Teachers' reported beliefs about the role of grammar, and their observed pedagogical practices of Foreign Languages teaching in England

Submitted by Sara Liviero, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, February 2014.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate teachers’ beliefs about a fundamental aspect of foreign language teaching: grammar. Whilst progressively reinstated in the national curriculum and consistently sustained by foreign languages teachers’ practices, grammar’s perceived irrelevance for assessment criteria of the nationally adopted method of assessment - the General Certificate of Secondary Education – kept it caught in conflicting discourses of policy, linguistic research and teaching practices. Whilst foreign languages policy and practice kept converging towards increasing focus on forms in language education along correspondences with linguistic research, the assessment has remained focused on generic communicative, skill-focused criteria. My small-scale research aimed to find how foreign languages teachers translated grammar teaching policy and possible theoretical guidelines in their teaching practices, by collecting data through interviews, observations and think-alouds. The findings revealed disparate educational contexts, approaches, as well as interpretations of grammar teaching. It led me to realise the necessity to probe further into a much more thorough theoretical and methodological underpinning of foreign languages education. As this study concludes, the secondary foreign languages curriculum has become disapplied, and schools and teachers have been left to devise their idiosyncratic foreign language learning strategies and rationales. As foreign languages teaching becomes anchored in the primary education curricular provision, this research hopes to document the need to frame theoretical and methodological guidelines, a consistent foreign languages education rationale, leading to a consistent and convincing education and provision of future foreign language teachers.
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This study was completed following the award of an ESRC scholarship for successfully presenting a proposal to run a parallel study to current ESRC research into *Grammar for Writing?*, designed by Professor Debra A. Myhill. Whilst the overall project focused on secondary school First-language English Teachers’ Beliefs about Grammar, my study extended its scope from first language to Foreign Languages.

I was responsible for the research design, the data collection, which included visiting, observing and interviewing eight foreign languages teachers in state secondary schools. The data analysis was also undertaken independently, under the supervision of Professor D.A. Myhill and Dr. A.M. Watson.
Chapter 1. Introduction

Foreword

My study plans to investigate foreign language teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in secondary school foreign languages teaching in England. By investigating teachers’ beliefs I am trying to understand how teachers’ adopted grammar pedagogies translate the curriculum for foreign languages, and how these in turn have related to the Key Stage 3 (KS3) assessment adopted by all state schools and the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). Moreover, I aim to observe how teachers’ grammar pedagogy relates to the theoretical and methodological recommendations of applied linguistics for foreign languages instructional settings.

I am also trying to investigate whether foreign languages teachers feel they are abiding by their adopted language pedagogies, or whether their beliefs, like mine, have become entangled in other issues that caused a shift in their beliefs of what role grammar had in their pedagogy. Since teacher cognition research indicated that it is rare for genuine belief change to occur in adulthood (Pajares, 1992), I hope to glean whether foreign languages teachers retain their language pedagogical objectives and methodologies when faced by policy, assessment priorities, contextual, educational and linguistic factors. I hope to observe whether teachers’ professional experiences or language learning backgrounds influence their foreign languages pedagogical choices.

I am interested in studying whether applied linguistics research manages to influence teachers’ practice. If so, I hope to glean which instructional modes and ideas about grammar teaching are reflected in their foreign languages practices. Equally, I aim to observe whether teachers are ready to undertake research initiatives, or update their theoretical and methodological foreign languages teaching approaches, or whether they rely on contextual and pedagogical personal experiences to guide their foreign languages practices. My study plans to see how or if these different conditions influence teachers’ beliefs about the usefulness of pursuing grammar teaching. It has been repeatedly suggested that teachers be involved in research in order to contribute to evidence-based practice (Macaro, 2003; Pachler, 2003). Although focusing on the
specific focus of grammar teaching, this aims to ask participants about their willingness to undertake research of their own, on any aspects of foreign languages teaching that they feel needs further exploration.

1.1. The problem leading to my study

I was led to this study by my practice as foreign languages teacher in England and Wales for nine years. I have always believed that grammar had an important place in my classroom pedagogy and in my formation as a language teacher. Often, though, I found myself having to set my beliefs aside in order to comply with other objectives, which I felt made little sense on the ground of my experience, my subject and pedagogical content knowledge. My first and second language learning took place in an educational context of predominantly grammar-based and top-down transmitted grammar knowledge. However, I later assimilated and espoused British humanistic, experiential language learning rationales when I read English language and literature at the University of Venice. I decided then to specialise in Applied Linguistics, embedded in Vygotskyan and Piagetian sociocultural language learning theory (Balboni, 2005; Freddi, 1990, 1999), giving much emphasis to Hawkins (1984), Brumfit (1984), Halliday (1987), and the integrative Communicative Teaching pedagogies conceptualised by Canale and Swain (1980). These ideologies, met at a later, elective stage of my language education, were consciously adopted as pedagogical strategies.

Once I qualified as a secondary school foreign languages teacher in the UK, I found that these theoretical rationales were not embraced by foreign languages departmental policies, and did not seem to meet students’ and parents’ expectations. My whole teacher training in 2000 pivoted around preparing flashcards and playing hang-man type games. My references to the theorists above were strongly discouraged as idealistic in the face of what I would have found in practice. Grammar at the time was strongly discouraged, apart from the occasional parent’s comment. I was urged to speak only in target language, prepare my own set of flashcards and ensure the students were entertained. Within a very limited timetable, I was expected to successfully guide my students to comply with examination demands. If at first I felt strong from having learnt from the very best of foreign language experts at British universities, later I began to doubt I could reconcile applied linguistics and classroom
practice, even though they seemed adopted by some schools and not others, because they did not yield the expected quick results. Many heads of foreign languages departments asked of my method the same: is what you are doing included in the assessment? If not, then I was urged to avoid it and give templates of exam tasks. Albeit trying to integrate humanistic, comparative and integrative espoused pedagogical beliefs, I felt compelled to giving vocabulary lists and coursework templates to learn by heart. Moreover, whilst initially responding enthusiastically to ‘languages for all’ policy requirements, I found differentiation very difficult, as not all students responded to the very limited metalinguistic activity I had the time to pursue; my idea of exposing all students to learning a foreign language clashed with the accepted need to ensure success; hence the readymade examples. I was also incapable of telling my students that their future careers depended on speaking either French, or Italian, or Spanish, as I felt it was not true and that the language in study was more a platform for exploring learning languages and approaching another culture. Eventually, I found myself adopting a methodology that I did not believe in, very similar to a notional-functional one, avoiding grammar talk in the classroom as well as in many staffrooms, right from the start of my PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate Education) induction. Grammar, however, remained a very strong feature of my pedagogy; one which I seemed to share with various colleagues who seemed to have made a similarly informed pedagogical decision.

My study responds to the need to understand how foreign language teachers interpret the role of grammar teaching, and how they relate to the tensions between foreign language theory and methodology, practice and policy, if they experience it. I aim to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of conclusive applied linguistic evidence on grammar teaching in the adoption of research- or practice-based pedagogies of grammar teaching. Moreover, I wish to gain insight into how teachers’ pedagogies are being translated in view of the recently recommended development of discrete foreign languages curricula ‘that best meet the needs of their pupils’ expected to be in place by next September 2014 (DfE, 2013). Additionally, it is interesting to see if the diverse state foreign language educational settings influence teachers’ epistemological beliefs about grammar teaching.
1.2. What role for grammar teaching in foreign languages?

In second language acquisition, which focuses mainly on the teaching of English as second or foreign language, Ellis (2006b) concluded that ‘there is ample evidence to demonstrate that teaching grammar works’ (p. 102). Studying the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching in England, (Jones, 2000) concluded that it was crucial to deconstruct the meaning and purpose of ‘grammar’ (p. 143). Jones cited Carter’s claim that it was untenable to deny the ‘connection between explicit grammar study and enhanced grammar performance’, as such a claim belonged to a time when grammar was confused with ‘old-style’ descriptive methodologies (Carter, 1997, p. 32). Furthermore, Jones urged us to research how, why and where grammar teaching fits not only in the literacy and language curriculum, but also as underpinning the whole secondary school curriculum.

1.2.1. What grammar?

The lack of linguistic underpinning was the cause of much confusion in language pedagogy in England, which Stern defined ‘ambiguous and sometimes downright confusing’ (Stern, 1983, p. 9). Stern asserted that the confusion engulfed the role of grammar, but also the entangled conceptualisations of language acquisition and language learning. Foreign languages’ study in England is a process of learning, not acquisition, as the latter is the process of learning one’s native language. foreign languages learning differs for time, syllabus parameters, psycholinguistic and motivational factors (Jones, 2000). Grammar teaching has a place in foreign languages learning because it ‘works’ at ‘enhancing’ students’ performance in foreign languages, but also because it allows foreign languages teachers to ‘construct an appropriate programme of study to frame the pupil’s learning’ (Jones, 2000, p. 144). The grammar that Jones (2000), Carter (1993) and Ellis (2006b) referred to was one conceived by drawing on a linguistic theory that comprises many grammars – descriptive, prescriptive, transformational, generative, traditional and structural, to name a few. Teachers, however, refer to ‘a ‘pedagogical grammar’ for purposes which are relevant in the classroom learning context and which are principally needs-related’ (Jones, 2000, p. 144).
Both Ellis and Jones framed grammar teaching within a communicative language approach, which was also prey to the ambiguous terminology in language pedagogy. The approach Ellis and Jones referred to was the integrative one conceptualised by Canale and Swain, combining grammatical, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competences (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). Tomlin (1994) indicated that a useful pedagogical grammar was embedded in an ‘adequate descriptive grammar of the target language’ (p. 141). Stern conceptualised a pedagogical grammar that responded to five criteria of analysis:

- a) Descriptive and contrastive data and concepts
- b) Ordering of the information in terms of the four skills [of listening, reading, writing and speaking]
- c) In terms of levels of achievement
- d) Evaluation procedures bearing in mind specified learning objectives
- e) The educational settings for which the grammar is intended (Stern, 1983, p. 175)

1.2.2. *What role for grammar in the national curriculum for languages and in the GCSE?*

If the above was the position of linguists and foreign language experts in international and British universities, the position on the role of grammar teaching assumed by the curriculum for foreign languages and its derived assessment – the GCSE – has been contrasting with both linguistic research and foreign languages practice.

For the last twenty years, foreign languages teachers’ pedagogy in England has been caught between contradictory discourses of language education; discourses that diverged regarding the role of grammar teaching in foreign languages. The first conflict was detected between the language learning ideologies emanating from the pre-national curriculum Reports (DES, 1975, 1988, 1989) as well as the LINC (Language in the National Curriculum) project (DES, 1990-1), and the Language Awareness (LA) movement originated in the 1980s (ALA, 2012; Hudson, 2007), contrasting with the first foreign languages’ National Curriculum (DES/WO, 1991) and its narrowly communicative trends (Hudson, 2007). Whilst foreign languages experts recommended methodologies which included focus on forms as well as
communicative language teaching, eventually narrowly focussed communicative recommendations were adopted, where the communicative and target language immersion aspects were emphasised to the detriment of the descriptive element, namely grammar (Meiring & Norman, 2001). Purely communicative methodology proved unsuccessful in the following reviews of the national curriculum for languages, which adopted increasing focus on explicit grammar teaching, eventually recommending that English and foreign languages teachers should collaborate in teaching about language (Hudson, 2007). Policy makers initially through the national curriculum for languages proceeded to issue guidelines that contrasted with the position of foreign language teaching specialists at British universities, as well as with increasing numbers of foreign languages native-speaking teachers amongst the foreign languages secondary teachers’ corpus (Block, 2002), and foreign languages teaching trends in general, which resulted to keep explicit grammar teaching as a key aspect of their foreign languages pedagogy (Mitchell, Brumfit, & Hooper, 1994b). The teachers’ discourse was more similar to that of academics, ‘in particular as regards the role of grammar’ (Block, 2002, p. 16). Explicit grammar teaching and learning has been re-integrated in both the English and foreign languages curricula in England. As part of a major reform of 11-19 education and qualifications (DCSF, 2007), the curricular changes in the last National Curriculum for foreign languages introduced in September 2008 (DfE, 2009) promoted knowledge about language whereby pupils should learn about common grammatical, syntactical or lexical features (DfE, 2009). Nevertheless, no pedagogical or methodological directives were given, requiring therefore individual initiative by foreign languages teachers. The discourse conflict between foreign language specialists and policy makers is echoed also in Coleman (2009, p. 111), who urges an analysis of the discrepancies in British politicians’ discourses and attitudes towards the issue of insularity and monolingualism, suggesting that they might contribute to the general ‘waning enthusiasm for language learning across all sectors’. Evans and Fisher (2009) indicated how external factors to policy, assessment and language teaching theory influence the perceptions of the status of foreign languages and its success in the National Curriculum. These factors range from parental perceptions to the profile that head teachers confer to the subject in their schools’ approach to language learning, indicating it as a strong influence on the impact of foreign languages pedagogical objectives and practice.
Even after many deliberations, the national curriculum for languages embraced progressively stronger grammar-oriented pedagogical guidelines, other researchers highlighted how the national curriculum for languages remained in conflict with the adopted assessment. Whilst the national curriculum for languages recommended explicit knowledge about language, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) was strongly anchored to a communicative performance of the four skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing (Meiring & Norman, 2001; Mitchell, 2003). The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), precursor to the introduction of the national curriculum for languages, does not require, nor test, explicit grammatical knowledge, focusing instead on situations and topics, and requiring speaking and written performances inclusive of different tenses, complex structures, opinions and justifications of the same.

For the last two decades, the quality of the secondary school foreign languages learning experience in England has progressively declined (Macaro, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001; Williams, 2001), despite the restoring of the significance of form-focused instruction and the reverberating role of grammatical understanding in foreign languages, first language (L1) and across the school curriculum (Hudson, 2006). The rationale for keeping foreign languages in the National Curriculum as a statutory subject for all students remains strongly disputed, whilst the strategy has extended its inclusion in the primary curriculum, urging research on continuity and language provision. Presently, the secondary foreign languages’ National Curriculum is awaiting a policy review due in 2014. Macaro (2008) indicated the inclusion of foreign languages and the allure of ‘languages for all’ in the national curriculum for languages as the start of the subject decline, discussing how the subject seemed to flourish when it was not compulsory. Academics have also consistently indicated that the curricular designated assessment measured proficiency in terms of students’ ability to recognise and respond to a range of topics and related functions, instead of grammatical understanding and knowledge about language, progressively restored in the national curriculum for languages at each progressive revision, up to present times. Due to the limited time table allocation, foreign languages teachers have felt pressed to prepare and rehearse exam-specific models of spoken and written target language use, neglecting both inductive and deductive language teaching; more importantly, neglecting the holistic rationale at the origins of foreign languages inclusion in the
National Curriculum, amongst complaints of dumbing down the subject. Meanwhile, the rationale for keeping foreign languages as statutory National Curriculum subject has been contested amongst complaints of lack of motivation due to shallow contents even encouraging stereotypes instead of fostering the much desired multiculturalism. Moreover, whilst suggesting how foreign languages should be taught following generic knowledge about language criteria, no specific methodological guidelines have been included, and the English foreign languages’ National Curriculum remains without theoretical and methodological underpinning (DfE, 2013).

Despite the initial national curricular recommendations, some teachers have kept teaching grammar as a tool for learning a language. Policy makers have increasingly taken notice of the debate sparking from the arising opposition of communicative skills and grammar teaching, as it seemed to engulf both foreign languages and subject English, with repercussions on pupils’ proficiency across the curricular subjects. Researchers and practitioners have since brought increasing emphasis on the teaching of grammar in both foreign languages and subject English pedagogies; however, foreign languages classroom pedagogy seems still rather disconnected from either policy making or research. Moreover, the language learning curricular area is still very much compartmentalised in foreign languages, subject English and Other Languages experiences for pupils and teachers alike, despite decades of cross-curricular and comparative pedagogical recommendations.

In view of the forthcoming revision of the national curriculum for languages, it is pressing to observe how foreign languages teachers are interpreting policy guidelines and research findings in their grammar pedagogy. Other research has pointed out that the national curriculum for languages has already in place the measures that eventually will lead to a reversal of the status of the national curriculum for languages, and that it will be a matter of time before the subject will ultimately overcome its current critical status if nothing is done and the changes already in place are promoted for their success ‘through the system’ (Hudson, 2007, p. 1). Although wishing it will eventually be so, this study asks whether this implies coordinating assessment criteria and curricular guidelines. If so, if teachers’ pedagogical beliefs are unlikely to change in adulthood (Evans & Fisher, 2009; Pajares, 1992), this research questions whether policy changes manage to cascade new sets of foreign languages pedagogical beliefs
so strong to impact their practice, or whether their current beliefs are to be studied to understand the factors so far influencing them, such as assessment pressures, diverse state educational settings, diverse school language policies, diverse teacher linguistic background, and teacher training programmes that do not include or counts on previously acquired methodological guidelines to impact learners’ success in this particular anglophone foreign languages learning context. Moreover, if continuity between primary and secondary national curricula for languages is a pressing goal, it follows that teachers’ beliefs and practices of grammar teaching in the secondary educational context (where the subject has so far been included) are an important landmark. Mapping their beliefs would guide the future development and successful implementation of a languages curriculum increasingly driven by form-focused, analytic language pedagogies.

1.3. **Reviewing the literature about the research focus**

Research on teachers’ beliefs has indicated how slippery the concept of beliefs is to define, and how complex it is to observe (Barcelos, 2003; Pajares, 1992). Nevertheless, research has also indicated that investigating teachers’ beliefs and classroom practice is greatly productive when exploring entangled domains. Borg has recommended this type of research as generating valuable data for both educational sciences and cognitive studies, in turns informing both policy and practice (Borg, 2006, 2011).

Research on teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching and about communicative methodologies has highlighted how the two concepts are diversely interpreted amongst teachers. Communicative language teaching was a broad approach generally endorsed to train teachers at the start of the national curriculum for languages (Meiring & Norman, 2001). Although progressively foreign languages teacher training has reinstated the place of grammar teaching within communicative approach (Pachler & Barnes, 2009; Pachler, Evans, & Lawes, 2007), communicative language teaching has remained a broad concept among language teachers (Hudson, 2007). The training offered to both locally and overseas educated foreign languages teachers remains without specific theoretical orientation and strongly based on reflection of own practice. Researchers across second language (L2) studies reported
how communicative language teaching has served as a useful umbrella term including various teaching methods in the so-called post-methods era (Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Prabhu, 1990; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Various linguists, from Nunan (1987) to Thornbury (1996) and more recently Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005), indicated that many teachers who claim to teach communicatively, in reality deliver lessons that are far less than communicative. The relevance of the communicative approach has been questioned in the teaching of English as foreign or second language (Ellis, 1996), and progressively, in England the teaching of foreign languages has been advised to adopt both communicative and analytic approaches to respond to more context-specific language learning needs (Hudson, 2006, 2012c), but a communicative approach of inclusive grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competencies has not yet been applied and observed.

For the vast majority, foreign languages teachers educated in England have not received homogeneous grammatical or pedagogical inductions either in their first, or in foreign languages education (Meiring & Norman, 2001; QCA, 1998). Klapper (2003) and Celce-Murcia (1991) stressed the lack of a theoretical framework within which teachers are enabled to make informed pedagogical choices. This study suggests that drawing from theories of first language or second language acquisition/learning may not be sufficient for the design of appropriate secondary school curricula and teacher educational courses, until they are attuned to context-specific language learning pedagogical objectives and practices. Encouraging an accurate conceptualisation of context-specific language learning approach and methodology may also contribute to form both national and international foreign language teachers. Attuning teachers’ linguistic and pedagogical knowledge to context-specific pedagogical objectives and practices may not alter teachers’ core pedagogical beliefs, but may influence their perceptions of their beliefs’ relevance within an agreed and informative language learning infrastructure. The possible ‘dominance of ‘second’ as opposed to ‘foreign’ language settings in much of the research output’ may also have contributed to controversial foreign languages policy, as inspired by fundamentally different classroom settings, such as the ‘typically monolingual’ foreign language settings and the ‘multilingual’ second language classrooms’ (Ellis, 2010, p. 7), increasingly cohabiting in the English educational system. This in turn may have led to discouraging
results for practitioners and students alike, together with perceived feelings of failure and inadequacy (Macaro, 2008).

Borg (1998a, 1999, 2003a, 2003b, 2006, 2009) has outlined with great precision the research to this day on teacher cognition, focusing also on teacher cognition in grammar teaching within first language, second language and foreign languages education. On analysis, however, research in this field has mainly referred to contexts of second language acquisition, featuring in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Brumfit, Mitchell, & Hooper, 1996; Busch, 2010; Crookes, 1997; Ludwig, 1983). Such fields, albeit of help in refining the focus and informing the methodology for exploring teacher cognition within foreign languages, have rarely been met, in their policy and social contexts, by the resistance and the disfavour often encountered by foreign languages teachers and students in England (James A. Coleman, 2009; J. A. Coleman, Galaczi, & Astruc, 2007; Macaro, 2008; Pachler, 2002; Williams, 2001). They have, however, been subject to heavily centralised governmental policy on education also in other English-speaking countries, such as the United States of America and Australia (Mitchell, 2000). Moreover, they have been the scene of research on grammar as a factor conducive of culturally appropriate, context-specific communicative language teaching (Ellis, 1996).

1.4. Identifying gaps in the literature

As much as there is increasing focus on teachers’ beliefs in the subject-specific aspect of grammar teaching within language education, foreign languages so far has been ancillary to first language, ESL and EFL teaching theory and methodology. The studies conducted on the lack of motivation of foreign languages students in the specific anglophone context of England suggest content-based and long-term goals issues. They also indicate that foreign languages assessment is perceived as vague and therefore leading students perceiving the subject as difficult (James A. Coleman, 2009). This study plans therefore to probe the ‘congruencies’ and the ‘discrepancies’ (Borg, 2006, pp. 126-134) between teacher education, practical knowledge, beliefs, practices in grammar teaching, and policy expectations of foreign languages in the specific context of English secondary education.
1.5. **Identifying the purpose of the proposed study**

My study aims to observe foreign languages teachers’ beliefs in secondary state English education, hoping that the collected perspectives inform policy and research on how to best frame contextual pedagogical objectives and coordinate correspondent teacher training and practices. It plans to contribute to teacher cognition in foreign languages, and to empower foreign languages teachers with a factual sense of their beliefs and knowledge, also by bringing forth the context of their experience. The study aspires to generate more awareness of the nature of one key aspect of foreign languages teaching and learning in English secondary schools, namely grammar teaching. Understanding how teachers treat grammar in secondary foreign languages in England would contribute to exploring and identifying their much needed perspectives before the next policy revision is caught amongst conflicting discourses once more. This kind of research has demonstrated to be influential both on policy and practice (Borg, 2006), particularly when focused simultaneously to gather teachers’ reported beliefs and to observe their continuity or discrepancy with their classroom practices.

