not perform language teaching through either just one of them, but rather that it should be carried out with a mixture depending on discourse. The teacher also highlighted that this mixture ought to involve the students' own written or spoken English.

"I think it should be a mix between the two ways because you can't just talk about grammar there and then think it's all over with. You need to talk about it and they have to find out themselves during the way while they're writing and while they're speaking." (Teacher #8)

Teacher #7 said that the deductive approach was to be preferred in order to teach grammar. However, the teacher did not expect the students to be able to explain how the rules worked themselves but rather emphasised the knowledge how to use them. Teacher #9 explained that a deductive approach lacked since it would not put the
language in a context but explained that classes involving vocational programs could require a more deductive approach due to limited knowledge to make own generalisations. This would let them isolate the rules as such in order to rehearse them. Teacher #1 claimed, with regards to earlier years of experience, that teaching grammar directly through grammar centered lessons had not shown any difference in terms of students recurring errors. The teacher meant that previous deductive methods thus did not result in students expressing better grammatical skills, the students would simply express errors in the given grammatical feature despite being taught rules in advance. In similar agreement with teacher #8, it would therefore be more representative to work with language errors if these mistakes could be derived from the students own texts, instead of repeating rules from textbooks or fill-in gaps-exercises.

"From experience I have found it rather pointless actually to have grammar lessons, I mean, I could teach grammar til I'm blue in the face but the students would make the same mistakes in their essays anyway. I don't see a clear connection between me teaching them grammar and them learning better grammar and expressing it in their essays."

(Teacher #1)

Overall, teachers generally stated that deductive approaches lacked in a sense that it did not put the language in a context for the students to connect to. In general though, teachers said that a mixture between inductive and deductive methods would be preferable, this since previous grammatical knowledge among the students often differs a lot.

6.3 Assessment of grammar skills

Teacher #1 explained that, apart from commenting the stylistic level of English, the assessment would be joined by a section in which where the grammar mistakes are marked. Furthermore, the teacher also spoke of the importance to add contrastive bits of grammar, where Swedes tended to make certain mistakes, whereas students with Arabic as their first language would make other mistakes. Teacher #2 said that the students' grammar skills themselves was not assessed; grammar was said to be a part of the assessment matrix but if students' texts would reveal to contain no grammar errors that would not solely lead to the highest possible grade. The importance of written feedback was explained by Teacher #6, where students simply would recieve constructive
comments about their grammar alongside their texts. The teacher did also emphasise the weight of oral feedback where there is an opportunity to explain grammatical rules further individually. According to the teacher, a two-way communication would ensure supplementary understanding of their given comments. Another essential part of the oral feedback was anchored in that the students would risk to misinterpret the comments that they have received. Students had also displayed a tendency to simply ignore the written constructive feedback and just look at the given grade only. This approach would therefore, according to the teacher, confirm that the students would have understood.

"The written way is often, it could be misunderstood, it's not certain that they read that at all. I mean, if they get an essay back and I've spent like half an hour of writing things on the back, I mean, they tend to look at it and then throw it away. They look at the grade then throw it away. That's why I feel like it's important to grab them sit them down, otherwise it is just a oneway." (Teacher #6)

Teacher #3 explained that assessment took form entirely through written feedback and never corrected in speaking, with regards to a respectful classroom. In this way no student would recieve direct comments about his/hers currently spoken English with the ambition to not have to worry about expressed errors during spoken English. Teacher #7 spoke of the importance of oral feedback. The teacher said that if the student have a hard time to know about English grammar, then all the words on a paper could be difficult to grasp if no further oral clarification would follow. Teacher #4 stated that the students' comprehension about grammar could be facilitated by avoid giving away the correct answers immediately to the students during correction. This meant that the students would have to reflect upon their grammatical mistakes instead of simply change them straight away.

"Sometimes they mark all the mistakes and they change them. You can still see that they have done that so that doesn't matter, but sometimes it is not good to tell the person: 'you said him there, it is supposed to be he.' Sometimes you could just mark it and say: 'There is something wrong here, what do you think it is?'" (Teacher #4)

Teacher #8 said that grammar tests take place twice a year in order to check the students grammar skills. The teacher said that the level depends if the tests occur at English 5 or English 6 course. During the rest of the year the teacher let the students carry out essays,
summaries and texts in which they receive comments on. Teacher #9 was not fond of assessing grammar through gap texts where you fill in the right form because it would not put the language in any context. The teacher explained that it was of more use to let the students see their own mistakes in their own texts and by that find out what has caused the mistake and what they can do to fix them. Teacher #5 explained that, in comparison between students' written and oral production, students' written English is more suitable for constructive feedback since it is easier to return to a text whilst a speech is surrounded by more ongoing elements that influence the message in general, unless the spoken English reveals very obvious mistakes through the oral production as a whole.