My empirical study intends to contribute to theoretical principles underlying the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages in the discrete context of English secondary school language education. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Doughty, 2003; Ellis, 2006b; Gass & Selinker, 2008) and Second Language Learning (SLL) (Cook, 2008; Mitchell & Myles, 2004) research has mainly considered ESL/EFL models, but my research responds to the need to attune linguistic research and pedagogical models to contextual needs and debates (G. Ellis, 1996; Pumphrey & Burley, 2009; Spolsky, 2004). Hence also the starting point, teachers’ own perspectives on the debated issue of grammar teaching; of which later.

My study aims to contribute to the theoretical principles of foreign language teaching on explicit and implicit learning, described as a ‘hot’ topic in SLA research internationally (Brown, 2007, p. 291; Ellis, 2010). This topic was also addressed by the Language Awareness movement in the British context (ALA, 2012; Hudson, 2006) whereby ‘explicit knowledge’ was described as knowledge of the language in its grammatical structures. The Language Awareness research also considered implicit
learning through a ‘focus on forms’, a complementary strategy of language education which avoided grammatical instruction, aiming instead at communicative competence (ALA, 2012; Hudson, 2006). My research therefore responds to identified gaps in focusing on teachers’ personal theories (Borg, 2006; Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Woods, 1996). In particular, it focuses on teacher’s personal theories and interpretations of explicit and implicit foreign language learning (Andrews, 2006; Pumphrey & Moger, 1999), in order to compare them with linguistic evidence and components of SLA theories. According to a ‘complexity’ model of SLA theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997; Long, 1990a), my research takes into account environmental factors and the fact that ‘acquisition is not a steady accumulation of generalizations’ (Brown, 2007, p. 291). Moreover, my research explores teachers’ ideas regarding the use of target language and the role of the first language (English) in teachers’ grammar pedagogical strategies. Teachers’ personal theories and practices will be compared to research positions explored internationally (Ellis, 2001; Krashen & Seliger, 1975; L. White, 1987) and nationally (Grenfell, 2000; Macaro, 1997, 2008, 2009). Additionally, this study aims to explore factors (teacher education, experience, or any other emerging aspects) influencing teachers’ grammar teaching pedagogical strategies.

My study contribution to teacher cognition stems from Woods (1996) and Myhill and Jone’s (2011) observations that the focus of research on language learning and teaching has shifted over the years from teaching methods, to learners and their learning processes, and finally more recently to a focus on the classroom setting in which formal learning takes place. This has signalled a growing emphasis on what teachers bring to language learning experiences, which had previously been a peripheral component of language teaching research. This study stems from the perspective of the teacher (Woods, 1996, p. 3), asking them to report their beliefs on the value (if any) of either inductive or deductive approaches to grammar teaching in foreign languages. Successively, it observes whether teachers’ grammar teaching strategies treat grammar implicitly by drawing from generalisations from a number of examples, or explicitly by starting with generalisations tested through examples; or if they treat it at all. The observation will also try to capture examples of TL use in teachers’ pedagogies, with particular focus on whether teachers use it for treating or negotiating meaning about grammar. Finally, my research addresses current gaps in our understanding of FL teachers’ treatment of grammar also by asking teachers to
reflect on the research process, but also on significant events that have determined their grammar pedagogical strategies.

Should the revision of the national curriculum for languages address the need for theoretical and methodological frameworks for foreign languages within secondary language education, the identified trends in teachers’ beliefs and their correspondences to contextual as well as policy requirements could provide a further step in framing also the training of foreign languages teachers. A strong theoretical and methodological framework of foreign languages’ teaching and learning in England could focus foreign languages teachers’ formation at university level. Moreover, it could also channel both locally educated and linguists of different linguistic educational backgrounds to best use their subject and pedagogical content knowledge to serve the language learning criteria and goals in this precise anglophone foreign languages context. Including applied linguistic views in teachers’ formation would allow them to discern critically the approaches to adopt to best deploy a complementary language pedagogy. A theoretical and methodological framework for foreign languages in England would ensure that teachers from different educational backgrounds are not left to devise their pedagogies based on personal differing experiences, or trial and error, but could deploy their linguistic knowledge within an agreed language learning framework.

So far, research has predominantly dealt with students and language learning strategies. My research, instead, focuses on teachers’ beliefs for dealing with grammar teaching, as research evidence seems to indicate that foreign languages teachers have been resistant to explicit metalinguistic teaching due to the lasting oppositions of communicative and/or explicit language learning stances adopted by policy, research and assessment agencies. My study aims to gather foreign languages teachers’ reported beliefs about grammar teaching within their adopted pedagogies. Successively, I aim to observe how their pedagogical theories are enacted in their classroom practice. Finally, what is related and what is observed is recalled in a final reflection on their pedagogies and the research process. Within the limitation of a small-scale, qualitative research plan, this study plans to glean valuable emic and etic insights from the foreign languages teaching field. Equally, any relevant results will be used inform thinking about foreign language teaching practice.
In interpretive research, generalising the findings concerning participants’ beliefs and practice entails going ‘from particular instances to general notions by virtue of the accurate temporal and spatial dimensions of the phenomenon under study’ (A. S. Lee & Baskerville, 2003, p. 232). This process makes sure that these ‘dimensions can yield important explanations of past data in particular contexts that could be useful to other settings in the future’ (Díaz Andrade, 2009, p. 49). Therefore I aim to attain reliability for my interpretive research by ‘producing results that can be trusted’ and establishing findings that are meaningful and interesting to the reader’ (Trauth, 1997, p. 242) instead of showing consistent results by repeated analyses.

My interpretive research aims to take a snapshot of grammar pedagogy as currently held in eight cases of foreign language teaching in England. My descriptions are based on the definitions given by the eight individual teachers of their own grammar pedagogies, in their discrete contexts. The knowledge from my participants’ realities was ‘gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools, and other artefacts’ (Klein & Myers, 1999, p. 69). This knowledge is consistent with my interpretive ontological view, and with the epistemological assumption that findings are literally created as the investigation proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). For this reason, my interpretive study adopted an inductive data analysis strategy inspired by grounded theory principles as outlined by Thomas (2006). This strategy was then complemented by a case study design, conferring to my inquiry an ‘empirical’ quality to investigate ‘a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’ (Yin, 2003, p. 13). My intention was to set up a systematic and discrete exploration of each case study, allowing research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant and significant themes inherent in raw data. The findings were successively summarised, and clear, demonstrable links were created between the research objectives and the condensed findings. From this process, a theory was developed and demonstrated against the theoretical principles underlying both teacher cognition research and the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages. These theoretical principles were outlined in the paragraphs above and illustrated in detail in the following literature review chapter.
Díaz Andrade (2009, p. 46) emphasised how the complementary nature of case study and grounded theory can assist the researcher respectively by 'defining the boundaries of the study' and by focusing 'on the existing processes from which theory will be ultimately constructed'. Moreover, interpretive research recognises that participants’ personal experiences are discrete perspectives and that in order to create an integral, persuasive and legitimate description of teachers’ beliefs, I must use my experience as a foreign languages teacher to stay close to my participants’ points of views, translating these in a form that is intelligible to readers (ibid). Consequently, the theoretical framework I generated on participants' beliefs was evaluated against the theories outlined in my literature review, which were revisited and contrasted to the emergent theory from the data. Case study interpretive criteria and inductive approach criteria were combined to construct validity in terms of triangulation and the strengthening of my theoretical framework by additional evidence' from the multiple case-sources functioning also as 'measures of the same phenomenon' (Yin, 2003, p. 99). Furthermore, internal validity was pursued by matching the patterns of descriptions emerging across the explanation building within each case study (Yin, 2003). My interpretive study therefore aimed to go from particular instances to general notions by virtue of the rich descriptions of each participant’s reality (A. S. Lee & Baskerville, 2003).

With reference to interpretive research, Woods’ (1996) study emphasised how classroom events are differently interpreted by learners, teachers and researchers respectively. Woods’ research aimed to focus on each participant as an individual, rather than as representing a collective. Woods stressed that it was difficult to generalise findings from descriptive research, but that the resulting ‘well-documented local units’ of teachers’ interpretations of the role of key curricula aspects of language teaching and learning contributed to the ongoing construction of understanding of language teaching (Woods, 1996, p. 46). Woods’ contribution is also in highlighting how interpretive research gives opportunities and draws credibility from a participative ‘dynamic triangulation’ (ibid, p.46) consisting in the comparisons of results from each case study with previous research findings and also with the audience approaching the present research.
1.6. **Purpose statement**

The intent of this qualitative study is to explore secondary school foreign language teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching in a variety of English secondary school contexts. It focuses on what eight secondary school foreign languages practising teachers in England think, know and believe (Pajares, 1992) about the role of grammar in foreign languages communicative methodologies. My adopted definition for grammar teaching is:

the implicit or explicit drawing of attention on aspects of the target language; the use of metalanguage, metalinguistic explanations or metalinguistic feedback with the aim of helping students understand them and internalise them.

This is a very recent area of linguistic and cognitive studies (Borg, 2003a, 2003b, 2006). The espoused beliefs initially collected are subsequently compared to enacted beliefs in pedagogical practice (Ernest, 1988; Skott, 2009). Finally, the study aims to contribute to theoretical understanding of metalinguistic instructional methodologies, and to be of relevance to policy and practice in foreign languages teaching. In particular, the study focuses on the exploration of the following points:

- The conceptualisation of grammar and its role in current foreign languages methodologies: its value, its effectiveness, how teachers feel about teaching grammar, or their reasons not to teach grammar in foreign languages
- The impact on espoused and enacted beliefs of a) language education, b) pre-service training, c) teaching practice, d) specific school context
- The impact of linguistic and pedagogical subject knowledge on reported beliefs and pedagogical practices regarding chosen approaches. The justifications that foreign languages teachers give for adopting specific approaches, or following their own teaching experience and beliefs in realising the translation of policy into their personal interpretation of successful foreign languages practices
- Teacher conceptions of grammar within communicative language teaching approaches (Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999)
The impact of teachers’ nationality and experience on their conceptualisation of the use of teaching grammatical understanding.

Firstly, I aim to gather teachers’ espoused beliefs by means of initial teacher interviews. Secondly, I conduct lesson observations. Lastly, I gather teachers’ reflection on initially expressed beliefs and the intended learning outcomes pursued in their lessons. Subsequently, I analyse the data to see the possible congruities and divergences between reported beliefs and observed practices of grammar teaching.

As this kind of research has been proved to be influential for both teacher training and practice (Busch, 2010; Johnson, 1994; Phipps & Borg, 2009), the present study aims to be relevant to educational applied linguistics studies. The intent is to shed light in the specific requirements of Secondary School foreign languages teaching in England. Moreover, I plan to describe how teachers currently teach grammar in foreign languages, following their beliefs, their subject knowledge derived from their language education, from their professional formation, and from the directives received from policy and school contexts. The study also aspires to contribute to research on teacher cognition by exploring the relationship between teachers’ espoused and enacted beliefs.

In addition, the study intends to be relevant to policy of secondary school foreign languages teaching, investigating policy interpretations of curricular needs, linguistic theories, teacher competence and teacher formation. This debate has been generated by the type of foreign languages teacher provision currently adopted across the UK (Block, 2002), impacting on chosen pedagogical approaches, teacher subject knowledge, beliefs and practices. Furthermore, the research aims to benefit both practitioners and students of foreign languages, as it plans to offer an opportunity to reflect on personal beliefs and conceptualisations about grammar within foreign languages. In particular, it intends to be useful for teachers to reflect on foreign languages theoretical and pedagogical models, as their insights may prove to be extremely useful information for future foreign languages teacher education.
1.7. **The structure of my thesis**

The second chapter firstly outlines the literature review on the debated role that grammar has in first language and foreign languages education, clarifying also some key concepts that are used in the discussion of grammar. Consecutively, it illustrates the role of grammar in language learning as distinct from language acquisition, with the aim to outline some characteristics of the study’s context. It then identifies the main approaches and methods of language learning, paying particular attention to the framework of Communicative Competence. Consecutively, it looks at the role that grammar had in defining a language learning rationale, and how this can adapt to the present context from language awareness perspectives, based on the role that grammar has in developing metalinguistic awareness. The chapter concludes by outlining the review of how the concept of belief has been outlined in previous cognitive research, and also how it has been approached in applied linguistics. Particular focus is given to reviewing the research on teachers’ beliefs about the specific curricular area of grammar teaching in foreign languages.

The third chapter frames the ontological, epistemological and methodological stance of my qualitative case study, introducing the research questions and the participants. Successively, it illustrates the data collection and the data analysis strategies, and the themes that were created by means of an inductive approach of open, axial and selective coding. The chapter concludes discussing the limitations of data collection and analysis, and illustrating the ethical research conduct followed.

The fourth chapter opens with the presentation of each participant and corresponding school profiles. The structure of the cross-case synthesis follows the research questions and their pursuit through each research method of data collection employed. Under each research question, the themes created from the analysis and coding of the initial interviews will be synthesised to answer each research question and sub questions. The selective coding traces each case study description by selecting and refining the themes and categories emerged from the open and axial coding described in Chapter 3 (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). The fifth chapter presents the cross-case analysis and synthesises of participants’ views and practices. It follows the same theme order adopted in chapter four.
Chapter six discusses the implication of the findings and the importance of considering teachers’ beliefs about grammar when devising foreign languages policy, teacher training, and when planning language teaching methodology and testing. The research questions, which guided the collection of data and the choice of methodology, framed the assessment of the meaning of the results by evaluating and interpreting the data across the main themes that progressively were created through the process of data analysis. The results were critically examined in the light of the previous knowledge reviewed in Chapter two. Chapter seven concludes the study by focusing on how the study framed eight snapshots of how teachers across English state foreign languages education are interpreting curricular and assessment guidelines, translating them in their adopted grammar teaching pedagogies.
Chapter 2. Literature Review

Foreword

The literature review underpinning this research follows four thematic strands. The first strand illustrates the grammar debate in subject English, foreign languages and the discourse of language education in the National Curriculum. The second strand maps the shifting role of grammar and the various foreign languages teaching approaches and methods pre and post what has come to be known as the ‘communicative approach’. The third strand explores the evolution of research into teachers’ beliefs in order to create a systematic reference to previous research in the conceptual areas of teacher cognition and applied linguistics. The fourth strand reviews research conducted within the domain of teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar, which is the focus of my research questions. In Appendix 2.1. (Chapter Two), I describe the methodology followed to search and review the literature supporting my study.

2.1. Languages curriculum: debated and revised grammar trends.

The role of grammar in a language curriculum has long been a contested area and past decades have witnessed a general abandonment of grammar in both first language and modern foreign language curricula in anglophone countries. However, in England, the gradual disappearance of grammar teaching since the 1960s in English has reversed in the last decade with its re-introduction in the National Curriculum (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005; Myhill, 2011b). The first National Curriculum for foreign languages in 1992 (Macaro, 2008) displayed anti-grammar trends in its generic communicative syllabus, where the goal was to achieve native-like acquisition of communicative skills, and where grammar figured in antithesis to this goal (Meiring & Norman, 2002). Since 1992, the national curriculum for languages has also reversed its trends regarding the exclusive use of the target language, initially thought to trigger the acquisition of the foreign language (Macaro, 2000, 2001, 2008, 2009). Moreover, interdisciplinary trends have returned, reversing the initial divide and bringing together not only foreign languages and subject English, but also Community Languages and Learners’ other languages (Anderson, 2008; Brumfit, 1989; Burley & Pompfrey, 2002; Spolsky, 2004). Consequently, agendas of multilingualism and comparative pedagogy
have reappeared, already popular in the 1970s (Doyé, 2005; Grenfell, 2007). Language learning curricula in England seem now re-focused on the process of learning and comparing languages by adopting context-relevant and learner-centred pedagogies. Grammar, teachers’ subject and pedagogical competence, and knowledge of students’ learning processes seem common denominators of the post-grammar debate language curriculum (Harris, 2008; Myhill, 2011b).

2.1.1. Subject English and the grammar debate.

The place of grammar in subject English was largely determined at the Dartmouth Conference, held in the USA in the early 1960s, bringing together English educationalists from the UK, Australia, New Zealand and North America. Grammar teaching was believed to have no beneficial impact on children’s language development, unlike other approaches. Myhill’s (2011a) analysis revealed that such conclusions were evidenced by biased studies making sweeping claims on partial observations, but managing nevertheless to unsettle ‘the belief of many older teachers’ that it was of value, and leading ‘many of the younger ones to deny its usefulness’ (Gurrey, 1962, p.7; in Myhill & Jones, 2011).

In the next decade, the Bullock Report (DES, 1975), foreshadowing England’s first National Curriculum for subject English, signalled a new shift in thinking about the role of grammar. Developed at the time when school-based research was funded by the Schools’ Council, the report was embedded in multiculturalism and multilingualism, recommending that every teacher is a teacher of languages. Bullock rejected formal grammar teaching, which focused on prescriptive grammar rules, but strongly advocated developing students’ language awareness (Myhill, 2005, p. 78). Following this in the mid-eighties, the National Curriculum began its preparatory stages. As the first National Curriculum was in its developmental stages, two significant reports, the Kingman Report (DES, 1988) and the Cox Report (DES, 1989) were influential in shaping how grammar was to be framed within the English curriculum. The Kingman Report, commissioned by the Conservative government and expected to advocate the re-introduction of grammar teaching, instead argued against a ‘return to old-fashioned grammar teaching and learning by rote’ (Kingman, 1988, para 1.11, in Myhill & Jones, 2011), but endorsed the teaching of Standard English over cultural and linguistic
diversity (Cameron and Bourne, 1988, in Myhill & Jones, 2011). The Cox Report, again counter to policy-makers’ expectations, warned against de-contextualised grammar, and like Kingman, recommended more teaching of language awareness. The first version of the National Curriculum for English addressed grammar principally through an emphasis on Standard English and Knowledge about Language, and adopted a socio-linguistic approach which English teachers favoured. It did not require any specific teaching of grammatical terminology or grammar as a system. As a consequence of these requirements, the Language in the National Curriculum (LINC) project was developed to provide English teachers with extensive in-service training (Carter, 1993; Hudson, 1992). The LINC project focused upon language awareness, called knowledge about language by English teachers, and was strongly socio-linguistic in orientation and adopted a descriptive view of grammar. Funded by the government, it was decommissioned by the same in 1992 because of the perceived permissive view it adopted towards language study, despite having published various resources aimed to supply teachers with much needed linguistic subject knowledge (Cajkler & Hislam, 2001; Myhill, 2010).

The National Curriculum for English was revised in 1995, 1999, and again in 2007. The primary school National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998) and the secondary school Framework for English (DfES, 2001) gave considerable progressive explicit emphasis to grammar, but with a clear attempt to encourage the contextualised teaching of grammar linked to textual study, writing, or spoken language. Presently, the KS3 strategy is based on modern linguistics, which rejects dogmatic teaching of grammar rules, favouring a focus on linguistic and metalinguistic awareness, aimed to support pupils’ (and teachers’) understanding of how grammar is a meaning-making resource for language production. In the meantime, the National Curriculum review for the year 2014 promises a radically different and more rigorous approach (DfE, 2012).

2.1.2. Foreign languages: grammar lost and grammar regained.

Secondary foreign languages pedagogy slowly abandoned grammar-translation teaching methods by 1970 (Hudson, 2012a). However, the requirement for grammatical accuracy in the O level examination ensured that the place of grammar was not diminished (Meiring & Norman, 2001, p. 59). The place of grammar was still
prominent in the final report for the National Curriculum for foreign languages (DES/WO, 1990), which claimed that ‘a good understanding of structures is also central to success in listening and reading’ (DES/WO, 1990, p. 9.21; in Meiring and Norman, 2001); essential therefore to ensure progress in the receptive, as well as the productive skills. However, ‘by the time the statutory version of the National Curriculum [for foreign languages] appeared (DES/WO, 1991), the role assigned to grammar became diluted amongst a plethora of other more communicative considerations like ‘communicating in the target language’, ‘understanding and responding’ and ‘developing the ability to work with others’ (Meiring & Norman, 2001, p. 59). Grammar ‘was subsumed in the subsection ‘developing language-learning skills and awareness of language (DES/WO, 1991, p. 125; in Meiring & Norman, 2001). Meiring and Norman marked how references to implied knowledge of grammar insisted particularly on the notions of accuracy (emphasis on text) and the application of tense forms – ‘past, present and future events’ - which resulted essential to progress to the higher levels of the attainment targets (AT1, Level 5; in Meiring & Norman, 2001, p. 59). The introduction of the foreign languages GCSE in 1988 pushed decisively the issue of target language use in the classroom, included in the National Curriculum with features that Meiring and Norman (2002, p. 27) traced back to the Direct Method for the ‘premium’ it placed on the target language as the prominent medium of instruction. In turn, this influenced the methodology of the graded objectives movement and subsequently the GCSE emphasis on the four skills and practical communication (HMSO, (1985) pp. 1, para. 2.1). Meiring and Norman (2001) argued that the introduction of the GCSE examination system determined and defined classroom practice by emphasising ‘the four skills’ (ibid., p. 59) and the use of the target language. Moreover, the emphasis on discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic skills ‘changed the conception of communicative competence […] in the British context’, where it ‘became synonymous with notional-functional aspects […] to the detriment of grammatical competence’ (ibid). Thus, policy and GCSE syllabus requirements shaped teacher perceptions, leading to a marginalisation of grammar and to ‘radical reversals of classroom practice’ (ibid, p. 58). Brumfit (1995) and Brumfit, Mitchell and Hooper (1996) also described the curricular guidelines as typical of a notional-functional syllabus, where target language and native-like communication were the only pursuits, and grammar would be acquired solely through exposure to the target language. Macaro (2008, p. 102) further observed that the GCSE foreign languages syllabus was
influenced by ‘the functions and notions syllabuses of the 1970s and 1980s’ and by the ‘graded objectives movement’. He claimed that the reason behind such design was ‘a British attempt at reflecting the growing international consensus that the main purpose of language learning was about communicating meaning’.

Macaro (2008, p. 101) also defined the methodology in the 1992 statutory foreign languages’ National Curriculum as ‘an almost impossible (and possibly misconceived) methodology of exclusive use of the target language. Coupled with a policy of ‘Languages for All’, such methodology was at the start of the growing unpopularity and decline of language learning in England.

Applied and Educational Linguistic researchers concluded that the opposition of communicative goals and explicit grammatical knowledge, and the subsequent exclusion of grammar teaching, were at the core of Foreign Language’s decline (Macaro, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001; Mitchell, 2000; Pachler, 2002; Svalberg, 2007; M. Wright, 1999). Northern American, product-based second and immersion language programmes (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) were also displaying a similar tendency, claiming that explicit teaching of grammar had no consequences for language acquisition and native-like proficiency goals. At the same time, these programmes contributed to the indifference towards a composite Communicative Approach to second/foreign language studies integrating grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence, as theorised by Canale and Swain (Canale, 1983; 1980).

The national curriculum for languages was heavily revised in 1999 (DfEE/QCA, 1999; Meiring & Norman, 2001) to include more ‘substantial and overt’ references to the term ‘grammar’, ‘accuracy’ and ‘register’, together with an additional note on expecting students to use and respond to the target language and use ‘English only when necessary (for example only when discussing a grammar point or when comparing English and the target language’ (DFEE/QCA, 1999:16, in Meiring & Norman, 2001, p. 60; emphasis on text). In 1999, the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998) was extended to all school years up to year 9. ‘For the first time ever […] a coherent school policy on language’, adopted a common glossary to be used as metalanguage for
classroom discussion (Turner, 2001). In England, Turner (2001, p. 40) observed as follows:

The National Curriculum 2000 represents a significant shift in modern languages learning away from acquisition-based models which have been widely (but not unanimously) accepted orthodoxy since the mid 1980s. The refocusing on grammar, the move away from topics as the organising principle for the scheme of work, the recognition that [...] foreign languages are learned in the classroom rather than acquired, that learners benefit from an understanding of how languages work (the grammar) and this understanding can be enhanced by making comparisons with learners' first (and second) languages’. These criteria ‘are all indicative of an approach to foreign language learning which acknowledges the specifics of the school context (impoverished contact time) and the learner (literate in another language).

The National Curriculum 2000 gave prominence to explicit teaching about language structure, and in 2003 it was supplemented with ‘an official government-sponsored glossary of metalanguage’ (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005, p. 20). Hudson described this as ‘a major revolution in British language education’ (ibid, p. 20), when prescription died, varieties and informal registers became tolerated, and it became accepted that ‘the teaching of foreign languages should build on what children have learned in English, including the technical terminology for grammar’ (ibid, p. 20). By this time, however, the Nuffield Report (2000) had identified serious methodological and purpose flaws in subject foreign languages (Grenfell, 2000), which lost its credibility and was subject of stern criticism for relying on discredited methodologies and rationale (Williams, 2001). The government responded to the Nuffield Report with the Languages for All: Languages for Life. A strategy for England (DfES, 2002), where foreign languages was dropped as a compulsory subject in the core curriculum after Year 9.

From 2003 (Harris, 2008), all policy revisions were strongly based on reinforcing grammatical knowledge in foreign languages as a key element of success, with lists of grammatical objectives being a major feature of both the Framework for Teaching English (DfES, 2001) and the Framework for Teaching MFL (DfES, 2003). In 2005,
reacting to the drop in numbers of entry for foreign languages at GCSE, governmental policy required all schools to enter at least 50% of their pupils for a language at GCSE (Hudson, 2012b, p. 8 of 10). In the 2007 New Curriculum for foreign languages at KS2-4 (in Hudson, 2012b), foreign languages was confirmed non-statutory at KS2 and 4, and statutory at KS3. In 2009, the New Framework for KS3 Languages (‘foreign languages’) (in Hudson, 2012b) adopted the same structure as the one for KS2. The framework was divided into five strands, one of which was ‘Knowledge about Language’. It included a new glossary which was ‘well informed though rather short of linguistic terms (e.g. determiner, case, gender), and entirely illustrated from English’ (ibid). In 2010, in the ‘Addendum to the White Paper on Education: the English Baccalaureate’, foreign languages was included in the selection of core subjects constituting the new accreditation (Hudson, 2012b). In November 2011, the New Framework for KS3 Languages (DfE, 2009) was confirmed until further review in 2013. It indicated ‘key concepts’ underpinning the study of languages: linguistic competence, knowledge about language (a. understanding how a language works and how to manipulate it; b. recognising that languages differ but may share common grammatical, syntactical or lexical features), creativity and intercultural understanding (DfE, 2009, p. 3 of 12; 2012, p. 3 of 12). Inclusive of KS2 to 4, the learning objectives recommended are ‘Knowledge about Language’, understanding how language works, and comparing the ‘common grammatical, syntactical or lexical features’ that English shares ‘with other languages that the pupils know best, since this helps pupils remember new language and understand how the target language works’ (DfE, 2012, pp. 1-12).

Only last August 2013, the national curriculum programme of study for modern foreign languages has been disapplied with effect from September, 1 2013. Whilst the subject remains statutory at Key Stage 3 (first three years of secondary education), its national curriculum is no longer statutory, and schools are free to develop discrete foreign languages curricula ‘that best meet the needs of their pupils’, until the introduction of a new foreign languages’ national curriculum, which is expected by September 2014 (DfE, 2013). By then, foreign languages will be statutory in primary education, and the disapplication of the national curriculum for languages aims to allow schools a smooth adaptation and transition of programmes. Conversely, in another anglophone context,
the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* (ACARA, 2011b), also under revision, is clearly underpinned in humanistic pedagogy, sociocultural and systemic functional linguistics.

It has been argued that similar clear theoretical guidelines would inform researchers, teachers, policy and other major stakeholders on future rationale and knowledge content developments for foreign languages, hopefully in ‘intercultural’ communication with subject English. Despite the increasing momentum of explicit grammar teaching during the last ten years, curricular developments have mainly occurred in first language, and foreign languages practice is still relying on teacher’s practice without any ties or models being proposed at academic level for the particular anglophone context.

2.1.3. Foreign languages rationale

Harris (2006, p. 2) recalled how the Bullock Report (DES, 1975) stressed that any literacy learning pupils undertake in their English lessons should be consolidated in other subject lessons, indicating also that there should be a common terminology as well as a common pedagogical approach across the curriculum. Gradually, agendas of explicit metalinguistic knowledge (Andrews, 2001; Ellis, 2010; Roehr & Adela Gáñem-Gutiérrez, 2009), interdisciplinary, comparative pedagogy (Planell, 2008), intercomprehension and multilingualism (Brumfit, 2001; Burley & Pumphrey, 2002; Doyé, 2005) have made a steady comeback, planning to create a common curricular ground for all the languages studied at KS2, 3 and 4, just as the Language Awareness (LA) movement initially envisioned. Hudson (2005) illustrated how Language Awareness received an impulse from The Cox report’s (DES, 1989) recommendation of how the new grammar teaching should be, stemming from Halliday’s (1987) programme on linguistics and English teaching, which underpinned Carter’s (1993) LINC project. Language Awareness was best articulated by Hawkins (1984), indicating that knowledge about language embraced grammar, the understanding of how language works, phonetics, foreign languages, social and regional variation, language learning and the history of language development.

Hudson and Walmsley (2005, p. 612) observed how
the argument for this broad approach was partly that it was an important part of a liberal education, but it also rested on some practical benefits, notably in the learning of foreign languages. ...This belief rests in turn on the controversial (but plausible) assumption that language learning at school is different from spontaneous language learning by an infant; whereas the latter learns without teaching and without understanding explicitly what it is doing, most school children benefit from explicit teaching and an understanding of content and process. This emphasis on understanding grammar (and other parts of language), rather than rote-learning, runs through all the reports and the strategies which have subsequently been adopted. Importantly, Hudson and Walmsley also firmly believed that the argument for a Language Awareness rationale informed governmental policy reaction to the crisis in foreign language teaching:

by encouraging foreign-language teachers to build on the ideas and terminology of first-language English. Rather than learning fixed phrases in the target language by rote, pupils should come to understand how the language works and, more generally, how language works. The ultimate aim is to ‘create language learners’ rather than to train children in elementary use of some particular language (Anon 2003a). It remains to be seen whether this stress on understanding and cross-language comparison will be translated into more teaching of Language Awareness in schools. (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005, pp. 612-613).

In the next section, I will review the role that grammar has covered in the various approaches and stances of foreign language learning, focusing on framing the language learning phenomenon in England, and the conceptualisation of a foreign languages rationale.

2.2. The role of grammar in language learning

2.2.1. Defining grammar

Grammar is ‘a difficult term to define’, due to the variety of phenomena it refers to and the disagreements among grammarians concerning its nature (Byram, 2000, p. 248).
The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary’s primary definition of grammar is: ‘That department of the study of a language which deals with its inflexional forms or their equivalents, and with the rules for employing these correctly; usually treating also of the phonetic system of the language and its representation in writing’ (Little, Fowler, & Coulson, 1985, p. 878). The grammar debate discussed in 2.1. regards the social, the pedagogical and the linguistic focal areas. The social area deals with standard grammar, the status and role of language varieties. It is the platform for elitist impositions of ‘correctness upon language users (for example, in English, I shall instead of I will; avoiding ‘split infinitives’, etc.)’ (Byram, 2000, p. 248). Pedagogy is concerned with how grammar is learned, and a ‘pedagogical grammar depends on critical assumptions about the nature of language and its relationship to language learning’ (Tomlin, 1994, p. 141). Within communicative language teaching theory, language learning is a social and cognitive process. Learners must acquire both knowledge of grammatical structures and the knowledge of how to use the grammatical structures in discourse interaction (Widdowson, 1978). Language teachers need access to a pedagogical grammar that details the regularities of linguistic aspects in native speaker discourse. A useful pedagogical grammar is developed according to the principles of the language teaching theory it refers to, and its critical assumptions about the nature of language and its relationship to language learning (Tomlin, 1994). VanPatten and Benati (2010) argue that the meaning of the term grammar depends on the users and the contexts where it is used. In instructional settings, grammar often refers to ‘the rules and formal features of language that learners must master as part of coursework. […] This kind of grammar is often called *pedagogical grammar*’ (ibid, p 91) and the focus tends to be on supporting accurate use of grammatical structures in speech and writing.

Linguistics is concerned with explaining ‘the nature of grammar: its structure and function within the more general process of human communication. Herein, ‘the word ‘rule’ is to be understood purely as a synonym for ‘regularity’. In doing so, grammarians will account for sentences which are well-formed or grammatical (formally correct), acceptable (meaningful) and, in some models, contextually appropriate’ (Byram, 2000, p. 248). Linguistics illustrate how grammar is subdivided in morphology and syntax, and that it is ‘one of four ‘levels’ of language, [with] phonology, lexis and semantics’ (ibid, p. 248). In Linguistics, ‘grammar is often used to refer to the mental
representation of language that native speakers possess regarding the formal aspects of language’ (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 91). Grammar as such is the representation of native speaker’s competence: it ‘refers to abstract features of language and how they are manifested in the actual language’ (ibid, p. 91).

This difference in thinking about grammar is, in essence, about the difference between prescriptive and descriptive grammar. Descriptive grammar refers to ‘how people actually use language’; prescriptive grammar instead tends to be associated with the imposition of ‘good language use’ on others ‘bad grammar’ (VanPatten & Benati, 2010, p. 91)

Myhill (2011a, pp. 9-10) observed the following:

Modern linguists all operate with a conceptualisation of grammar as descriptive: a way of describing how language works. They analyse and examine language in order to describe language structures and patterns of language use. Descriptive linguists do not attempt to determine what ‘correct’ usage is or to make judgments of language use. In contrast, many non-linguists hold a prescriptive view of grammar: that there is a set of rules for how language should be used which are outlined and set down for common reference. A prescriptive grammar establishes a norm and sets a value on that norm, and critiques, as inherently inferior, usages which do not conform to that norm. Just as different understandings of the word ‘standard’ are at the heart of the Standard English debate, so too is the difference between descriptive and prescriptive perspectives at the heart of the grammar debate. One way to look at the language debate about Standard English and grammar is to see it as a fundamental difference in understanding between academic linguistic discourses and political and public discourses.

Linked to descriptive/prescriptive views of grammar and standard language varieties are contrasting views of grammar as fixed or changing. Myhill (2000, pp. 155-156) notes that some people see grammar as ‘a monolithic entity’ and non-linguists ‘find it hard to appreciate that Standard English and dialects each have their own equally systematic and organised grammar, so many non-linguists are also unaware that
grammars vary from one language to another’. Likewise, Joan Bybee (2012, p. 61) stresses the constant flux of grammar, noticing that whilst the ‘Language Police always deplore the loss of grammar’, it is ‘barely noticed that languages also develop new grammar’.

This study comes from a perspective of grammar as part of the dynamic view of language embedded in Halliday’s (1987) perspective on language education, and as such subject to the interaction of dialectal (regional/social), diatypic (functional) and diachronic (historical) dimensions. Unless differently described such as prescriptive, generative, etc., the term grammar will signify a modern linguistic approach to describing language in use. Halliday’s theory of systemic functional linguistics emphasised the role of meaning and communication in language teaching. Within a perspective of Language Awareness, Hawkins, Hudson and Myhill have contextualised modern linguistic discourses relevantly for the English and foreign languages curricula, without shying away from advocating explicit grammar teaching, but exploring which grammar and which pedagogical strategies would best serve a holistic language education.

2.2.2. Clarifying concepts used in discussion of grammar

Any theoretical discussion of the role of grammar in language learning, or of teachers’ beliefs about the place of grammar in a foreign languages curriculum has to engage first with the multiplicity of conceptual terms used in the field, not all of which are used consistently across the research. Already in this chapter, I have referred to Language Awareness and to Knowledge about Language: at this point in the review it is necessary to consider some of these key conceptual terms and provide a clear working definition for subsequent analyses and discussion. Analysing the place that grammar teaching has in the Language Awareness theoretical stance is important also to envisage a unified national curricular view of language teaching; an issue which is still challenging most anglophone contexts.
2.2.2.1. Metalanguage and meta-talk

Macken-Horarik and Adoniou (2010, p. 368) define metalanguage as ‘talk about language and other modes of communication’, drawing from Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Metalanguage refers to specific vocabulary used to talk about or describe language. One part of this metalanguage is grammatical metalanguage, such as noun, clause or nominalisation. Another set of metalanguage is literary metalanguage, such as metaphor, personification, or caesura used to describe how literary effects are achieved. Beyond this remains a wide set of vocabulary used to talk about language ranging from commonplace vocabulary such as word, paragraph or text, to specific metalanguage around particular genres, such as the idea of narrative hooks and cliffhangers in narrative, or the rhetorical tropes used in argument. For the purpose of the research focus of this thesis, I am interested in the grammatical metalanguage used by teachers and students in the context of foreign languages teaching and learning.

Meta-talk was defined by Borg (1998a) as talking about grammar in classes. He concluded that the reasons for meta-talk in foreign languages classes depended mainly on teachers’ experience, subject knowledge, beliefs about language and foreign language learning, theoretical and methodological orientation, choice of material and context. Borg suggested that teachers’ knowledge and experience play an important role in their adoption of form-focused instruction. Swan defined as ‘grammaticalization’ teachers’ ability to catch up and understand the changes and the use of a foreign language (Swan, 2011).

2.2.2.2. Metalinguistic knowledge and understanding

This is more conceptually difficult to define as the disciplines of psychology and linguistics have evolved subtly different interpretations. In linguistics, metalinguistic knowledge generally means the use of language to comment on and analyse language, whereas in psychology, the emphasis is more on the notion of metalinguistic activity as a cognitive process. From a predominantly linguistic perspective, Camps and Milian (1999, p. 6) have described metalinguistic activity as the ability ‘to take language as the object of observation and the referent of discourse’. Similarly, Roth,
Speece, Cooper and La Paz (1996, p. 258) describe it as ‘the ability to objectify language and dissect it as an arbitrary linguistic code independent of meaning’. From a predominantly psychological perspective, Bialystok (1981, 1990) maintains that metalinguistic understanding involves two related language processing components: analysis, which refers to the ability to articulate explicit and conscious knowledge and control, which concerns the ability to use that knowledge in practice. So, a learner might know that adjectives and nouns must agree in French, but might not do this correctly in their writing. In Bialystok’s terms, the student has the analysis knowledge but not yet the control. Myhill (2011b, p. 250) integrates the linguistic and psychological in her description of metalinguistic activity as ‘the explicit bringing into consciousness of an attention to language as an artefact, and the conscious monitoring and manipulation of language to create desired meanings grounded in socially shared understandings’. There is a further confusion in the research literature regarding metalinguistic knowledge and metalinguistic understanding. The two terms are often used interchangeably.

Moreover, Schmidt (2001) distinguishes between metalinguistic awareness in terms of noticing and in terms of understanding, claiming that while awareness at the level of noticing is necessary for learning, awareness at the level of understanding will foster deeper and more rapid learning. Rod Ellis (2010) claims that metalinguistic activity entails both awareness at the level of noticing and understanding. In second language, form-focused instruction theory, he identifies metalinguistic activity as the most noteworthy characteristic, whereby metalinguistic information is used as means to invite students to discover grammatical rules by themselves and self-repair errors whilst engaged in practice activities. The evidence supports the combination, rather than the isolation of metalinguistic activities and information which could be communicative in nature. Ellis (2010, pp. 441-452) identifies four different approaches to such metalinguistic activities, which vary in the way metalinguistic awareness is developed:

- explicit metalinguistic explanations: proactive/deductive explicit form-focused instruction;
- consciousness-raising and intentional tasks: proactive/inductive explicit form-focused instruction;
• giving the correct form: reactive/deductive explicit form-focused instruction;
• corrective feedback in terms of repetition and corrective recasts: reactive/inductive explicit form-focused instruction.

In these different approaches, the direct teaching of grammar is likely to occur only in the deductive situations, with grammatical knowledge being developed implicitly through inductive strategies.

2.2.2.3. **Explicit grammatical knowledge**

On one level, this is the ability to name and describe grammatical features/constructions: metalinguistic knowledge ‘*is declarative knowledge that can be brought into awareness and that is potentially available for verbal report*’ (Roehr, 2008 p. 179). So, for example, it would include learners being able to identify and name the passé compose, or able to understand that nouns are capitalised in German. However, some would argue that explicit grammatical knowledge also includes the metalinguistic awareness which enables identification without labelling. It would include, therefore, the awareness enabling students to notice and express the recurrence of certain endings characterising gender, without necessarily being able to grammatically define categories of *feminine, masculine*, or indeed *suffixes, lexeme*, etc. The same explicit grammatical knowledge may enable students to spot and describe the differences between word order in Spanish and English, without necessarily expressing it through grammatical metalanguage.

2.2.2.4. **Implicit grammatical knowledge**

This is the ability to use language effectively with appropriate grammatical constructions. Roehr (2008 p. 179) sees implicit knowledge as ‘*knowledge that cannot be brought into awareness or articulated*’. Implicit grammatical knowledge helps language producers to self-correct or to generate similar grammatical forms through knowledge of pattern or through use of analogy (such as when young children learning to talk over-apply grammatical rules as in pluralising *sheep* as *sheeps*). Implicit grammatical knowledge is very powerful in first language acquisition as it enables communicative competence without explicit learning and draws on environmental
immersion in that language. However, its role in second language learning is much less clear and more contested. Grammar-translation approaches to second language learning would argue that because learners have little or no implicit grammatical knowledge as they have not been immersed in the language sufficiently to acquire it, as native speakers do, then they need to be explicitly taught it. In contrast, communicative approaches to second language learning argue that by creating classrooms rich in the use of the target language learners will acquire implicit grammatical knowledge, similar to the acquisition processes of first language learners. For example, foreign languages students of Italian might say ‘mano caldo’ following the implicitly leaned rule that the ending in –o signifies agreement in the masculine.

2.2.2.5. Language awareness

For this study, I have adopted the definition that the ALA (Association for Language Awareness) website currently provides: ‘We define Language Awareness as explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use (ALA, 2012; emphasis on text; Svalberg, 2007, p. 288). In common with Ellis (2010) Hudson (2006) and Hawkins (1999), my definition integrates explicit grammatical knowledge, as evidence-based, effective L2 practice.

Bolitho et al. (2003, p. 251) maintain that ‘Language Awareness is a mental attribute which develops through paying motivated attention to language in use, and which enables language learners to gradually gain insights into how languages work. It is also a pedagogic approach that aims to help learners to gain such insights’. It was born as a reaction to grammar-translation methods and the tendency to use them to champion one standard language variety and its associated grammar as elitist expression. In his foreword to Language in Use (Doughty, Pearce, & Thornton, 1971), Halliday (1971) introduced it as an approach developing language awareness by inductive, bottom up exploration of language; learned not taught, and not requiring the use of metalanguage but rather developing metalinguistic understanding. Halliday (1971, p. 11) claimed to firmly root his approach to Linguistic Science and what it ‘has to say about language’. Building on Halliday’s theories, but contextualising them within language learning in the classroom, and the developments of the British educational
observed that the reality of languages and language teaching is more complex than the one presented by English as first or second language teaching. Hawkins (1984) emphasised the role played by learning another language in generating awareness of the first language by comparing structures in a meaning-oriented, yet unashamedly explicit teaching of language forms. Hudson (2010) has argued in favour of explicit attention to forms as having a positive effect on writing skills and linguistic performance. Moreover, he promotes linguistic theory to 'strengthen all the existing language subjects [for a] more coherent approach to language throughout the school' (ibid, p. 58). Hudson explains that the teaching of linguistic principles in secondary school, as elaborated in Carter’s (1993) KAL (Knowledge About Language), would mean allowing ‘mother-tongue teaching to take over where ‘nature’ stops’ to extend the ‘functional potential of language’ (Halliday, 1978, p. 100).