"In writing, you see where the errors are occurring in a more concrete way and speaking you're more focused on understanding what's being said and there's so many other parts than just speaking, you know, the intonation, the body and the context so it's a little bit harder to check in unless if it's really obvious errors in the speaking, you know because we concentrate on the message not on the grammar." (Teacher #5)

In general, if teachers did spot common mistakes after longer assignments, they would use these errors as examples and talk about them to the class as whole, so everyone would benefit. Intriguingly though, not all teachers did provide individual oral feedback alongside the written feedback to the students. Teachers argued that the main reason for this was that they simply did not have the time for that, even if they wished they have had.

6.4 Common grammar errors expressed by students

Teacher #1 explained that subject-verb agreement is a major stumbling block in terms of common grammar errors among Swedish students. However, the teacher emphasised that these errors would not disrupt understanding as much as other mistakes in language would. Teacher #2 said that there are students even at English 7 level who use Swedish word order where they put the subject and the verb in the wrong order. Teacher #6 described Swedish students as being very proficient in terms of spoken English but also argued that, in comparison with other European countries, Swedish students tend to lack in terms of their written English. The teacher suggested that, depending on other
countries’ syllabi, these countries could likely be putting more effort into writing during earlier years in school.

"Usually the students tend to speak better than they write, and I've talked to the ones making the Cambridge certificate test and they say that Swedish students they are very proficient when it comes to speaking, they always tend to do well there. But when it comes to writing, they tend to perform worse than countries like Bulgaria, Hungary, /.../ Other countries, I guess, put more focus on writing from the start." (Teacher #6)

Teacher #3 also stated that Swedish students tend to struggle with subject-verb agreement and suggested that there could exist a connection with Swedish grammar since Swedish does not deal with subject-verb agreement in the corresponding manner. Although more anchored in the aspect of spelling, teacher #4 said that capital letters was very seldom right and one of the most common mistakes, or that students at least were not consistent in terms of their usage. The teacher argued that it might be a contrastive aspect behind this error, in which Swedish does not capitalise as English do, and also, that texting could be involved as an informative component. In the corresponding way as teacher #6, teacher #7 also stated that Swedish students perform very well when it comes to spoken English but do not express the equivalent proficiency in written English, at least with regards to formal writing.

"The hardest is writing and for each year it shows more that students are very familiar with speaking English, with listening to English. But, they are not familiar with writing, not in a formal way anyway. So I think that is the hardest part for most students. /.../ that is a new thing, I think, I've seen now when I've corrected all those essays that many students have a hard time knowing whether it's a genitive s or a plural s." (Teacher #7)

Teacher #5 explained that subject-verb agreement was something that students struggle with, even all the way up to the third year. The teacher said that students needed extra instructions in how to use the passive tense, which would enable them to vary their language. Teacher #8 said that students had displayed a tendency to change tenses throughout their texts, joined by subject-verb agreement error. They could simply start a sentence in one way and finish in another. Teacher #9 had observed a habit among the students where they mix up prepositions. The teacher pointed out that these mistakes could be derived from the students’ mother tongue, in this case Swedish, with the
suggestion that not all prepositions denote the aspects of space and time in the same manner as they do in Swedish.

"They also tend to mix up prepositions, especially when they come to the higher levels and the demands on them increase /.../ it could be when they should use 'at' for instance and then they used 'on' because the Swedish equivalent is 'på' and they think 'on' so they don't really grasp that if you are going to use 'on' then it should be referred to a plane surface like a table or a beach or something like that." (Teacher #9)

Teachers in general claimed that student struggle with subject verb agreement. However, grammatical mistakes are not the biggest mistakes in terms of students' English proficiency, but rather the range of their vocabulary. They stated that students in general do inhabit a good grammatical awareness, but the content of their written English can be quite poor in a lexical perspective.