Despite broad consensus around the concept of Language Awareness, the way it is understood and developed is less consistent, specifically around the issue of explicit grammatical knowledge and explicit teaching of grammar. Van Lier (2001) distinguishes two approaches to Language Awareness, one advocating explicit grammar knowledge for learners (analytic), the other reacting against a top-down transmission of grammar knowledge (experiential). Hudson, instead, sees ‘language awareness’ as ‘a unified approach to language [that] has been brewing in the UK for several decades’; a term deliberately implying ‘explicit knowledge tied to a metalanguage’ (Hawkins, 1999; Hudson, 2010, p. 57). Moreover, he recommends that foreign languages should follow the principle of ‘recycling’ language awareness insights ‘learned initially in mother tongue lessons’ (ibid, p. 57). Both perspectives on Language Awareness agree that there should be an explicit focus on language, drawing learners’ attention to language and how it functions in context, but they disagree on whether this should include explicit grammatical knowledge. These differences are critical to this study which will be exploring foreign languages teachers’ views on the role of grammar in the national curriculum for languages.

Hudson and Hawkins’ approaches are consistent with Halliday’s prominence to the concept of context and the Language Awareness’ ‘main principle […] that most
learners learn best whilst affectively engaged’ (Bolitho et al., 2003, p. 252; emphasis mine). Hawkins’s Language Awareness pedagogy recognised students as learners in a formal anglophone educational setting, and promoted ‘general understanding of how language works, including pronunciation (phonetics), foreign languages, social and regional variation, language learning, its relation to animal communication, its history and so on’ (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005, p. 17). The same attention to explicit grammar teaching as means to contextualise and effectively engage students was pursued also by Ellis (1996) and Bryan (2011); the former for engaging and acknowledging student’s preferred learning mode, and the latter as a means to pursue an effective bilingual language policy and teacher formation.

2.2.2.6. Knowledge about Language

Hawkins argued that Knowledge about Language (KAL), a term often used synonymously with Language Awareness, is ‘often associated with UK school context […] and the early years of the British Language Awareness Movement, and particularly with knowledge about grammar’ (Hawkins, 1999, p. 288). Carter’s (1993) theory of KAL focused on the explicit knowledge and understanding of language: for teachers, but also for students (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005). Figure 1 below shows how Carter’s conceptualisation of KAL attempted to relate learners’ ‘implicit knowledge of language, their reflection on language use, and the study of language itself […] within a whole language curriculum’ (Carter, 1993, pp. 40-41).

Just as with Language Awareness, Carter’s conceptualisation of KAL is concerned with developing explicit knowledge about language, but is more ambivalent about the place of grammatical knowledge. In its historical context, the LINC was led by Carter, who developed a portfolio of pedagogical materials to help teachers teach KAL. This project was scrapped by the government precisely because it did not pay enough attention to explicit grammar of a prescriptive type. Foreign languages’ pedagogy and rationale were shaped within Language Awareness in the times leading up to the National Curriculum for foreign languages, which discarded them in favour of vague notional functional syllabus designs (Meiring & Norman, 2001). It was within KAL remit ten years later that foreign languages adopted National Literary Strategy’s

Figure 1. Knowledge about language in the curriculum. Source: Carter (1990; p. 41).

In anglophone context, the Australian government seem to have tackled languages education by adopting a holistic view of languages learning across the school curriculum (ACARA, 2011b). In England and in the United States, the development of foreign languages has not been framed within a theoretical approach to language learning. Languages in the English National Curriculum are not related in the holistic cross-curricular view recommended by the Language Awareness movement. Moreover, foreign languages teachers in England do not inherit a framework for foreign language teaching methodology (Macaro, 1997). Native and foreign teachers are therefore left to interpret pedagogical solutions based on their personal experiences, despite their substantial differences and unpredictable familiarity with the English educational system. In the United States, foreign languages rationale and approaches are also being revised, particularly trying to overcome the ‘anglophone’ challenge of making foreign languages universally available despite government, industry and popular demand (Brecht, 2012).
Examining the Australian anglophone context, it seems that the curriculum has comprehensively referred to first language, foreign languages, and Community Languages learning in its ‘Languages’ curriculum, while in England they are still divided and reviewed at different paces and agendas. The Australian languages curriculum also adopts a unitary rationale and approach for languages teaching and learning. The ‘languages learning’ element in the *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is defined by ‘language-specific achievement standards, which focus on the active and proficient use of language being studied’ (ACARA, 2011b, p. 6). However, besides this rather product-based goal, for first language and other languages it links languages learning to a humanistic rationale emphasising learning to communicate and make meaning; express and explore identity. It identifies the distinctiveness of languages learning in leading to metalinguistic awareness through the comparison and referencing between languages, understanding ‘how languages work’ and how language and culture shape experience (ibid, p. 11-12). The comparison leads to reflection and reinforces intercultural communication. Similarly to KAL (Carter, 1993), it roots more emphatically on systemic functional linguistic and sociocultural linguistic theory, without shying away from recommendations of ‘mastering of grammatical, orthographic and textual conventions, and the development of semantic, pragmatic and critical literacy skills’, where ‘explicit, explanatory and exploratory talk around language and literacy is a core element’ (ACARA, 2011b, pp. 13, 17). The explicit systemic functional and sociocultural theoretical underpinning of the Australian languages curriculum seems shared knowledge, explicitly picked up and commented on in the Remarks to the Consultation Report (ACARA, 2011a, p. 36) following the draft aforementioned, consisting in comments and feedback from teachers, principals, students, academics and other major stakeholders.

### 2.2.3. The role of grammar in language acquisition and learning

Nassaji and Fotos (2004) urged us to reconsider the role that grammar has in language instruction, even when this is underpinned by communicative language theory. Whilst the theoretical underpinning of the communicative approach will be described in the next section, here I will indicate the main reasons why grammar is a necessary component of language instruction.
The close examination of the main differences between first, second language acquisition and foreign language learning hopes to bring forth the crucial reasons why foreign languages learning in England should not be equated so easily to either first or second language acquisition. There are several neurological, cognitive, affective and linguistic factors to consider when dealing with these three phenomena, most of which do not affect either first or second language acquirers (Brown, 2007). Grammar teaching helps compensate some limitations encountered in foreign language contexts, such as:

a) explicit instruction compensates for the lack of exposure to the foreign languages, and the consequent lack of time to make students ‘notice’, subsequently bringing them to awareness of target language forms during input. Noonan (2004) also indicates explicit instruction as a way to draw students to notice particular forms.

b) According to Pienemann’s (Pienemann, 1984, 1998) ‘teachability hypothesis’, certain grammatical structures can only be acquired when learners are ready while others are more easily acquired when second language learners are explicitly taught them.

c) The ‘inadequacies’ of meaning-focused teaching approaches excluding grammar for the exclusive focus on communication do not seem to achieve sufficient accuracy in the target language (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004, p. 128).

d) Explicit instruction, as opposed to implicit, results in better learning of target structures (Norris & Ortega, 2000). Moreover, this type of learning has a longer lasting effect (Ellis, 2010).

Krashen (1981, 1985; Krashen & Terrell, 1983) theorised that error correction and explicit teaching of grammar rules do not lead to language acquisition, but rather that acquisition is triggered by the modifications that caretakers and native speakers apply to their spoken language. Instead of grammatical explanations of correct or incorrect utterances, language acquirers receive ‘truth value’ feedback on the functional appropriateness, truthfulness or falsehood of their utterances and expressed intentions (Johnson, 2008, pp. 78-79). The acquirer’s output is not corrected, but matched by the fine-tuning of the language provider’ input (Krashen, 1981, 1985). Krashen claims that conscious language learning is a different process through which learners are ‘helped a great deal by error correction and the presentation of explicit

It seems therefore that, on one side, there is a goal of native-like, subconscious acquisition, and on the other, a goal to help students achieve a mental representation of another linguistic system. Table 1 gives a theoretical synthesis of salient characteristics of first language acquisition, second language acquisition/learning and foreign languages learning, showing how these characteristics may overlap.

**Table 1. Characteristics of L1, L2 acquisition and FL learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental stage</th>
<th>F1 acquisition</th>
<th>L2 acquisition/learning</th>
<th>Foreign languages learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive process</strong></td>
<td>Implicit acquisition of grammatical structures. (Gass &amp; Selinker, 2008, p. 8).</td>
<td>Implicit language acquisition, possibly triggered by initial learning (Ellis, 2002; Hinkel &amp; Fotos, 2002).</td>
<td>Deliberative, 'conscious operation where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure' (N. Ellis, 1994, p. 243; Gass &amp; Selinker, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge are dissociable but cooperative. The interface is dynamic. The influence upon implicit cognition endures thereafter. (N. Ellis, 2005, p. 305).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>Within the L1-speaking environment/country/society, speaking the TL to function in everyday life.</td>
<td>Formal instruction, subject to contextual factors; a learning environment. Absence of TL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Input provider

|       | Parent, teacher, caretaker, facilitator. Linguistic structures are absorbed from native speakers. | Either teachers providing linguistic structures in authentic situations, or members of TL speaking society. | Teacher, sole provider of TL experience. Limited access to quality and quantity of input (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 368). |

### Input quality

|       | The input is both finely tuned and roughly-tuned, in the TL; (Canale & Swain, 1980; Krashen, 1981). |
|       | No direct teaching of features that the learner is not ready/able to acquire. | Either | Structural explanations usually in the learner’s L1. Foreign languages learners rely on conversation mainly in L1 as a tool for negotiation of meaning and hypothesis generation/testing and extension of knowledge to new contexts (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 370). |

### Output Monitoring

|       | Focused on meaning. The knowledge is procedural (Gass & Selinker, 2008). New language skills are tested/practised, and structures implicitly learned in authentic situations. Flawed output prompts focused feedback, recasts: psycholinguistic data, ready for explicit analysis (N. Ellis, 2005, p. 306). Academic level: formally tested, or necessary for the functioning of the individual within the society. | Explicit knowledge can contribute to implicit knowledge. Flawed output is explicitly corrected, or recast. Production is required for testing purposes, with subsequent demands and pressure of examinations. Explicit knowledge, based on declarative memory. |

### Reward / Purpose / Requirements

Learning how to learn languages/about languages (Hawkins, 1984). Recognition of proficiency in Instructed learning environment (Gass & Selinker, 2008)

| Affective filters | None. L1 acquisition relies on procedural, implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2005). Naturalistic learning (Gass & Selinker, 2008) | Affective filters are present, but mitigated by motivation and by the communicative need to use the TL. Sharing aspects of naturalistic learning (Gass & Selinker, 2008). | Formal learning and testing impinge on the individual’s affective filters and motivation. |
| Nature of language: what is that needs to be learned? | Procedural, intuitive knowledge; highly automated (R. Ellis, 2005, pp. 148-149; Myhill, 2000). Declarative and/or unconscious knowledge of the systemic aspects of language) according to the more or less specialist reasons/aptitude for learning the TL. Linguistic and Metalinguistic awareness (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Myhill, 2000). Explicit and encyclopaedic in nature, like knowing’ when the Normans invaded England, or the number of degrees in the angles of a triangle’ (Ellis, 2005, p. 148). Explicit knowledge interfaces with implicit knowledge, subsequently promoting it. (N. Ellis, 2005, p. 305). |

2.2.4. The difference between foreign language and second language learning.

Foreign languages is a type of second language learning (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; Turnbull & Dailey-O’Cain, 2009) and ‘refers to the learning of a non-native language in the environment of one’s native language’ (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 7). It is the case of English speakers learning Japanese or Spanish in England, USA, or Australia. Theories of Second Language Learning, or Acquisition (SLL/SLA), often deliberately make no distinction between second language learning and acquisition (Cook, 2008; Mitchell & Myles, 2004; L. White, 2003), referring to them as synonymous processes. Krashen (1982), instead, sharply distinguished the two, using the term acquisition to
emphasize the subconscious nature of the learning process, and the term *learning* to refer to the conscious aspect of language learning.

In England, the foreign language input is provided by a formal educator, who is often the sole target language ambassador, unlike in second language learning, where the teacher is a facilitator within a target language speaking context (G. Ellis, 1996). In foreign language learning, the speaker cannot access the developed linguistic knowledge immediately because of external factors conditioning competence, performance and output (Bialystok, 1990; Chomsky, 1980). Turner (2001) observed that the National Curriculum recognised foreign language as learning and not acquisition, because learning is happening in limiting contextual conditions, such as a limited timetable, and the learners’ literacy in other languages.

Second language acquisition benefits from long and constant exposure to the target language from a very early onset (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003; Kachru, 1982), whilst Macaro (2000) observed that while a child will have received thousands of hours of mother language input by the age of 2, most foreign languages classrooms provide at best 400 hours of input in 5 years, provided by a formal educator from a prescribed syllabus, not by a ‘language provider’ of acquired language input (Johnson, 2008, p. 77). Finally, foreign language learning in secondary school starts at the age of 10/11, coinciding with the end of the *critical period* for language acquisition, which spans from the age of 2 to 6/7. This places the onset of foreign language learning in secondary school at puberty and young adulthood, and with a preferential analytic learning mode (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003, pp. 547, 554, 558; Lenneberg, 1967).

### 2.2.5. The theoretical framework of Communicative Competence

Many British foreign language specialists recognised the communicative approach initially adopted in the national curriculum for languages as vague and with characteristics of a notional-functional syllabus favouring the sole exposure to communication in antithesis with grammar teaching (Klapper, 2003; Macaro, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001). Moreover, linguistics found that the communicative approach has often been misconceived by language policy and teachers alike also in various language learning contexts world-wide (G. Ellis, 1996; Karavas-Doukas,
1996). Illustrating the theoretical framework of Communicative Competence helps appreciating the role that grammar has consistently played in this theory. At the same time, it helps envisaging how the national curriculum for languages would be like, should it adopt Communicative Competence as theoretical and methodological framework.

The theoretical underpinning of Communicative Competence is attributed to Hymes’ (1972) response to Chomsky’s strong distinction between linguistic competence (the linguistic system; grammar) and linguistic performance (concerned with psychological factors involved in the perception and production of speech, e.g. perceptual strategies and memory limitations). Concerned with language teaching and assessment, Canale and Swain (1980, p. 3) and Canale (1983) proposed a theoretical framework for communicative competence including four areas of knowledge and skill: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Figure 2). From their theory, it emerged unequivocally that the goal of a communicative approach, was to ‘facilitate the integration of these types of knowledge for the learner, an outcome that is not likely to result from overemphasis on one form of competence over the others throughout a second language programme’ (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 27). For language teaching and learning purposes, Canale distinguished Communicative Competence from ‘actual communication’, defined as the ‘realization of such knowledge and skill under limiting psychological and environmental conditions such as memory and perceptual constraints, fatigue, nervousness, distractions, and interfering background noises’ (Canale, 1983, p. 5).

Figure 2. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale’s (1983) model of Communicative Competence.
Ellis (1996) observed how models of communicative foreign languages teaching methodologies often tend to place more importance on process, as opposed to content; on meaning as opposed to form. Often this emphasis translates into opposition between the extremes of communicative competence as sole imitation of communicative strategies, and processes of rote-learning of rules of grammar.

2.2.6. The role of grammar in Hawkins’s ‘apprenticeship’ rationale.

Earlier I considered how, within the Language Awareness movement, two dimensions developed: an experiential one, where explicit grammar teaching had no role, and an analytic one, supporting explicit grammar teaching of a comparative nature to explore both first language and second language. Hawkins addressed the need to incorporate the analytic dimension of language learning to the experiential one, and theorised an ‘apprenticeship’ rationale of language learning in *Awareness of Language* (1984). Within an apprenticeship rationale, both first and other languages are taught co-ordinately within the curriculum. Grammar teaching would play an important part in coordinating first language and the study of other languages, as the comparison of their respective systems would generate more expert language awareness, not attainable with the study of only one language, or the disjointed study of the curricular languages, whereby students would not be guided to reflect on similar or differing linguistic aspects. Moreover, an apprenticeship approach would engage language teachers not to train students to be proficient in one language, but to teach students how to learn other languages. Hawkins explains how this is particularly relevant to speakers of English, the global language, as they will need to choose at a later stage which language might be relevant to be learned to fulfil their future ambitions. In the secondary school, Hawkins (1984, p. 91) was not concerned with learning turning into acquisition, as his apprenticeship rationale was not the learning of a language per se, but the training it involves into learning other languages, and the process of insight into the first language. He conceptualised the role of grammar teaching within a process-focused rationale for foreign languages as curricular subject. Addressing language learning in the UK as a social practice was a ground-breaking approach introduced by Halliday (1971, 1987) and Doughty, Pearce and Thornton (1971), who detached from previous grammar-translation, prescriptive-only language learning theories and approaches. In turn, these theories were inspired by humanistic,
Vygotskyan sociocultural theories applied to language learning as a social practice (Balboni, 2005; Freddi, 1999; Kolb, 1983; Kurtz, 2000). Social constructivism as a theory of knowledge was used to investigate language learning, suggesting that teachers promote language learning as both a cognitive (of learning rules and knowledge) and a social interactive process (learning as a dynamic, meaning-constructing social process), paying attention to teachers’ and learners’ context and learning modes. Consistent with constructivist, process-focused learning theories (Bruner, 1966; Kolb, 1983; Kurtz, 2000; Singh, 2009; L. S. Vygotsky, 1966), explicit grammar teaching in foreign languages would allow pupils to explore ‘how to learn a foreign language’; to get ‘outside the mother tongue and [operate] even at quite an elementary level, in another language’, as this allows to see ‘the mother tongue […] objectively […] as an apprenticeship, whose main object is to show how to learn, while giving confidence that the job can be done and is rewarding’ (Hawkins, 1984; Turner, 2001, pp. 36-37). Underpinned by social and linguistic sciences, Hawkins’s apprenticeship, process-focused rationale was supported also by Second Language Acquisition theory on biological constraints for native-like second language acquisition beyond the age of 10 or 11 (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003, p. 563; Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979; Long, 1990b). At this age and albeit young, ‘adults lose most of their ability to learn languages implicitly, and must instead use their explicit, problem-solving capacities in L2 acquisition’ (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003, p. 548).

Hawkins (1984), Hawkins and Towel (1996), and Hudson (2006) considered the context of the language learning phenomenon in an anglophone perspective of Language Awareness. Hudson (2006, p. 477) argues that school level grammar should not consist of ‘major word classes’, but of all the ‘concerns that linguists call grammar’. Together with all aspects of language structure (syntax, morphology, phonology, punctuation, semantic and morphological - lexical - relations), it should consequently include semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and language change. It should therefore combine both the experiential and analytic aspects of Language Awareness. Hudson sees school level grammar as also providing a metalanguage for second language learning, and for explicit comparisons between first and second language structures, as did (1996). In foreign languages, Hudson (2006) sees the role of grammar as the ground to build on the understanding developed in first language. In the UK and wider anglophone contexts, it seems that an agreement is emerging
that grammar teaching should not be a prescriptive pursuit of disconnected categories from meaning and from interactive practice (Ellis, 2010). It should not aim to correct errors as deviation from a prevalent standardisation of a language and its grammar, but it should rather explore language in use in all its variety (ACARA, 2011b; DfE, 2012; Myhill, 2011a).

For Hawkins (1984, 1999) and within the Language Awareness movement, comparing the complex systems of other languages with one’s first language is paramount for attaining a first language knowledge that goes beyond the one attained through acquisition. This is also the position of cross-curricular and comparative pedagogy proposals (Planel, 2008; Pomphrey & Burley, 2009; Turner, 2001) which currently pursue research and policy change within the Language Awareness movement promoting both experiential and analytic approaches to language education. Such proposals explore the importance of metalinguistic activity and awareness also within multicultural theory and practice (ALA, 2012; Burley & Pomphrey, 2002; Languages Without Limits, 2011; Planel, 2008; Pomphrey & Burley, 2009). Already, Thomas (1988) indicated that English-speaking students with prior formal instruction in Spanish had an advantage over monolinguals when learning French formally in a classroom. The study further revealed that English-Spanish bilinguals developed a conscious awareness of language as a system giving them additional advantages over bilinguals who had informally acquired Spanish at home. Moreover, the results provided evidence that ‘developing students’ metalinguistic awareness may increase the potential advantage of knowing two languages when learning a third’ (Thomas, 1988, p. 235), as claimed also by Hawkins’s apprentice rationale. Cross-metalinguistic reflection, therefore, emerges as a dominant rationale in foreign languages learning, and is based on implicit and explicit metalinguistic activity (Ellis, 2010). The above stances also agree on the pivotal role of teachers’ content and pedagogical knowledge for an effective teaching of both first language and second language (Hudson, 2006; Myhill, 2011b; Planel, 2008)

2.2.7. The place of grammar in different pedagogical models

As my study attempts to infer my participants’ theoretical and practical ground (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), I will try to map the place that grammar teaching has
occupied in language learning and teaching theories (2011). Whilst grammar may have had an ambivalent role in curricular policy documents in England over the past twenty years, all along, grammar has remained manifest as the ‘unmarked’ teaching routine in the classroom, seemingly comforting both teachers and students alike (Bryan, 2011, p. 121; G. Ellis, 1996). Below, I will outline some of the principal pedagogical approaches to the teaching of a foreign language which have characterised the domain, and I will indicate the role of grammar within these approaches.

2.2.7.1. The Grammar-Translation Method

Until the beginning of the 20th century, grammar provided the categories and rules necessary to study, read and translate the written texts of other languages, namely the classical ones such as Latin and Greek (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002; Hudson, 2006). This method is still very much ingrained in traditional language teaching pedagogies for first language, second language and foreign languages teaching all over the world (Borg, 2011; Ellis, 1996; Karavas-Doukas, 1996) and it is one where the pedagogical role of grammar is fundamental to learning and explicitly taught.

2.2.7.2. The Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio-Lingual Method was theorised as requiring the sole use of the target ‘language, aural and oral skills’, including conversation practice (Brown, 1994, pp. 14-16). It was influenced by structural linguistics, Skinner’s behavioural psychology, and focused on the inductive learning of grammar through repetition, practice, and ‘memorisation’ (Spada, 2007, p. 273). Thus in this model, grammar is learned naturalistically through practice and through engagement with the target language, and is thus approached implicitly, rather than through the teaching of explicit grammatical knowledge.

2.2.7.3. Communicative Language Teaching and Functional/Notional Syllabus

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is not to be confused with the conceptualisation of Communicative Competence (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain,
Although CLT’s aim is ‘to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching’, the means to attain it have been rather ‘fuzzy’ in teachers’ understanding (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 115). This has resulted in several misconceptions of CLT and its implementation in the second language learning classroom (Spada, 2007). Researchers note that there is no one single agreed upon version of CLT, and there are no prescribed pedagogical or practical classroom guidelines (Klapper, 2006; Richards, 2006; Spada, 2007). As a consequence, it is the most widely adopted teaching approach ‘on a world-wide basis’ (Skehan, 1998, p. 94); but whilst teachers may report that they are practising CLT, in fact they might be applying their own interpretation of it (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood, & Son, 2005).

CLT approaches are as widely adopted as they are criticised. In the UK, it has been criticised as a-theoretical (Johnson, 1996, pp. 173-174) and as a post-method (Brumfit, 1988), because it is void of precise pedagogical and methodological guidelines (Klapper, 2003; Spada, 2007). Brumfit (1995) claimed that in England, the CLT approach espoused in foreign languages adopted a Notional/Functional Syllabus, based on the repetition of pattern drills. Accordingly, Johnson and Morrow (1981) and Tomlin (1994) described this syllabus as a system of categories based on the communicative needs of the learner, where rules of grammatical aspects associated to specific functional aspects of a language are drilled in a linear sequence from easy to difficult, stressing the immediate production – as in repetition - of correct forms. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) also confirm that typically, CLT approaches adopt a functional syllabus emphasising language functions over forms. Moreover, Hinkel and Fotos (2002) observed that a notional functional syllabus is typical of ESL/EFL pedagogies, and interestingly, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) based their general outline of CLT on a class at a high-intermediate level of English proficiency for immigrants to Canada, who had lived there for two years. CLT approaches seem pedagogical syllabi designed for immersion programmes of natural second language acquisition, which are substantially different from class-based, second language learning programmes, as explained in the preceding section. CLT approaches have been widely questioned in their claim of supporting Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, as their implicit focus on form seems unlikely to get students to achieve beyond Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (Bryan, 2011).
In CLT, the target language is a vehicle for classroom communication. Explicit grammar teaching has no place, as different linguistic forms are presented together in ‘authentic language’ (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011, pp. 119-120), as used in a real context, and pursued through role-plays and games: activities with a communicative purpose and immediate feedback on the success of the communicative intent. But even in CLT, some argue for the integration of more direct instruction of language, like Spada (2007), who argued for the inclusion of grammatical, lexical, and socio-pragmatic features with communicative skills.

2.2.7.4. The Natural, or Direct, approaches

The philosophy underpinning natural methods is that learning how to speak a new language is not a rational, but an intuitive process which will take place if the natural language learning ability is appropriately awakened (Brown, 1994; McLaughlin, 1987). Krashen and Terrell’s Natural Approach (1983) gave meaning priority over form, whereby students listened to the teacher using the target language communicatively from the start. Pictures, expressive target language use at a stage just further than the students’ current level of proficiency, ensuring that the input is comprehensible are the main teaching strategies. Little or no attention to grammar is given, which, if treated, is strictly implicit and incidental. Natural approaches hoped that adults learn a second language in the way children learn their first.

2.2.7.5. Task-Based, Meaning-Focused and Form-Focused Instruction

Task-based approaches require students to communicate information, make decisions, solve problems, and negotiate information until the task is taken to a result. In Second Language Acquisition, Fotos and Ellis (1991) illustrated how the ‘task’ can consist of metalinguistic activity involving both explicit metalanguage and explanations of metalinguistic features. It is therefore the learning ‘about grammar while taking part in communication centred on an exchange of information’ on metalinguistic features (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, p. 622). This approach is typical of immersion programmes (Ellis, 1994; Nunan, 1989; Pica, 2010; Richards & Rodgers, 2001), delivered in the target language. This approach is an attempt to combine meaning-focused and form-focused pedagogy, thought to be a continuation of the rationale behind the principles
underpinning Canale and Swain’s (1980) theorisation of communicative competence. Trying to adapt the task-based (T-B) syllabus in a method for state secondary foreign languages instruction, Bruton (2005, p. 66) concluded that ‘for teachers in (state) secondary schools with large numbers of students at pre-intermediate levels, [task-based syllabi] have very little to offer’, because designed for small, strictly student-centred immersion programmes of language acquisition.

Ellis (1997) distinguished between Communication-Focused Instruction, and Form-Focused Instruction (FFI): ‘The former involves the use of tasks that focus learners’ attention on meaning’ (Ellis, 2010, p. 437) whereas the latter refers to ‘any pedagogical effort used to draw the learner’s attention to language form’ (Spada, 1997, p. 73). DeKeyser (2003) distinguishes Form-Focused Instruction as explicit and implicit. Explicit Form-Focused Instruction requires learners to develop metalinguistic awareness of rules either deductively or inductively: deductively, if the rule is given to them; inductively, if they have to work the rule out from the data containing the rule. Implicit instruction is ‘directed at enabling learners to infer rules without awareness’ of what is being learned (Ellis, 2010, p. 438). Long (1991) distinguished Focus on Form (FonF) as meaning-focused, incidental use of form, and Focus on Forms (FonFs) as explicit instruction on grammar forms (Hinkel & Fotos, 2002). Ellis (2010, p. 440) observed that Form-Focused Instruction goal is ‘implicit knowledge with explicit knowledge seen just as a starting point’, as ‘explicit instruction is premised on either a strong or a weak version of the interface hypothesis’. Studies by N. Ellis (2010) and Fotos and Ellis (1991) proved how explicit metalinguistic activity-based approaches lead to better and longer term results.

2.2.8. The place of grammar in Language Awareness approaches

Building on what discussed in 2.2.2.5., Halliday (1971) observed how in previous language teaching in schools, grammar was based on the explicit teaching of ‘knowledge of the language’ which aimed to enable students to classify words and parse. He identified this knowledge about language as ‘rudimentary and inadequate’, because solely aimed to increase the ‘competence’ element of language study, instead of offering ‘a rewarding end in itself’. Differently from natural approaches (Krashen et al., 1979; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Terrell, 1977), and in accordance with
Doughty et al. (1971), Language Awareness approaches do not see the grasping of patterns as a process that would ‘develop spontaneously out of expressive use of language in the classroom’ (Hawkins, 1992, pp. 32-33) but as a process where ‘systematic strategies’ are needed for teachers to pursue three main aspects of language education:

i) the nature and function of language (grammar);

ii) its place in the lives of individuals;

iii) its role in making human society possible (Doughty et al., 1971; Hawkins, 1984, p. 51).

Hawkins proposed an exploratory approach to grammar, demystifying the exploration of linguistic categories - such as noun, modifiers, etc. – through the description of and focus on their function. His aim was to enable pupils to ‘see that there are two ways of ‘knowing’ grammar – one conscious and the other subconscious’ (Hawkins, 1984, p. 140).

Whether analytic or experiential (see 2.2.6.), Language Awareness methodology conceptualises grammar as descriptive exploration of language patterns and linguistic categories (Halliday, 1971, 1970; Hawkins, 1984). Hawkins (1992, p. 4) defined the Language Awareness approach to language study as the ‘space between’ the different aspects of language education, which have been pursued in isolation in the National Curriculum despite the initial input of the LINC project, an initiative coordinated by Carter (1993) and also despite the Bullock report (precursor of the National Curriculum) recommended a cross-curricular approach (DES, 1975). According to Hawkins, teachers' main pursuit was to give pupils confidence in ‘grasping the patterns’ of first, second, foreign, community and classical languages through a contrastive study of linguistic patterns and their manifestation in spoken and written forms. Within a Language Awareness approach, teachers would also answer pupils’ questions ‘about language origins, language change, dialects, borrowings etc.’ (Hawkins, 1984, p. 5). The rationale of Language Awareness methodology was unapologetically ambitious, aiming to combat the ‘linguistic complacency’ (ibid, p. 6) degrading language studies in comparison to other curricular areas. Hawkins aimed to ‘arm our pupils against fear of the unknown which breeds prejudice and antagonism [by making] pupils’ contacts with language […] more interesting, simply more fun’ (ibid. p. 6). Within Language Awareness, all languages would be taught through ‘arising
pupils’ curiosity about grammar’ (ibid, p. 142) as an aid to ‘conceptualise the function of each part of speech before seeking a name for it’ (ibid, p. 145; emphasis on text). Thus Grammar would no longer be a ‘bogey word’ (ibid, p. 150-151). Hawkins urged to consider the substantial body of research ‘showing that insight into pattern lies at the root of successful foreign language learning and that it is also the key to efficient ‘processing’ of verbal messages in the mother tongue’ (Ibid, p. 150-151). Hawkins also claimed that such evidence showed unequivocally that explicit metalinguistic teaching is integral with communicative use in the distinguished processes of language acquisition and learning.

Borg’s (1994) view of Language Awareness as a methodology in foreign language teaching maintains the requirement to develop a metalanguage for the purpose of analytic discussions of the language. His approach stemmed from a ‘process/product view of language learning, focusing not just on the outcomes of learning (i.e. knowledge about language) but also on the means through which these outcomes can be reached’ (Borg, 1994, p. 62). Borg maintained the necessity of training teachers to be ‘linguistically aware' for a ‘proper planning, implementation and evaluation of Language Awareness’. Moreover, demystifying formal language study as the ‘anathema’ of ‘extreme forms of communicative language teaching’ would allow teachers to cater both for the demands related to students’ linguistic awareness, and their own ‘beliefs, attitudes and skills relevant to the whole language teaching and learning process' (Borg, 1994, pp. 62-63).

The role of explicit grammar teaching emerges as an integrative component in both analytic and experiential traditions of the Language Awareness process-focused movement. From the review of KAL in 2.2.2.6., the debate in subject English in 2.1.1., and the languages learning approach of the Australian curriculum, grammar emerges integrative in anglophone as well as international interpretations of Language Awareness for national curricular language education (Balboni, 1993; Bryan, 2011; Pahissa & Tragant, 2009).
2.2.9. Grammar teaching in foreign languages in England

A theorised role for grammar within a foreign languages pedagogical framework would be to generate grammatical understanding and metalinguistic awareness. As noted earlier, In SLL, metalinguistic awareness is broadly defined as conscious knowledge about language: the explicit and verbalisable knowledge about language (Ammar, Lightbown, & Spada, 2010; Renou, 2001) that we do not need when we learn our mother tongue (Krashen, 1981). However, maturational (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003) and instructional constraints mean that more attention to metalinguistic awareness is needed in second and foreign language learning (Ellis, 2010). Schmidt (2001) claimed that incidental metalinguistic activity aimed to generate awareness at the level of noticing is necessary for learning. However, explicit metalinguistic activity aimed to generate awareness at the level of understanding promotes a deeper and more rapid learning. Ellis (2010) observed how both types of awareness (of noticing and of understanding) were fundamental in metalinguistic activity, as they promote the development of second language implicit and explicit language knowledge.

Metalinguistic activity would also compensate for the lack of ‘negotiation of meaning’ in an anglophone context where students largely share English to communicate; even if they come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Second Language Learning research frequently draws attention to the inter-relationship between metalinguistic knowledge of the first language and growing metalinguistic knowledge of second language (Mitchell & Myles, 2004; L. White, 2003). Ammar, Lightbown and Spada (2010) observed that students form comparable representations of the foreign language system if they are influenced by the same first language. Students sharing the same first language are also likely to understand each other when producing sentences using patterns from a commonly shared interlanguage, moulded by their first language, which undermines and marginalises the role of ‘negotiation of meaning’ (Gass & Selinker, 2008; Long, 1983, 1996). The activity of negotiating meaning is claimed to help students collectively discover and solve the following:

a) the errors emerging from difficulties to approach the target language grammar (Odlin, 1989),
b) the gaps in the target language grammar (L. White, 2003),
c) the avoidance of problematic target language grammatical features (R. Hawkins & Chan, 1997).

In same-first language classes, not only do students understand each other when producing sentences using Interlanguage patterns related to their shared first language, but they are also likely to ‘reinforce each other’s Interlanguage’ errors and gaps (Ammar et al., 2010, p. 130). Metalinguistic activity would generate understanding of the classroom interlanguage, reinforcing accurate interlanguage patterns and metacognitive activities implicit in the aim to generate the explicit knowledge about language illustrated in the next passage.

2.2.10. The explicit and implicit knowledge question

However, the research also indicates that there is no consensus on whether metalinguistic awareness should include explicit grammatical knowledge and the topic is often muddied by a lack of clarity about implicit and explicit knowledge. The distinction between implicit/explicit knowledge about language and implicit/explicit grammatical knowledge is a key distinction, briefly discussed earlier.

Bialystock (1981, p. 34) claimed that in second language learning, knowledge about language can be dichotomised as ‘implicit’ and ‘explicit’. Implicit knowledge about language refers to knowledge that is intuitive and procedural, consciously available to learners (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, p. 606). It is ‘accessed instantaneously during spontaneous comprehension or production’ (Akakura, 2012, p. 10). Native languages are known intuitively, and speakers may or may not be able to describe the formal rules or the social conventions of their native language. Implicit is the knowledge that ‘face-to-face conversation’ requires (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, p. 606). In contrast, explicit knowledge about language is analysable and abstract, and available to learners as a conscious representation, where ‘learners are able to say what it is that they know’ (ibid., p. 606). However, it is only partially accessible in face-to-face communication, as it ‘is knowledge about language and how the language can be used’ (Akakura, 2012, p. 10). It may allow L2 learners to articulate verbal rules, but it is not ‘represented to the learner as a set of rules’ (Bialystok, 1981, p. 34; Fotos & Ellis, 1991).
Implicit or explicit grammatical knowledge is a subset of knowledge about language which relates specifically to grammatical metalanguage and grammatical understanding. Whilst implicit grammatical knowledge is very similar to implicit knowledge about language because it is unarticulated, the difference between explicit knowledge about language and explicit grammatical knowledge is more clearly discernible because it is conscious and articulated. So, for example one learner might possess the explicit knowledge that questions can be formed using the ‘Est-ce que….?’ construction, another learner might possess the explicit grammatical knowledge that this is constructed by reversing the verb and subject and joining them with a hyphen. These conceptual distinctions are not always clearly made in the research literature and it is not always evident what perspective the researcher is adopting. However, what is clear is that the significance of the kind of metalinguistic understanding promoted by explicit grammatical knowledge is at the core of the different arguments about the place of grammar teaching in a foreign languages curriculum. It is the arguments about this which underpin the different rationales for foreign languages pedagogies which revolve around either explicit or implicit teaching of grammar.

In general, Second Language Acquisition and foreign languages educationists and linguists are more prone to adopt a weak interface position regarding the relationship between explicit and implicit linguistic knowledge (Bialystok, 1981; Fotos & Ellis, 1991). Interface represents the extent to which a declarative representation of a linguistic feature is translated to a procedural one, therefore the extent to which explicit instruction contributes to the acquisition of implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2009, p. 20). The Weak Interface position argues that explicit metalinguistic knowledge can facilitate the acquisition of implicit knowledge by focusing learner’s attention on linguistic features in the input: the language on focus (N. Ellis, 1994; 2005, pp. 606-607; Fotos & Ellis, 1991). It helps promote more rapid L2 acquisition to higher levels of ultimate achievement (Long, 1988), but it is constrained by learners’ developmental stages, determining the order of teaching and learning certain grammatical rules according to their complexity. Practice is not sufficient to overcome these constraints, as formal instruction focusing on developmental or difficult grammatical structures has little effect on performance in spontaneous language use. These structures are acquired in stages, involving the learner passing through a series of transitional phases before
mastering the target structure. Examples of developmental structures are negative and interrogatives (Fotos & Ellis, 1991). Only simple grammatical rules (such as plural and third-person –s or copula be) seem successful in developing implicit knowledge, as they do not require mastery of complex processing operations (Pica, 2010). Fotos and Ellis (1991) claimed that there is substantial evidence to suggest that formal instruction is successful if the learning outcomes are measured by instruments allowing for controlled, planned language use (e.g. an imitation test, a sentence-joining task, or a grammaticality judgment task). It is in this kind of language use that learners are able to employ their explicit knowledge.

**Strong Interface** positions argued that, through practice, learners automatize the learned explicit metalinguistic knowledge to the point that it becomes subconscious, and therefore acquired (DeKeyser, 2003). Instead, the **No Interface** position claimed that metalinguistic knowledge has no effect on language acquisition, which is the primary mode for L2 development. This is because it assumes complete distinction of explicit and implicit knowledge (Krashen, 1981). Metalinguistic knowledge serves only the ‘monitor function’ (Doughty, 2003; Krashen, 1982, 1994), which is activated when the learner is focused on the accurate use of the language, having sufficient knowledge of its grammatical rules, time and motivation to apply them.

The premise of strong and weak interface positions is explicit instruction, defined by Ellis as FFI (see 2.3.). Fotos and Ellis (1991) and Ellis (2002, 2010) provided evidence that explicit grammar teaching has greater significant effectiveness than meaning-based approaches for both short and long term proficiency. Furthermore, Savignon (1972, 1991) observed that it can help adolescent language learners’ affective filter to lower, as it does not expose to real or performed communication. Krashen (1985, pp. 42, 44) also claimed that ‘It is conceivable that grammar study may lower the affective filter for some students, while excessive grammar study can raise it for others’.

2.3. **Researching teachers’ beliefs**

Brumfit urged linguistics research ‘to start where teachers are themselves if it is to have any impact’ (Brumfit, 1991, p. 35). He argued that ‘teachers must contribute to the creation of language theory’ (Brumfit, 2001, p. 165), as the information obtained
from them is the most valuable evidence that linguistic theory and policy can draw upon. My study aims to start where teachers are with grammar teaching by giving voice to their beliefs. My study is prompted by the perceived decline of foreign languages and the advocacy of theoretically ambiguous communicative methodological frameworks. It hopes to address this gap in knowledge by researching foreign languages teachers’ reported beliefs about grammar teaching, exploring how these beliefs translate in classroom practice. I wish to discuss consistencies and inconsistencies stemming from a theoretical-practical observation of teachers' beliefs (Woods & Çakır, 2011). Communicative methodologies, recommended for foreign languages since its inclusion in the National Curriculum, positioned grammar and communication in opposition to each other (Macaro, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001; Mitchell, 2000; Pachler, 2002; Svalberg, 2007). Moreover, this ‘almost impossible’ methodology of exclusive use of the target language combined with a policy of ‘Languages for All’, may have indeed checked the growing popularity of language learning in England and sown the seeds of the decline (Macaro, 2008, p. 101). Despite the recent strong comeback of grammar in secondary foreign languages policy (DfE, 2010, 2012), the resulting methodological uncertainties have pressed teachers to rely ‘on their own practical theories’ (Borg & Burns, 2008, p. 458), or underived beliefs (Rokeach, 1968), to ensure the value and functionality of their pedagogical systems.

Investigating foreign languages teachers’ beliefs and reflecting on their pedagogical enactment in observed classroom practices addresses identified research gaps in teacher cognition and linguistics. Reviews reveal that research in teachers’ beliefs in second language acquisition have focused mainly on ESL, EFL contexts, often concerning university courses (Borg, 2009; Brooks-Lewis, 2009; A. V. Brown, 2009; Busch, 2010; Edilyan, 2006, 2007; Macrory, 2000; R. V. White, 2009). Very few of these studies link research on teachers’ beliefs with their actual classroom practices (Borg, 2003a). Even fewer consider the issue of teacher beliefs in the context of foreign languages in anglophone countries.

2.4. Conceptualising 'beliefs'

2.4.1. Grasping the slippery concept of belief
Pajares acknowledged that the concept of belief does not lend itself ‘easily to empirical investigation’ (1992, p. 308), as it can be a ‘paradoxical’ and ‘messy construct’ (Pajares, 1992, pp. 307, 313). Similarly, Barcelos (2003, p. 7) described it as ‘an elusive concept to define’ and interpret. Research on teachers’ beliefs is a domain of cognitive studies, contributing to the field of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003a, 2003b, 2006; Calderhead, 1996; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996). It flourished particularly between the 1950s and 1970s (Borg, 2003b, 2006; A. V. Brown, 2009), when the National Institute of Education (NIE, 1975; in Calderhead, 1996; Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 292) in the United States conceptualised the image of the teacher as a reflective professional. In the 1980s, Borg (1998b, 2003a; 2006, p. 1) established a Second Language Acquisition tradition of research on teacher cognition, defining it as the study of teachers’ mental lives, examining ‘what teachers think, know and believe’.

Borg’s (2011) reviews summarised the theoretical thinking around the concept of belief, synthesising the myriads of overlapping terms and concepts used to refer to teachers’ beliefs about Second Language Acquisition in different research agendas and stances (Borg, 2006; A. V. Brown, 2009; Woods & Çakır, 2011). Nespor (1987) indicated common characteristics at the basis of beliefs’ ontology, such as the process of enculturation, their strong contextual features, their social construction and their link with identity – similarly to language. Busch (2010, p. 320), noticing that beliefs are often referred to interchangeably with terms such as ‘opinions, assumptions, knowledge and cognitions’, offered her definition of beliefs as ‘any views held by the participants’ in her study about the nature of second language learning and teaching. Pajares and Borg suggested following the criterion of the ‘degree’ of difference between knowledge and beliefs observed (Pajares, 1992, p. 311). Rokeach’s (1968, pp. 1-2) positivist approach to studying beliefs organised them into architectural systems; psychological and ‘not necessarily logical’ forms. Like chromosomes and genes, they had ‘measurable structural properties which, in turn, have observable behavioural consequences’. However, he acknowledged that beliefs could not be observed directly, but inferred by means of psychological methods that searched participants’ actions as well as reports, as often people are unable or reluctant to accurately represent them. Beliefs thus emerged as individual’s representation of reality, containing cognitive, affective, and behavioural components, guiding both

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thought and behaviour; influencing what one knows, feels, and does (Abelson, 1979; Nespor, 1987; Rokeach, 1968).