7. Discussion

In general, teachers were more fond of inductive methodology in comparison to deductive; although some of the participants in the interviews occasionally mentioned beneficial aspects of deductive methods, they tended to return to the constructive features of inductive approaches. These features were argued to be more associable with a long-term attainment of knowledge in the English language. Since inductive methodology is more biased towards the written and oral production of the students themselves, this was considered to be more representative of language learning overall, in many ways analogous to how we learn our mother tongue in a gradual manner. Comparably, the benefits of deductive methods were emphasised in a sense that rehearsal of rules enable students to shine light upon what is considered right or wrong when it comes to grammar. Likewise, teachers explained that many students appreciate the idea that someone tells them that "This is correct." but according to the teachers, the elements that characterize deductive approaches often isolate grammar rules, reducing the students ability to connect grammatical pieces into a broader context in which for them to relate.
Since inductive methodology puts focus towards students own generalisation of language rules over time, the approach therefore facilitates the process of evaluation and assessment, at least with regards to formative assessment, which is produced during longer educational periods. This long-term assessment makes it easier for the teacher to set a final grade for each student since the grade is based upon the overall work and achievement through the course as a whole. Thus said, using deductive methods in assessment, for instance grammar tests, should not be considered as something to avoid: It enables the teacher to establish an indication of the students current grammar skills and by that determine which students that could be in need of more support (or more challenging tasks for that matter). The syllabus for English as a foreign language in the Swedish curriculum strives for a communicative classroom, where English is supposed to be used in such a great degree as possible, with that being said, teachers' response about Swedish students' oral proficiency is very much understandable. It seems however that this skill does not neccessary include the equivalent aptitude when it comes to writing. The teachers in the study did agree upon the suggestion that Swedish students could be gaining their main input of English through spoken media, for instance film, TV-shows and music, and putting less time in reading books. Students' common mistakes in terms of their grammar mostly involve subject-verb agreement, capital letters and prepositions. This suggests that there could be a connection between the grammar of their mother tongue in relation to their skills in the English language since the Swedish language does not deal with the same concept of subject-verb agreement, or use capital letters and prepositions in the same manner.

Some teachers argued that grammar mistakes are not the biggest mistakes that Swedish students tend to do in terms of their English; they claimed that, rather than being bad at grammar, students tend to be weaker when it comes to their vocabulary. They meant that structured sentences, in many cases, may be very much correct but yet be considered poor or too basic since they would lack variation with regards to choice of words. Students tendency or general lexical ability to express themselves with variation is therefore something that could be investigated in future studies. Additionally, in relation with Graus & Coppen (2016), who stated that deductive methodology has shown to be more suitable in lower school levels, it could also be of interest to examine if language teachers in elementary schools do apply deductive approaches in a greater extent in comparison with language teachers in upper secondary school.
8. Conclusion

This study aimed to establish an indication of the notion of grammar teaching where the characteristics of inductive and deductive approaches has been reviewed through in-depth interviews with language teachers. The inductive method has shown to be a student centered approach whilst a deductive being more of a teacher centered. Teachers' practical knowledge in the study enabled detailed elaboration of didactic experience and issues and teachers were found to be most fond of inductive teaching approaches since these methods were regarded to unfold grammar in a more representative language context. Assessment of grammar skills usually took place through written feedback as written English were easier to use to point out aspects of grammar for students to improve. Teachers' view on grammar, experience, as well as their students' educational conditions influence their choice of methodology in order to enable their students to develop their language skills. In some circumstances, teachers need to point out and isolate specific grammar rules in order to rehearse their function but most often it is more representative for students to practice instances of the language to independently generalise grammar. By working mainly with their own productions, this enable students to establish an understanding for grammar and its role in the English language through time.
9. References


10. Appendices

Interview questions

1. How would you define what grammar is and its role in language teaching?

2. What is your experience of students’ general approach to learning grammar?

3. Are there any certain grammatical aspects that students find extra hard to comprehend?

4. In what ways do you:
   
   A: teach grammar
   B: assess students’ grammar skills

5. Should the notion of grammar be presented in an inductively or deductively manner?

6. Is there a specific part of the syllabus that tends to be extra facilitative towards learning grammar. If so, in what way(s)?

7. As students learn EFL, in what extent can the rules of their native language be used to compare and contrast English in order to explain grammatical points?

8. What kind of supplementary materials do you use in your lessons involving grammatical aspects?

9. Since you began your profession as a teacher, have students changed their approach towards learning grammar?