2.4.2. Adopting a construct of belief within teacher cognition and educational linguistics

My focus will be on foreign languages teachers’ reported beliefs and their pedagogical translations in the foreign languages classroom. I will not measure teachers’ beliefs against any one theoretical and methodological framework of language teaching, or other forms of finite knowledge of grammar, such as modern or traditional. The phenomenon this research hopes to glean is composed of personal, contextualised and subjective answers to the value of grammar teaching and understanding in everyday foreign languages pedagogical practices. Concurrent contextual factors of administrative, managerial and pedagogical nature will be accounted for, because ‘in the absence of uncontested conclusions about what constitutes good practice, teachers base instructional decisions on their own practical theories’, as they are central to understanding teachers’ choices (Borg & Burns, 2008, p. 458).

There is no idiosyncratic definition of ‘belief’ in linguistics, but a synthesis of definitions supplied by other disciplines. Pajares’ (1992; p. 313-314), Sigel’s (Sigel, 1985), Nespor’s (1987) and Rokeach’ (Rokeach, 1968) concurring definition of beliefs is: ‘mental constructions of experience – often condensed and integrated into schemata or concepts that are held’ to be true and that guide behaviour’, and that must be ‘inferred from what people say, intend, and do’. Parallel to the previous, in teacher cognition, Borg’s definition of beliefs is: ‘propositions individuals consider to be true and which are often tacit, have a strong evaluative and affective component, provide a basis for action, and are resistant to change’ (Borg, 2011, p. 371). Woods (2003) also observed how beliefs are relatively resistant to change, compared to knowledge. In the context of language teacher education, beliefs are seen to be a key focus for research into teacher learning, also as a ‘measure of a teacher’s professional growth’ (Kagan, 1992, p. 85). Finally, studies rooted in Psychology have been criticised for drawing an artificial, conventional distinction between knowledge and belief systems (Rokeach, 1968; Sigel, 1985). As there is no agreed pedagogical knowledge equally underpinning foreign languages teachers’ beliefs, it is tempting to adopt positivist
constructs that contemplate beliefs separately from knowledge for the study’s sake. However, my stance considers foreign languages participant teachers’ experiences and knowledge as inextricably rooted in their beliefs, and both embedded in their contexts.

2.4.3. The difference between belief and knowledge systems

One repeated theme in the research is the distinction between beliefs and knowledge. Abelson’s study (1979) clarified the difference between a ‘belief system’ and a ‘knowledge system’ through seven distinguishing features, often used as a point of reference by later research:

1) The non-consensuality of beliefs, which can be disputed, unlike knowledge, also accounts for the lack of awareness of knowledge, like for example the naïve position of children’s beliefs in Santa Claus.

2) The awareness of existence or not of an entity, for example of grammar pedagogy, or terminology; or the insistence on the existence of a category, or conceptual entity, implying the ‘awareness of others who believe it does not exist’

3) The ‘alternative world’ representation included in beliefs, whereby ‘factors are manipulated […] to eliminate the deficiencies. […] A kind of problem solving, but at a more abstract level than the […] tasks in cognitive science’

4) The evaluative and affective components of beliefs, with their cognitive and motivational aspects, by which knowledge is polarised in either ‘good’ or ‘bad’, according to inferences following psycho-logical, rather than logical processes.

5) The episodic nature of beliefs, which, unlike knowledge, are strongly influenced by personal experiences. Knowledge relies on facts and principles, instead of ‘episodic and semantic memory features’

6) The openness of beliefs, whereby ‘each amplified concept would relate to new concepts themselves needing amplification’, making beliefs distinctly unbounded.

7) The varying degree of certitude by which one is strongly or weakly attached to a belief (Abelson, 1979, pp. 357-359).

Nespor (1987) argued that beliefs have a stronger influence than knowledge on human behaviour, as they are not affected by reason, and tend not to change, unless replaced
by equally stronger beliefs installed by a crucial episode: ‘a conversion, or gestalt shift [rather] than the result of argumentation or a marshalling of evidence’ (Nespor, 1987, p. 318). Sigel (1985, p. 364) added that beliefs ‘have been known to exist in the face of contrary evidence’, suggesting three explanations for beliefs’ grasp on cognition: ‘distrust of evidence, distrust of the source, and inability to evaluate new evidence’. Both Sigel (1985, p. 366) and Rokeach (1968) observed that belief structures do not necessarily hold a deductive, logical organisation, but manifest themselves in psychological forms, organised ‘(consciously and/or unconsciously) into schemata, which encompass an array of related attributes’ that ‘may or may not be related to one another’. More powerfully than knowledge, affective, evaluative and episodic beliefs filter new phenomena and incorporate them in the central belief system (Abelson, 1979; Calderhead, 1996; Nespor, 1987; Rokeach, 1968). Calderhead (1996) and Richardson (1996) viewed teachers’ thought patterns and behaviours as influenced by a complex network of various types of knowledge, including subject knowledge, practical knowledge, skill knowledge, contextual knowledge, and individual theoretical knowledge (Sakui & Gaies, 2003). Pajares (1992, p. 310) and Ernst (1988, 1989) tended to see cognitive knowledge and beliefs as closely related, proposing knowledge as ‘the cognitive outcome of thought and belief [as] the affective outcome’, attributing a ‘cognitive component’ to beliefs.

Relevant to my study is the integrative cognitive model that Woods elaborated, whereby ‘beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK) [...] develop through a teachers’ experiences as a learner and a teacher, evolving in the face of conflicts and inconsistencies, and gaining depth and breadth as varied events are interpreted and reflected upon’ (Woods, 1996, p. 212). Furthermore, Woods’ research argued that the macro discourses and decisions cascading from various authorities had great influence on teachers’ choices, and that teacher-centred research was important in determining the factors involved in the outcomes of classroom events. Building and moving on from method- and learner-centred studies, his teacher participant-centred focus examined a third and pivotal facet of the language learning event, namely research participants’ understanding of events in context. Woods’ methodology consisted of collecting teachers’ verbalisations of their own points of view and interpretations of classroom events in context, subsequently relating teachers’
reported beliefs to their observed pedagogical strategies, their resources and course structures.

Progressively, research has closely interconnected the conceptual areas of teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003), defining the first as “objective” (i.e. ‘true’), universal and impersonal, and the second as “subjective” (i.e. coloured by personal biases), idiosyncratic and personal. The term knowledge (unmodified) is often used to refer to the former, while beliefs is often used to refer to the latter’ (Woods & Çakır, 2011, p. 383, emphasis mine).

2.4.4. Beliefs shaped by social interaction and prior experience

Although focusing on learners’ beliefs, Woods (2003, p. 208) asserted that beliefs, ‘especially in language classrooms, are crucially connected to the interactions which take place among learners and those which take place between teacher and learners’. Woods (1996, 2003) developed a constructivist, process-based decision making model strongly influenced by the interplay of beliefs, assumptions and knowledge (BAK). Although not leading to lists of categories of beliefs that could be generalised, this model emphasised the interplay ‘between beliefs and interpretations, and between interpretations and actions’ (ibid, p. 225). This model illustrates how, in the classroom, goals are conceived not as objective entities, but as ‘a construct that is intended by the planner, and that is interpreted by others via BAK’ (ibid, p. 225). In this model, ‘decisions are influenced by reasons of culture and peer pressure’ (ibid, p. 223), whereby theories (for example SLA) may or may not have relevance if the teachers perceive that they will not make them ‘the best teacher in the eyes of their students and other teachers’ (ibid, p. 223). Woods admitted his study did not aim to produce an exhaustive list of the ‘factors that play a role in why beliefs change in some cases and are resistant to change in other cases’ (ibid, p. 222). However, his research highlights the social construction of beliefs, strongly anchored to their context. Moreover, both his 1996 and 2003 studies highlight how teachers’ beliefs drove them to ‘develop an intricate set of strategies in order to accomplish’ a goal which is consistent with their beliefs (ibid, p. 220).
Borg (2011) argued that teachers’ beliefs are well established by the time teachers go to university, and are powerfully influenced by their experiences as learners. While M. Borg (2005) reported that teachers’ beliefs are stable before and after education, Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000), Clarke (2008) and Busch (2010) provided evidence that language teacher education impacts and changes student teachers’ beliefs. As a consequence, they advised teacher programmes to invest on researching pre-service and in-service beliefs to impact on teachers’ pedagogical choices.

Unlike in other professions, the preparation to become a teacher involves operating in an environment which strongly evokes past educational experiences, and Pajares (1992) pointed out how teachers bring to their professions what they have internalised from the model of cultural transmissions they were exposed to. Pre-service teachers are *insiders*, for whom ‘changing conceptions is taxing and potentially threatening’ (Pajares, 1992, p. 323). Pajares argued that this would prevent teachers, once in service, from willingly addressing the need of system reform, thus protracting the status-quo where their beliefs originated. The nature of beliefs formed in early *enculturation* was reported to be resistant to change even in teachers who eventually developed into informed and competent practitioners (Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990).

2.4.5. Implicit and explicit beliefs. Relationships between these different types of beliefs and actual practice.

Teacher cognition research has identified significant differences between implicit and explicit beliefs; however, their relationship rather than dichotomous appears complex (Zheng, 2013; Feryok, 2010). Once more, terminology varies, as these different types of beliefs are defined as either voiced, reported, espoused; or as enacted, beliefs in practice, respectively. M. Borg defined beliefs as ideas ‘which may be consciously or unconsciously held’, and ‘evaluative’ as they are ‘accepted as true by an individual. Moreover, they seem to serve ‘as a guide to thought and behaviour’ (M. Borg, 2001, p. 186). In addition, Basturkmen (2007, p. 8) recognised that teachers ‘have beliefs which they can articulate and of which they are aware’, as well as ‘beliefs that guide their practice and of which they are not necessarily aware’. Feryok (2010) observed how teachers are unaware of beliefs that are rooted in school learning experiences,
which translate into familiar practices and are repetitively applied in teacher classroom strategies, thus preventing ‘cognitive change’ during teacher education programmes (ibid, p. 275).

The exploration of the relationship between the different types of teachers’ beliefs and their practices revealed how beliefs systems are ‘highly complex, dialectic and interactive’ (Zheng, 2013, p. 192). Zheng also observed that teachers’ ‘professed beliefs may not always concur with what other evidence suggests’ (ibid, p. 198). For this reason, the study’s perspective assumed that ‘beliefs may not always be held consciously but may become explicit by being related to the teachers’ practice’. Zheng concluded that teachers’ professed beliefs are to be ‘juxtaposed’ to their beliefs in practice in order to ‘assess the interaction between the two’ (ibid). Consequently, Zheng treated teachers’ professed beliefs ‘as hypotheses to be supported or contradicted by subsequent evidence’ drawn from the observation of teachers’ classroom practices (ibid, p. 198), and defined the object of enquiry as ‘teachers’ beliefs in practice’. In this way, ‘the dynamic nature of the belief system’ revealed an ever-changing nature, as ‘teachers’ belief systems do not exist in isolation but are connected to a dynamic context of educational reform’ (ibid).

Although difficult to separate implicit and explicit beliefs, Feryok (2010) observed how ‘changes in the environment’ may create ‘conditions for change’, and how the new knowledge thus acquired creates ‘dissonances’. If reflected upon, these dissonances lead to re-evaluating ‘familiar practices’, ultimately eliciting teachers’ awareness of their implicitly held beliefs through the differences between reported beliefs and their classroom practices.

The reviewed literature seems to suggest that the exploration of implicit and explicit beliefs by juxtaposing them with classroom practices seem to yield important data on the ‘filtering effect’ that teachers’ beliefs have on all aspects of ‘teachers’ thoughts, judgments and decisions’ (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 283).
2.4.6. The relationship between beliefs and practice

In Second Language Learning, Woods’ (1996, p. 15) ‘participant-centred research’ significantly contributed to teacher cognition and language teaching and learning studies, focused on participants’ understanding of the teaching and learning in context. It sparked from his observations of the different aims that teachers pursued, despite sharing common resources and curricula. This perspective previously had been a peripheral component of language teaching and learning research, which was previously focused on teaching methods, successively on learners and their learning processes, and finally on classroom dynamics and research participants and their understanding of events in a formal learning context. Woods’ study broadened the research focus on second language teachers’ perceptions, which he identified as having started to develop in the context of teacher education, such as Noonan (1992). Woods reinforced the pivotal notion of ‘context’, which he described as made of events meant to accomplish ‘the course and the curriculum that the course embodies’, the processes that the teachers chose as relevant to achieve the lesson outcomes, and finally the knowledge, assumptions and underlying beliefs about the role that classroom events had in accomplishing second language teaching and learning aims (Woods, 1996, p. 15). Woods’ strong contextual stance aimed to bring to the fore individual teachers’ often downplayed contribution to the understanding of events in the classroom context, where they were mainly expected to adopt prescribed methods and materials, overlooked in the way they re-elaborated the same, thus producing diverse outcomes, guided by different aims.

In First Language learning studies, Watson’s (2012a, p. 37) review indicated that ‘a wide range of studies has been undertaken which attempt to compare teachers’ espoused beliefs to their classroom practice, both at a macro-level, […] and at micro-levels’. Nespor (1987) and Fang (1996) showed that there is a strong link between teachers’ beliefs and practices, and highlighted the importance of contextual factors in espousing or divorcing beliefs from practice. At macro level, García and Sebastián (2011) compared teachers’ epistemological beliefs about the nature and acquisition of knowledge of preschool, middle, and high school pre-service teacher education students in Chilean context. Olafson and Schraw’s (2006, pp. 71, 84) study reviewed teachers’ epistemological beliefs and the relationships among these beliefs to teacher
practice ‘within and across domains’. Concomitantly with Nespor (1987), they concluded that teachers’ beliefs reveal both consistencies and inconsistencies with their teaching practices, and that they extend beyond their subject-specific domain. Significantly for this study, Brown, Lake and Matters (2011) and Lam and Kember (2006, p. 712), related how teachers’ approaches to teaching followed from their beliefs, but that ‘very strong contextual influences, such as external examination syllabi, can lead to a complete divorce between conceptions [of teaching] and approaches’.

Research has focused on teachers’ espoused beliefs to their classroom practice at micro-level examined ‘within domain’ beliefs about specific areas of the curriculum, such as literacy (Weaver, 1996), mathematics, (Ernest, 1988, 1989) and sciences (Kang & Wallace, 2005). Although conducted in their specific domains, these studies concluded that teachers' beliefs have a powerful impact on the practice of teaching, and that the enactment of teachers’ beliefs in practice is strongly influenced by contextual factors and pedagogical objectives, which limit teacher autonomy; a finding shared also by Brumfit, in foreign languages context (2001). These studies also converge towards concluding that researching the impact of teachers’ beliefs in their practice has great relevance on teacher educational programmes (Ernst, 1988; Luft & Roehrig, 2007; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Furthermore, Watson (2012a, p. 38) signalled that the ‘degree to which espoused beliefs have been found to accurately reflect the beliefs researchers infer from observations of teachers’ practice is extremely varied’. Basturkmen, Lowen and Ellis (2004) presented an emerging picture of both congruence and incongruence in the espoused beliefs and actual practices of participant teachers. Their study found that contextual factors, such as time, examinations constraints and institutional policy had little influence in the differences in teachers’ stated beliefs and actual practices. Lee (2009), on the other hand, revealed significant gaps between teachers’ beliefs and practice, due to the accountability of and the constraints imposed by institutional context, exam pressure and school policy. Prompted by Karavas-Doukas’ (1996) study and the negative view on the phenomenon of mismatches between teachers’ stated beliefs and their practices, Phipps and Borg (2009, p. 380) conceptualised them as ‘tensions’, adopting Freeman’s (1993, p. 488) definition of ‘divergences among
different forces or elements in the teachers’ understanding of the school context, the subject matter, or the students’. Following Golombeck and Johnson’s (2004) proposal to examine emotional and cognitive dissonances according to Vygotskyan (1978) and Bakhtinian (1981) sociocultural theory, Phipps and Borg (2009, p. 388) encouraged a ‘dialogic exploration’ of the tensions emerging from the analysis of teachers’ stated beliefs and observed practices, as they ‘provide a potentially powerful and positive source of teacher learning’.

Finally, in reviewing the common methodologies used in the investigation of beliefs, Barcelos (2003) urges to take into account the experience-based nature of beliefs and their social context. Watson (2012a, p. 39) also considered the possibility that emerging tensions between beliefs and practice might result from the methodology employed to explore beliefs, and the difficulty that teachers might experience ‘in making their implicit beliefs explicit’ as they might not be ‘fully aware of context as a significant factor that influences their questioning, or of how this influence operates’ (Sahin, Bullock, & Stables, 2002, p. 381). ‘In sum, [the investigation] has to recognise not only the cognitive and metacognitive side of beliefs, but also their social basis’ (Barcelos, 2003, p. 29), ‘reconciling the long-standing interest in grammar learning with the attention to grammar teaching and teachers’ (Borg, 2006, p. 134).

2.4.7. How teachers’ beliefs have been researched in SLA

As a consequence of their development within cognitive psychology, teachers’ beliefs in Second Language Acquisition have often been approached positivistically, as having cause-and-effect relationships. Typically, such research adopted questionnaire or survey methods and adopted statistical methods of analysis (Barcelos, 2003), such as Horwitz’s (1985), Karavas-Doukas’ (1996) and Ludwig’s (1983) studies on teacher and students beliefs about language learning and teaching methods. Increasingly, in Second Language Acquisition positivist approaches have been critiqued as inadequate to address the complexity of human belief systems. They tended to assume that teacher beliefs were implicit and stable representations of mental attitudes, opinions and ideas about language that could be made explicit through surveys, questionnaires and similar scientific methodologies (Kramsh, 2003).
Munby (1984, 1987) argued for the choice of qualitative, interpretive research paradigms to explore teacher beliefs. He viewed questionnaires and rating scales as debilitating research for inferring meaning beyond the test results and the domain where the tests were standardised. For Munby, qualitative research’s specific commitment was to seek the uniqueness of an individual within his/her specific environment to generate particular, rather than generalizable knowledge, determined by the observed teachers and their context, and not by external test items. Munby observed that the knowledge about beliefs obtained from interpretive research could be judged as very limited due to the uniqueness of each participant, when in fact it is empowering for the very particular information gained on teachers’ idiosyncratic perspectives on their professional activities.

A diverse range of qualitative methods have been used to investigate teacher beliefs. Munby (1982) recommended methods of repertory grids, lesson observation and stimulated recall, used either exclusively or combined. Metaphor, widely used by Munby (1982, 1984, 1986, 1987) has been identified as a data analysis tool to make sense of teachers’ conflicting beliefs, serving ‘an important role of creating order in an ambivalent, unsettling and chaotic situation’ (Sakui & Gaies, 2003, p. 165). Interpretive research paradigms have since strongly advocated that knowledge and beliefs are socially constructed phenomena (Barcelos, 2003; Sakui & Gaies, 2003). To gain an insight in teachers’ practices, methodologies progressively more relying on personal and idiosyncratic perspectives have featured, such as ethnography (Duff & Uchida, 1997), normative, metacognitive, contextual approaches (Barcelos, 2003) and discursive (Kramsch, 2003; Kramsh, 2003). Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) and (critical) discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 2005) have promoted progressively discursive and social constructionist approaches, considering language ‘not so much as reflecting than as constructing social reality – less a ‘mirror’ of the world than a ‘construction yard’ (Potter, 1996, pp. 97, 98). Other methodologies have relied on methods closely related to teachers’ identities, such as teacher narratives and self-study (Sakui & Gaies, 2003).

Recent ideas have derived from studies which have used complexity theory as a conceptual framework for analysing language learning. Larsen-Freeman (1997) compared SLA to ‘non linear systems’ investigated by physicists by means of
chaos/complexity theory, whereby they explain how ‘disorder gives way to order’, of how ‘chaos is a science of process rather than state, of becoming rather than being’ (Gleick, 1987, p. 5; in Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 141). SLA was therefore also described as ‘dynamic, complex, nonlinear, chaotic, unpredictable, sensitive to initial conditions, open, self-organizing, feedback sensitive, and adaptive’ and therefore not suitable for ‘reductionist explanations’ (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 142). Within this stance, not only was language use adaptive, but language users also underwent changes, starting from developmental ones. SLA therefore ‘focused on the particular while embracing the whole’ (ibid, p. 159). Larsen-Freeman asserted that Vygotsky claimed the same by citing that trying to ‘understand consciousness by reducing it to its elementary components was futile’ (Vygotsky, 1981, in Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 159), and that it was hence necessary to adopt a minimal unit of analysis consisting ‘itself of a microcosm of consciousness’ allowing to ‘focus on the particular while embracing the whole’ (ibid. p. 159).

Feryok (2010) noted how the growing field of language teacher cognition shared the above changing and dynamic characteristics, and therefore suggested complex systems theory to be applied as a framework for studying language teacher cognition. Feryok’s review identified complex characteristics emerging from the comparison of ‘pre-service and in service language teacher cognitions’, ‘inexperienced and experienced teachers’ (ibid, p. 272). Moreover, the teacher cognition studies focusing on classroom practice highlighted ‘non-linear dynamics’ of ‘pedagogical realities’, composed of ‘confusing, contradictory, and, at times, rather trivial’ traits, from which the ‘inferred cognition’ appeared ‘at odds with stated cognitions’ (ibid, p. 273). Feryok reports how Holliday (1994) and van Lier (1998) emphasised the importance of context as affecting language teacher cognitions, ‘particularly as they are (or are not) expressed in practice’ (Borg 2006, in Feryok 2010, p. 273). Feryok (2010) paid particular attention to the ‘specific’ contextual factors that require both novice and experience teachers to ‘reinterpret principles in locally relevant ways’, such as ‘workload’, ‘institutional expectations’ (ibid, p. 273). Feryok’s review comprehended observations on different cognition types: stated cognitions and inferred cognitions based on practices, in turn evidencing ‘declarative (knowledge that)’ and ‘procedural (knowledge how)’, which he correlated respectively with linguistic content knowledge and ‘pedagogical content knowledge about how to present’ the linguistic content
knowledge (ibid, p. 274). Feryok finally contemplated how complexity theory can be applied to understand if and how changes can happen in teacher cognition, often ‘rooted in their school learning experience, of which [teachers] are largely unaware but which can prevent cognitive change during teacher education programs’ (ibid, p. 275). Zheng (2013) applied complexity theory as analytical framework to a study on the relationship between six EFL Chinese teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning and their practices. The study revealed coexisting core and peripheral beliefs’, and that the former played an important role in influencing teachers’ practices, concluding that the ‘mechanism underlying the relationship between the teachers’ beliefs and practices lies in the interaction between their core and peripheral beliefs in different teaching contexts’ (ibid, p. 192). On the framework of complexity theory, Zheng theorised the ‘network of interactions between beliefs and practice’ to be ‘complex, dynamic and interactive’; characteristics that best describe the ‘diversity of teachers’ belief systems’ (ibid, p. 192). Interesting for my study is Zheng’s choice of methodology, relying on initial interviews, lesson observations and stimulated recall interviews, respectively aimed to elicit teachers’ ‘professed’ beliefs; to ‘ascertain the extent to which the teachers’ classroom practice was affected by their beliefs’; and to ‘elicit teachers’ beliefs underlying specific practices’ (ibid, p. 195). Zheng claimed that the adopted ‘holistic’ and ‘dynamic’ theoretical perspective allowed the study to go beyond the dualistic opposition of ‘consistencies and inconsistencies’, and instead ‘focus on an exploration of the interactive features of teachers’ beliefs and how such interactions impact upon their practice’ (ibid, p. 202). Interesting for my study is how Zheng’s is also contextualised in a time of curricular reform: the ‘National Curriculum reform in China’ (ibid, p. 192), which compelled teachers to adopt an ‘eclectic approach’ depending on whether they pursued the purpose of passing examinations or the promotion of learners’ communicative needs implicit in the NECS. The study also revealed implications for language teacher education by highlighting how beliefs systems were seen as highly complex and ‘not easily convertible into predictable, systematic pedagogical action’ (ibid, p. 202).

2.4.8. The methodological challenge of eliciting teacher beliefs

From very early on, researchers advised multiple methods to investigate teacher beliefs, as they recognised that gaining access to belief systems is challenging. Kagan
observed that beliefs are tacit, unconsciously held assumptions, and that ‘teachers are often unaware of their own beliefs, they do not always possess language with which to describe and label their beliefs, and they may be reluctant to espouse them publicly’ (p. 66). Furthermore, the beliefs that teachers espouse in their practices may not be those they report, and the difficulty inherent in capturing teachers’ beliefs is that the connection between them and teachers’ behaviours is not as self-evident as it may seem on observation. Teachers may also not know their true beliefs, or may feel intimidated to express them (Kagan, 1992). Moreover, teachers may be unable to articulate them in adequate words (M. Borg, 2001; Braithwaite, 1999; Calderhead, 1987, 1996). Additionally, teachers’ stated beliefs might reveal a ‘tenuous relationship’ with their classroom practices (Basturkmen et al., 2004; M. Borg, 2001; I. Lee, 2009) resulting as competing or conflicting. Borg (Borg, 2001) asserted that empirical insight is needed in educational research into the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of subject-matter knowledge and their classroom practices. Basturkmen et al. (2004) observed how such enquiry is particularly useful in investigating debated elements of teaching, such as grammar teaching, as it is based on both stated beliefs and observed behaviours.

Having investigated the concept of beliefs and the methodological challenges that research faces when exploring teachers’ beliefs, in the next section I will review research conducted within the specific domain of teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar, which is the focus of my research questions.

2.5. **Researching teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign languages**

2.5.1. **Teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in language teaching**

Teachers’ own experiences and contexts were found to influence their beliefs about the role of grammar more than distinct language theories. In Borg and Burns (2008), teachers’ reported beliefs about the role of grammar displayed mismatches between the terminology they used and their theory of reference, even when beliefs were collected from teachers with a declaredly shared knowledge system, such as the ‘Focus on Form’ approach (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 23). It also emerged that beliefs
about grammar teaching held by native English speaking teachers differed from those of teachers and students from other linguistic backgrounds. In a cross-cultural study involving 18 countries, Borg and Burns (2008) surveyed the beliefs and practices about integrating grammar and language skills in English language teaching. Their study was prompted by Ellis’s (2006a) conceptualisation of Focus on Form and implicit, incidental metalinguistic teaching; and by Mitchell’s (2000) support for grammar teaching in meaning-oriented activities in English secondary school foreign languages. Borg and Burns’s participant teachers were observed endorsing the teaching of grammar integrated with broader linguistic, contextual, and communicative language skills, but without displaying or advancing any declared knowledge of ‘focus on form’ as a theory, and without using any technical language of reference to pedagogical models of grammar/language skills integration (Borg & Burns, 2008, p. 457). The study revealed that teachers were basing their responses on their experiential perceptions. Basturkmen, Lowen and Ellis’s (2004, p. 243) study in ESL context also found that there was a ‘tenuous relationship between the teachers’ practices and reported beliefs regarding ‘focus on form’ and ‘focus on content’ approaches.

Latin American (Borg, 2003a), Armenian (Edilyan, 2006, 2007) and Asian (G. Ellis, 1996) teachers of English were observed to be more in favour of conscious instruction than anglophone English teachers. The former declared that explicit grammar teaching was worth pursuing as it was a consolidated experience of their language learning experience. In their review, Hinkel and Fotos (2002, p. 8) interpreted similar findings assuming this might be due to many countries still widely adopting explicit grammar teaching within grammar-translation methodology, causing ‘students who arrive to obtain their language training in Great Britain, the United States, Australia, and other English-speaking countries often demanding grammar instruction’. Edilyan (2006, 2007) also identified mismatches amongst the beliefs of Armenian students of English for Academic Purposes, who believed in the paramount role of grammar teaching, and their native teachers of English, who believed that critical thinking, rhetorical control and fluency were more important than grammatical accuracy and error correction. Mismatches among beliefs held by teachers and their students were also found in Borg’s (2003a) review of American and Colombian universities’ approaches to grammar teaching and corrective feedback for the eventual mastery of the foreign
language. Whilst students reported the usefulness of written and spoken error corrections, teachers deemed that pursuing explicit error correction and grammar teaching was not fundamental for their students’ proficiency. Borg (2003a, p. 99) raised the concern whether such mismatches contributed to ‘reduce the ‘pedagogical face validity’ of instruction in the eyes of the learners, [impinging] negatively on student motivation, and consequently be detrimental to learning’.

2.5.2. Research on foreign languages teachers’ beliefs about grammar in England

In English secondary schools, research on foreign languages teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching has highlighted discrepant beliefs held by teachers, researchers and policy makers. The research studied beliefs about the need to build on the initial implicit awareness of language by teaching a conscious and articulated understanding of language and its use, following educational process-based approaches (Harris, 2008; Planel, 2008; Pumphrey & Burley, 2009). Research on teacher training for the secondary school curriculum has brought foreign languages and subject English under the ‘intercomprehension’ agenda of ‘language studies’ (Brumfit et al., 1996; Pumphrey & Burley, 2009; Pumphrey & Moger, 1999). Their findings observed foreign languages teachers primarily conducting grammar teaching at word and sentence level, whilst subject English teachers mainly taught literacy at text level, avoiding explicit grammar teaching.

At university level, the beliefs of foreign languages students, of aspiring foreign languages and of subject English teachers have been explored. The research presents further evidence of mismatches between beliefs on the role of grammar teaching held by aspiring foreign languages teachers and aspiring subject English teachers respectively (Brumfit et al., 1996; Pumphrey & Burley, 2009).

The agenda of researching teachers’ beliefs and corresponding practices of teaching about the nature of language and how it functions had been strongly pushed by Hawkins (1984, 1999), and Mitchell, Hooper and Brumfit (1996; 1994b). The latter study is a larger scale precursor of mine, and it involves gathering teachers’ beliefs and observing their actual classroom practices. Their study observed how foreign languages and subject English teachers’ beliefs diverged on the nature, the model and
the scope of language awareness in the secondary school curriculum. Whilst foreign languages teaching was based on aspects of morphosyntax at sentence and subsentence level, subject English teaching was largely text-focused, with no focus on language as a system. Neither foreign languages, nor subject English teaching revealed any focus on language acquisition and development, or the history of languages: two of the five areas proposed by the LINC Project (Carter, 1993) within the comprehensive Knowledge About Language, including: 1) language variety (accents, dialects, registers, etc.); 2) language and society (social power and language use); 3) language acquisition and development; 4) history of languages; 5) language as a system (grammar – the sharing of meaning between users). These areas have been recently the object of research of ‘comparative pedagogy’ (Planel, 2008), cross-curricular approaches to ‘learning to learn’ languages (Harris, 2008), international (Doyé, 2005) and national ‘intercomprehension’ research agendas (Burley & Pompfrey, 2002; Pompfrey & Burley, 2009; Pompfrey & Moger, 1999) aiming to create a common curricular area of language studies in secondary school where the teaching and learning of first, second and other languages is comparative and integrative.

2.5.3. Cross-subject focus on subject English and foreign languages

Research on the importance of language awareness in teachers’ views has been decisively conducted within subject English context in the last ten years (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005; Jones, Myhill, & Bailey, 2013; Myhill & Jones, 2011; Watson, 2012b). Myhill’s (Myhill, 2000, 2011b; Myhill, Jones, Lines, & Watson, 2011) and Watson’s (Watson, 2012b) ESRC-sponsored research is actively investigating how grammar can be taught effectively, how students learn grammar, and how to provide teachers with the subject and pedagogical knowledge to enable students apply their abstract knowledge to live text.

In foreign languages, so far studies have concentrated on proposing the re-integration of grammar teaching and metalinguistic awareness within foreign languages and first language teaching pedagogy, considering the implications of explicit knowledge of grammar rules (Allford, 2003). Block (2002) compared policy, practitioners’ and researchers’ discourses on grammar teaching in secondary schools, proposing foreign national foreign languages teachers as catalysts of the policy discourse on grammar.
in foreign languages. Grenfell (2007) reported on language learning strategy research in second language policy in England and Wales, focusing on the foreign languages Key Stage 3 strategy for secondary schools, its theoretical rationale and its place in a broader language curriculum. He previously (Grenfell, 2000) discussed issues of policy and practice in modern foreign language teaching in the light of the concerns raised by the Nuffield Inquiry. He comments about methodological doubts, curriculum confusion and loss of purpose, but the teachers’ beliefs are reported indirectly.

M. Wright (1999), T. Wright (2010), Brumfit, Mitchell and Hooper (1996), and Svalberg (2007) signalled a resistance of teachers of English as first language teachers, to pursue language awareness that includes a descriptive rationale, as they directly connected it with the teaching of grammar. Brumfit, Mitchell and Hooper (1996) recommended that Language Awareness should be structured according to consistent, clearer goals and contents to guide teachers in this pedagogical aspect of their work. Already voiced in their 1994 study, this was a touchstone for their belief-derived theories (Mitchell, Brumfit, & Hooper, 1994a). In Jamaica, research on teachers’ beliefs and practices found that English teachers’ predominant literary background was found to lack linguistic competence, hampering their ability to differentiate between English input and Jamaican Creole input, ultimately detracting from a Maintenance Bilingualism educational stance (Bryan, 2011), promoting the conservation of all language varieties.

Burley and Pomphrey (2002) and Pomphrey and Moger (1999) addressed the conflicting attitudes and perceptions that a group of PGCE English and foreign languages student teachers presented about language awareness and its inclusive role of explicit grammar teaching. Their findings paralleled those highlighted by Mitchell, Hooper and Brumfit (1994). Burley and Pomphrey proposed a new definition of language teacher for the future, strongly embedded in subject knowledge to guide students in the emerging multicultural and plurilingual secondary school scenario. Firmly rooted in Hawkins’s (1984, 1992), Brumfit’s (1991, 2001) and Mitchell’s (2000, 2010; 1994b; 1994) research, Burley and Pomphrey believed that teacher education was a pivotal moment to exploit for eradicating the inhibitions and anxieties that both sets of teachers presented when dealing with the issue of how to bridge language education in secondary school. Burley and Pomphrey (2002) and Pomphrey and
Moger (1999) promoted research exploring where teachers are in terms of their awareness of language, including their beliefs about the role of grammar in language education. Their reviews found that teachers’ beliefs reflected a strong prescriptive view of grammar, which was largely used as the basis of foreign languages teaching, deprived of any discussion on language, and largely avoided in the teaching of English due to English teachers’ general lack of explicit structural knowledge of language.

2.5.4. Beliefs about grammar and classroom practice

Borg’s reviews indicated that teachers’ beliefs were strongly linked and dependent on their experiences as teachers and learners, which proved decisive when adopting theoretical models of language teaching methodologies (Borg, 2003a, p. 99; 2003b, 2006). Little empirical evidence regarding teachers’ current beliefs and classroom practices regarding pedagogical models of grammar or other teaching in the foreign languages classroom have informed educational linguistics and teacher cognition research (Borg, 2003a).

Borg (1998a; 1999; 2001; 2003a; 2011) and Brumfit et al. (1996) observed that teachers’ knowledge of grammatical terminology shaped their approach to language instructional decision. In Second Language Acquisition, reviews have been preoccupied with the impact of teachers’ explicit and implicit knowledge of the target language on their practice (Berry, 1997, 2009; Dillon, 2009; Ellis, 2005), but the studies do not include empirical studies on teachers’ beliefs and their practices. Borg (2003a, p. 105) highlighted the need of insights into the interrelationship between cognition and practice in grammar teaching as a key feature of cognitive and linguistic research, as ‘they [would] describe actual classroom practices and ground their analyses of teacher cognition in these practices’. His research has also concerned other studies in Second Language Acquisition and educational linguistics, equally sensing the tension between policy, theory and practice, (Barcelos, 2003; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000; Johnson, 1994; Mitchell, Brumfit, et al., 1994a; Richardson, 1996).
2.6. *The author’s own position.*

Here I will discuss my own position in relation to the different perspectives discussed in the review of the literature, focused on four thematic strands: the grammar debate, the role of grammar in language learning approaches, the evolution of research into teacher beliefs and the research conducted within the domain of teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar.

With reference to the grammar debate in subject English and foreign languages, and concerning the discourse of language education in the National Curriculum, my study aligns with the discourses proposing an apprentice language learning rationale. This was adopted by foreign (and first) language educators and researchers alike (see (2.2.6.). Its ultimate aim is to create language learners who attempt, and hopefully reach an understanding of the foreign language and culture, rather than train children in the elementary, rote-learned use of some particular language. I believe that the argument of Language Awareness, grounded on the same language learning rationale, should inform a governmental policy response to the crisis in foreign language teaching by emphasising language understanding and cross-language comparison. The literature reviewed revealed that, despite decades of cross-curricular and comparative pedagogical recommendations, the language learning curricular area is still very much compartmentalised for pupils and teachers alike. With respect to foreign language teachers, I believe that they should be encouraged to build on the ideas and terminology taught in first-language English, incentivising pupils to understand how language works. However, it remains to be seen whether applied linguistic research will match foreign language classroom practice to follow up research-based foreign language approaches and assessment guidelines.

As I discussed in section 2.1., it seems that both native and foreign teachers are left to interpret pedagogical solutions based on their personal experiences, despite substantial language education and training differences, and despite their varying degree of familiarity with the English educational system. Moreover, foreign language teachers in England are not yet embedded in a theoretical and methodological framework for foreign language teaching (Anderson, 2008; Harris, 2008; Hult, 2013; Macaro, 1997; Mitchell, 2010). Within the Language Awareness movement, teacher
training aims to compare the complex systems of other languages with learners’ first language in order to attain a linguistic knowledge that goes beyond the one attained through acquisition. This is also the position of cross-curricular and comparative pedagogy proposals (Planel, 2008; Pompfrey & Burley, 2009; Turner, 2001) which promote both experiential and analytic approaches to language education. Moreover, these movements promote the exploration of the importance of metalinguistic activity and awareness also within multicultural theory and practice (ALA, 2012; Burley & Pompfrey, 2002; Languages Without Limits, 2011; Planel, 2008; Pompfrey & Burley, 2009).

My study’s stance therefore agrees with the conclusions that research into first, second, community and foreign language learning seem to converge, suggesting that developing students’ metalinguistic awareness may increase their first language proficiency and their successful learning of other languages. From the literature review, cross-metalinguistic reflection based on implicit and explicit metalinguistic activity emerges as a dominant rationale in foreign languages learning (Ellis, 2010). Additionally, my study’s stance agrees on the pivotal role that first and second language research identifies in fostering teachers’ content and pedagogical knowledge for an effective teaching of both first and second languages (Hudson, 2006; Myhill, 2011b; Planel, 2008).

Concerning the role of grammar in language learning approaches, my stance links the considerations regarding the role of grammar in the language learning rationale, and its identified role in the language acquisition and learning processes. Moreover, it grounds itself in the particular anglophone context that I explored, identified as one of foreign language learning, aiming at the acquisition of the foreign language, but engaged in offering an educational activity equally valuable to all the students in compulsory education.

Proceeding from a language learning rationale of apprenticeship (see 2.2.6.), in a context of language learning, not of acquisition, my study sees grammar teaching as a tool to conduct the exploration of a foreign language, and to frame the progression of students’ apprenticeship. This strategy and rationale have been researched and drafted by Language Awareness (ALA, 2012); however, its implementation has not yet been researched and investigated with an aim to explore how to enable teachers to
range from explicit to implicit metalinguistic activity according to an analysis of their students’ needs; how to plan a more holistic foreign language curriculum, inclusive of linguistic and sociolinguistic goals. In the meantime, the current evidence-based strategies developed in subject English should be very inspiring for foreign language research into the place of grammar in function to foreign-language specific competences and skills (Pearson Schools and FE Colleges, 2014).

My perspective on the beliefs that I researched has been strongly influenced by that of researchers who have adopted sociocultural, contextual paradigms in the evolution of research into teacher beliefs (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003; Woods, 1996). Consequently, my construct, described in 2.4.2., considers participant teachers’ experience and knowledge inextricably rooted in their beliefs, embedded in their contexts. Within this paradigm, a tradition of research into beliefs about second language learning was significantly started by the work of Woods (1996) and Borg (1998b). Following their tradition, my research responds to the need to step into the participant teachers’ shoes and look at the language learning phenomenon from their standpoint, taking into account their interpretation of classroom events, their contextual realities and all the factors influencing foreign language classroom dynamics. Furthermore, the same teacher cognition research and reviews have confirmed my methodological stance, aiming to adopt multiple methods to capture the complexity of teacher beliefs systems.

Borg’s reviews (Borg, 2003b, 2006) of teacher cognition in SLA have confirmed the timely nature of my exploratory research, also developed following Borg’s focus on the particular curricular aspect of grammar teaching. My research defends the need to follow up and establish applied linguistic research focus on foreign language education in the discrete context of English secondary language education. Currently, the grammar debate is being vigorously addressed in the revision of the subject English curriculum, where research suggesting that functional approaches to grammar teaching are effective is informing teaching practice and the development of teaching materials for the development of writing skills (Pearson Schools and FE Colleges, 2014).
2.7. **Conclusion**

This review of the literature on the role of grammar teaching in language learning, specifically learning a modern foreign language, has highlighted several important aspects for my own study. Firstly, taking a historical perspective, it is clear from the analysis of different pedagogical approaches over time, that the place of grammar in language learning remains ambivalent and thus prone to being either ‘in or out’ of the curriculum. Secondly, it seems that at the heart of this ambivalence is an uncertainty about the value of explicit grammatical knowledge compared with either explicit knowledge about language or implicitly developed linguistic knowledge. This uncertainty plays out in the choice of inductive approaches to language learning, generally intended to develop implicit knowledge, or deductive approaches, generally intended to develop explicit knowledge. It also plays out in different ways of valuing form and function. In meaning-oriented approaches where knowledge about language, though not necessarily explicit grammatical knowledge, is developed through use of the foreign language in purposeful contexts, function is important. In contrast, form-focused approaches place a heavier emphasis on the significance of form, and with that, explicit grammatical knowledge. My own study will investigate teachers’ beliefs about these conceptual ideas.

The second part of the literature review has mapped how research so far has focused on teacher cognition. Firstly, I reported how recent trends of research on beliefs have progressively adopted interpretive and contextual stances, when at first research heavily relied on quantitative methods of survey and questionnaires. The review has progressively illustrated how research has privileged paradigms that conceived beliefs as socially constructed and interdependent with knowledge. Subsequently, I reviewed the methodological challenges of researching beliefs, progressing then to illustrate recent development in SLA, and focused on grammar teaching.

The next chapter illustrates how previous studies here treated have guided my theoretical and methodological stance.
Chapter 3. Methodology

Foreword

This chapter illustrates the research methodology, including the sample, the population, the data collection and analysis, the trustworthiness of the research project, and the ethical considerations. The project firstly seeks insights into teachers' declared beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching in England. Secondly, it aims to observe how teachers' declared beliefs are reflected in their enacted pedagogical practices: how – and if – they teach and use grammar in the classroom; what theoretical framework is reflected in the instructional modes used for dealing with grammar; and what factors influenced the development of teachers' pedagogical systems. By grammar teaching, this study refers to the implicit or explicit drawing of attention on aspects of the target language, use of metalanguage, metalinguistic explanation, or metalinguistic feedback.

My adopted interpretive, exploratory paradigm hopes to capture significant ‘themes inherent in raw data’ (Thomas, 2006, p. 2). My approach is contextual, as it is ‘grounded in actual data from specific settings’ (Leo van Lier, 2003, p. viii), and it allows meaning to emerge from the data (Barcelos, 2003). The data are cyclically interpreted during the data analysis, developed into categories and reinterpreted by stakeholders and participants (Thomas, 2006). As categories reverberate and gather around themes, I hope to reconstruct an authentic picture of foreign languages teachers’ beliefs, thoughts and strategies for dealing with grammar.

To date, research in foreign languages has focused mainly on reporting teachers' beliefs, without observing their impact on teachers' treatment of grammar in their daily foreign languages teaching practice. At a time characterised by National Curricular policy amendments to language teaching rationale and approach, I chose a diverse range of qualitative methods reviewed to best pursue teachers' reported beliefs and their correspondences or discrepancies with their practices (Borg, 2006; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). This study parallels current ESRC research into Grammar for Writing? (Jones et al., 2013; Myhill et al., 2011; Watson, 2012a, 2012b) on secondary school First-language English Teachers' Beliefs about Grammar, involving a complementary
large scale randomised controlled trial and qualitative study, which extended its scope from first language to foreign languages.

Very few studies of teacher beliefs and cognition have been conducted on grammar in foreign languages teaching in England and anglophone contexts, as most of these focused on either English as a foreign or second language, or second language acquisition and learning in higher education. The findings of this study contribute to research on foreign languages as a unique contribution in its empirical, discrete focus on foreign languages teachers’ reported beliefs about and enacted pedagogical practices of grammar in the context of secondary school education in England. The study aims to investigate the link between policy and practice to get a sense of foreign languages teachers’ pedagogical stance regarding the importance and role of metalinguistic activity and understanding in their classrooms. My research provides valuable evidence for educational linguistics, contributing to linguistic theory, teacher cognition and teacher education, classroom research and policy implementation.

3.1. Research design

3.1.1. Ontology

Foreign languages teachers are left to individually construct their own pedagogies following the grammar debate, the lack of guiding theoretical and methodological principles in the national curriculum for languages and the current in-between revision status of Foreign languages in secondary education. At the present time, the national curriculum for languages is disapplied and schools are urged to devise foreign languages pedagogies that best suit their particular students’ needs (DfE, 2013). Teachers have relied on their individual professional knowledge and their individual beliefs in pursuit of context-specific and effective foreign languages pedagogies, their multiple interpretations of policy guidelines and exam assessment criteria. Moreover, they have been strongly influenced by the demands of their particular educational contexts.

My study stems from my personal experience as foreign languages teacher and the answers that I tried to give to the contested aspect of grammar teaching in foreign
languages outlined in the literature review. To make sense of my pedagogy, I aimed to see how human interactions shaped it, and what meanings other colleagues were making of it. I therefore moved on to look at other foreign languages teachers’ perspectives to seek understanding of my own pedagogical practice, my own beliefs about teaching grammar as a foreign languages teacher. In doing so, I relied on foreign languages teachers’ views and beliefs about grammar teaching in secondary school foreign languages in England (Cresswell, 2009). I attempted to elicit teachers’ interpretations of their own and others’ actions, beliefs, practices and institutions; within foreign languages or across the curriculum (Green, 1990).

My qualitative research is positioned within an exploratory-interpretive paradigm. Within the interpretive paradigm, I took a constructivist approach, which positions reality as a social, multiple construction. Constructivism is a synergetic set of assumptions about the world and the manner in which we can know it (Green, 1990; Lincoln, 1990). These assumptions relate to the nature and the description of the reality and knowledge that this study approaches, individually outlined below and in the sections describing the ontological and epistemological stance of my study.

It is an exploratory paradigm because it does not presume or impose previous knowledge on the social and psychological phenomena in the particular context observed. The study started with an area of particular interest to me, from which I formed preliminary questions to open up those areas. The preliminary questions arose from my own interest and from my review of the literature on grammar teaching in foreign languages. My research explores and examines research participants’ concerns within a discrete society, and it hopes to further develop questions and investigate interest around those concerns. Consequently, I sought participants whose experiences would illuminate different facets of these questions and concerns. Moreover, I chose methods of data gathering and analysis that kept me close to the gathered data and context, rather than to what I may have ‘previously assumed or wished was the case’ (Charmaz, 2003a, p. 311).

3.1.2. Contextual approach and methods in second language research
Inquiry into beliefs in Second Language Acquisition has progressively moved from adopting mainly quantitative stances to privileging qualitative research which takes a contextual approach in its most recent tradition (Leo van Lier, 2003). Whilst the positivist paradigms see beliefs as static and unchanging phenomena, ‘a contextual approach looks at how beliefs are constructed in everyday practice, and how they may change and take shape in the social contexts of learning’ (Leo van Lier, 2003, p. vii). Whilst positivist stances rely primarily on quantitative survey instruments such as questionnaires, a contextual approach relies on qualitative data gathering and analysis of interpretive, constructive paradigm. Embedded in Vygotskian sociocultural theory (L. S. Vygotsky, 1966; L.S. Vygotsky, 1986), contextual approaches describe beliefs as rooted in participants’ lived reality, and recognise the primacy of their social context. In this paradigm, beliefs ‘are socially constructed and are variable rather than stable in nature’ (Kalaja & Barcelos, 2003, p. 2). Contextual approaches use triangulation, combining different methods to interpret participants’ beliefs in their own contexts, in an effort to bring participants’ emic perspectives into account (Barcelos, 2003).

Extensive reviews on teacher cognition studies by Borg (2006) and Kalaja and Barcelos (2003) found that within this paradigm it was possible to devise a methodology of data collection and analysis appropriate to collect ‘the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think’ (Borg, 2003b, p. 81). This perspective aptly frames the discrete focus of this enquiry on foreign languages teachers’ beliefs on grammar teaching in England - a particular aspect of their pedagogical practice in a particular anglophone context. By exploring teacher cognition, teacher learning, and classroom practice, this enquiry hopes to generate greater understanding of the complex relationship between these phenomena, thus contributing to a better understanding of teachers’ perspectives about the teaching of grammar in foreign languages by practitioners themselves, teacher educators, the educational research community, and educational policy makers.

3.1.3. Epistemology

In the previous two sections, I argued that constructivist knowledge is researched and co-constructed through a field-grounded, inductive methodology (Green, 1990). In this
section, I explain how, in the premise that beliefs are socially constructed, I planned to acquire this knowledge.

As my study proceeded from my experience as a foreign languages teacher in England and Wales for nine years, I decided to adopt an insider perspective (emic). I aimed to exploit my insider understandings in order to bring both a sensitive approach to my participants, as well as a deeper understanding of their reported beliefs and classroom practices. Skrtic (1990, p. 125) described educational inquiry as dialogical, ‘bringing together all paradigmatic perspectives in a democratized discourse on the nature, conditions, and implications of education’. Consequently, my personal experience was used to report as truthfully as possible my participants’ beliefs and teaching practices, availing myself of their feedback to validate my efforts to interpret the collected data. Albeit potentially a source of bias and contamination, in an interpretive paradigm the ‘interactivity between researcher and researched’ (Lincoln, 1990, p. 78) is utilised and seen as maximising the continuity and dialogical interaction ‘between a cooperating respondent and a human enquiry instrument’ to generate ‘meaningful understanding’ of emic knowledge of those in the setting being studied (Green, 1990, p. 234). Pring (2000) also observed that it is advantageous to conduct research from inside the profession, as the familiarity with the ‘shared practices’ and being part of the participants’ ‘society’ brings greater understanding to the interpretation that participants make of their ‘society in its constant defining and redefineing of reality’ (p. 100).

As I shared the idea that beliefs are strongly contextualised, I intended to study participant teachers’ beliefs held in their specific contexts, aware also that the study itself was centred on specific occasions, and that generalisations and abstractions had therefore to be avoided both at micro and macro contextual levels. My qualitative study, however delimited to a relatively small number of participants and contexts, planned to report ample evidence from each one them, purposely selecting diverse contexts and participants. This strategy responded to the intention to generate reflections that would resonate from my discrete case studies to other research conducted in applied linguistics and teacher cognition.
The sociocultural framework of my study suggests that beliefs are expressed in ‘multiple voices’, as well as being ‘tools in the language learning process’ (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2003). Moreover, sociocultural studies on beliefs have documented how teachers make pedagogical decisions based on their beliefs about learners’ beliefs (Woods, 2003) and about the role of grammar in foreign language teaching (Borg, 2006). Therefore, collecting reported beliefs, observing pedagogical interpretations of such beliefs, and reflecting on such interpretations seemed to be tools to explore not only the beliefs at the origin of teachers’ pedagogical enactments, but also the events where such beliefs can find an explanation, such as adopted knowledge schemata, theoretical assumptions, past education and their interplay with the current instructional context. The next section illustrates further my study’s methodology to obtain the knowledge I set off to research.

3.1.4. Methodology

I conducted an exploratory interpretive enquiry of case study design, involving interviewing and observing eight foreign languages teachers. My inquiry was conducted within foreign languages teachers’ contexts, with the following methods: interviews, classroom observations, think-alouds and researcher’s memoes. Accounts and presentations of my supervisors’ research demonstrated that it was challenging to consolidate the thinking about the teachers’ beliefs (Myhill, 2012; Watson, 2012b), as they might derive from either their previous education, social received constructs, or forming as they impact with the teaching practice (Borg, 2006, 2011; Nespor, 1985; Pajares, 1992). Pajares (1992) already advised adopting methods of data collection that included gathering statements, observations of teachers in action, and teachers’ reflections. My study followed these criteria and those outlined in my theoretical and methodological stance to capture teachers’ beliefs about the value of grammar in their pedagogical practices.

Recent reviews (Phipps & Borg, 2009) have indicated the paucity of research on teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching, and others have highlighted the need for classroom research and teacher cognition research to address language learning in England and other anglophone countries. (Brumfit et al., 1996; Burley & Pumphrey, 2002; Mangubhai et al., 2005; Pumphrey & Burley, 2009). Rokeach (1968)
recommended a methodology focused on teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practices to find out about ‘attitudes’ and beliefs of teachers around entangled aspects of their situation. Consequently, I use it to explore foreign languages teachers’ perceptions of grammar as a debated aspect of the national curriculum for languages, together with additional ‘affective [components] capable of arousing emotions’ (Pajares, 1992, p. 314). It seems therefore that there is great potential to elicit foreign languages teachers’ belief systems in their current predicament, engendering great opportunities for reflection on their mental constructions regarding grammar teaching.

Table 2. Qualitative data collection approaches. Adapted from Cresswell (2009, p. 182).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A list of qualitative data collection approaches</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct a semi-structured interview, audiotape the interview, and transcribe it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather field notes by conducting an observation as an observer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Documents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep a journal during the research study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse public documents (schemes of work; exam papers; students’ homework; photos of commemorative events and paratextual teaching material; policy documents).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audio-visual materials.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take pictures of students work and document departmental achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect voice-recorded notes, instead of written ones, on any of the above events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect e-mail messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each method was judged against qualitative data collection procedures to identify:
- Purposefully selected sites and individuals
- ‘Type or types of data to be collected’
- Activities pertinent to qualitative observation requirements
- Activities pertinent to qualitative interviews requirements
- The collection of qualitative documents
- The collection of qualitative audio and visual materials. (Cresswell, 2009, pp. 178-181)
Creswell’s (2009, p. 182) list of qualitative data collection approaches also helped narrow down my choice of tool to a ‘semi-structured interview’, which would be audiotaped and successively transcribed. Table 2, above, illustrates my list after narrowing it down to my chosen strategy.

3.1.4.1. Reflexivity and intuition

Constructivist research is a synergetic attempt to arrive at a description of reality through an interactive negotiation of meaning. ‘The subjectivity of the researcher and of those being studied becomes part of the research process’, as researchers’ reflections on their field activities, their impressions, irritations, feelings, become data in their own right and part of the interpretations (Flick, 2009, p. 16; emphasis on text). Constructivist researchers rely on intuition to define the field, the problem, the approach, following up with a systematic application of the methodological rules to eliminate arising ambiguities (Flick, 2009).

Without supervisory guidance, my preconceived values at times would have taken over and obscured my focus on the research questions. To achieve credibility, I needed to adopt a critical stance that helped me suspend my own beliefs about grammar teaching as a foreign languages teacher; and my feelings and conflicts experienced during the research. My beliefs about aspects of grammar teaching are a potential limitation of this study. The preventive strategies were first and foremost supervisory feedback, which picked up on biased descriptions or interpretations of research literature. Supervision ensured that my paradigm compass was calibrated, and that the methods of data collection and analysis remained appropriate and true to my research aim. A second strategy was to write and visualise my feelings and preconceptions by post-it pegging them on my wall and on the research diary. In the field, I tried to recall my reaction after each interview, observation and salient episode to study the impact that events had on my ability to express myself.

3.1.4.2. Triangulation
Triangulation has been discussed in 3.1.2. as a strategy used in contextual approaches, combining different methods to interpret participants’ beliefs in their own contexts. It helps the judging of the fairness and rigour of the research project. I involved my participants in meaning-making by asking for their response to my interpretations of their beliefs and of their school contexts. Examples of their responses can be found in the discussion of each method. In order to achieve methodological triangulation, I combined different ways of collecting data that focused on beliefs about grammar teaching and pedagogical enactment of beliefs from different perspectives (Flick, 2009). Whilst interviews collected data at the level of narrated, reported, abstract beliefs about grammar teaching, lesson observations collected data at the level of how teachers try to enact their previously reported beliefs. The think-aloud method aimed to collect the weight that such beliefs, if any, had in the evaluation of their students’ work. It also tried to capture any reflection on teachers’ perceived needs to plan further grammar teaching due to recurrent mistakes in students’ work. Finally, the final interviews aimed to collect data at a level of final reflection on whether what they tried to achieve in the lessons either clashed or agreed with their reported beliefs and their pedagogical practices of teaching grammar. Case study design is another way of triangulating the data, because it maintains the uniqueness of the emic data collected in each case.

3.1.4.3. The piloting

Although a pilot study is not necessarily part of qualitative research, each technique was piloted prior to data collection with three teachers: a teacher of English as a foreign language (EFL) declaredly using communicative methodology in her home country, and with a teacher of foreign languages and a teacher of subject English, both of whom were practising in England. All pilots were voice recorded, enabling me also to pilot verbatim transcription. The first pilot E foreign languages teacher pointed out to me the necessity of removing any bias about the phenomenon I was studying. To suspend my beliefs and avoid interfering with or influencing the participants’ experience, I had to refrain from stressing what I thought I knew about the phenomenon under study, and remain open to data as it revealed concepts and meanings (Polit & Beck, 2008). I found it useful to listen to my voice recordings and adjust my enunciation to as neutral a tone as possible. The second piloting with the
foreign languages teacher saw a great improvement, as she was satisfied with the neutrality of my tone and interviewing manner. As I feared having the same biased agenda as a foreign languages colleague, I piloted the interview also with the teacher of English, who confirmed my improvement. During the piloting I found that whilst initially I planned to take notes of my participants’ answers, eventually I took notes on a separate diary whilst listening to the recorded interview. I also recorded my impressions immediately after interviewing, whilst on my own, whilst they were still vivid in my memory. These eventually became memos (Charmaz, 2003a). Piloting was valuable practical experience of approaching participants and provided me with feedback on how to keep a clear and open mind and how to prepare myself for the impact with participants’ emic and etic perspectives on grammar teaching. It helped me to bracket my preconceptions when approaching participants in the formal field study. It also helped me to see them as unique individuals, with unique experiences, worthy of all my respect and ethical consideration for their voluntary, anonymous and yet extremely generous act of participation.
3.2. **Research Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question 1, guiding initial participating teacher interviews</th>
<th>Research questions 2, guiding lesson observations and think-alouds</th>
<th>Research question 3, guiding final participating teacher interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are participating teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in FL teaching?</td>
<td>How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by participating teachers?</td>
<td>What factors influenced the development of participating teachers’ pedagogical systems?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sub-questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do participating teachers’ beliefs vary according to their teaching experience?</th>
<th>What theoretical framework is reflected in the participating teachers’ instructional modes used for dealing with grammar in the FL classroom?</th>
<th>What reasons lie behind the choices of pedagogical practice/approaches?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do participating teachers’ beliefs vary according to their language background?</td>
<td>What instructional modes are reflected in the participating teachers’ dealing with grammar in the FL classroom?</td>
<td>To what educational and training events do participating teachers attribute the development of their pedagogical practices and the changes in their beliefs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What ideas about FL grammar teaching/learning are reflected in the materials and in the classroom practices?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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111
This study stems from teachers' perspectives as research participants (Woods, 1996), asking them to report their beliefs about the value (if any) of grammar teaching in foreign languages, here defined as the implicit or explicit drawing of attention on aspects of the target language, the use of metalanguage, metalinguistic explanations or metalinguistic feedback with the aim of helping students understand them and internalise them. Successively, it observes participants' lessons to observe the relationship between participants' initially reported beliefs and their classroom grammar pedagogical strategies. For example, I aim to observe whether participants treat grammar by drawing from generalisations from a number of examples, or if they start with a generalisation which is tested through examples; or if they treat it at all.

The observation will also aim to capture examples of participants' use of the target language in their pedagogical practices, with particular focus on whether teachers use it for treating or negotiating meaning about grammar. Finally, my research addresses current gaps in our understanding of foreign language teachers' treatment of grammar by asking teachers to reflect on significant events that have determined their grammar pedagogical strategies. Moreover, they were asked to report their reflections on their involvement in the research process.

The above aim is pursued by means of three research questions. Following from teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006; Woods, 1996), my study attempts to address gaps relevant to language education theory and practice by focusing specifically on the curricular aspect of grammar teaching in foreign language education. My small-scale, interpretive study aims to be strongly contextualised in foreign language teaching in England, aware of the difficulties to generalise from descriptive research, but equally of the quality of the resonance that producing ‘well-documented local units’ (Woods, 1996, p. 46) has in the ongoing construction of understanding of language teaching.

My first research question addresses the need to describe teacher's beliefs about grammar taking into account larger concepts which make up foreign language education in secondary schools. It asks what teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in FL teaching are; more specifically, it asks whether teachers' beliefs vary according to their teaching experience; or whether teachers' beliefs vary according to their language background. This question takes stock from previous observations...
(Woods, 1996) that for teachers, there are broader concepts relevant to how they operate in class; concepts possibly descended from policy guidelines, previous language education and classroom-specific dynamics. These concepts may be expressed in terms of *exercise*, or *teaching structures, teaching grammar communicatively, knowledge about grammar* (emphasis mine), and so on.

The second research question is prompted by the increasing shift of language teaching research from a focus on the product of teaching to the process of teaching (Woods, 1996, p. 12). This question focuses on the pedagogical events translating teacher’s beliefs about how grammar should be treated. In particular, it observes what theoretical frameworks, if any, are reflected in the teachers’ instructional modes used for dealing with grammar in the foreign language classroom; what ideas about grammar teaching/learning are reflected in the materials and in the classroom practices. Particularly, my study identifies and addresses a gap in researching foreign language teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching in one anglophone context that so far has relied mainly on SLA research embedded in ESL/EFL contexts.

The third research question aims to focus on participants’ interpretation of their intentions and goals pursued in the observed lessons, seeking their explanations for their reported beliefs and the reasons behind their pedagogical choices of grammar teaching. The third question asks teachers what factors influenced the development of their pedagogical systems; what reasons lie behind their choices of pedagogical practice/approaches, and to what educational and training events teachers attribute the development of their pedagogical practices and the changes – if any - in their beliefs.

My study aims to reinforce the contextual relevance of participants’ views and pedagogical interpretations of national policy guidelines and theoretical frameworks. The research focuses on participants’ beliefs about the educational implications of grammar teaching and understanding. My study is justified by and in turn responds to the interpretive epistemological stance from whence the findings concerning discrete participant’s beliefs and practices in discrete contexts might be generalised and validated by the very situated nature of the collected data.
3.3. **Sample. The participants**

The sample for the study comprises eight foreign languages teachers currently teaching in state schools. In selecting the participants, an attempt was made to achieve some diversity in terms of teaching experience and first language spoken so that these characteristics were reflected in the data. The eight respondents were two males and six females. Three were born and educated outside the UK, and were teaching their mother tongue as a foreign language; all three studied English as a foreign language at university level, and had near-native fluency. Three teachers were inexperienced, with equal or less than five years' foreign languages teaching experience at secondary school. Two of them, one a newly qualified teacher (NQT) and the second with five years’ experience, held a PhD in linguistics, with university teaching experience, amongst other academic activities. There were five experienced teachers: two with six and seven years of experience, one with ten, and two with more than twenty years of experience. Participants’ profiles are described in the Case Studies in Chapter 4 and in Appendix 4.1.

3.4. **Data Collection Strategies**

Data were gathered during one to two weeks for each participant, comprising one initial interview of 40-45 minutes; two lesson observations; one think-aloud protocol and one final interview. To further reinforce the socially constructed, inferred meanings on beliefs, reports on each method were submitted to participants to give them an opportunity to respond to my interpretations. Appendices 3.1.a.-c. illustrate the school-based data collection schedule, and the data checklist. The teachers were observed teaching a range of classes from year 7-11. Concomitantly, I attempted to gather contextual evidence by taking pictures, photocopies of work and of departmental schemes of work, and researcher’s journal keeping. Each technique was piloted prior to data collection.

3.4.1. **Initial interviews**

The initial interview schedule (Appendix 3.2.) was designed to elicit data to answer the research question: what are teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign
languages teaching? It was shaped to provide an ‘open-ended, in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which the interviewee has substantial experience, often combined with considerable insight’ (Charmaz, 2003a, p. 312). Outlined as ‘a flexible, emergent technique’ (Barcelos, 2003, p. 19), it aimed to elicit views of foreign languages teachers’ subjective, contextual worlds; to explore and expand as themes emerged. In drafting it, I followed Barcelos’s and Charmaz’s advice to use it as a guideline to outline, conduct and analyse the beliefs embedded in each specific case study context. This anticipated the design of the final interview, which would be guided by the reflection and analysis of the initial interview, the lesson observations and the think-aloud methodology.

3.4.1.1. Theory

Interviews have been used in previous studies to explore students’ and teachers’ beliefs. Barcelos (2003, p.13) argues that they disclose how ‘beliefs about language learning are context-bound and dynamic’. Sakui and Gaies (1999) used interviews to validate their quantitative methods as they allowed participants to describe their beliefs in ways that questionnaires and surveys did not. In this way, emerging discrepancies were revealed that beforehand appeared as statistical errors or anomalies. Interviews were therefore used for discovering key issues in normative projects, or even for finding out which questions would be asked in later research stages (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). They were seen as eliciting ‘aspects of strategy use’ influenced ‘by particular cultural, contextual, and individual factors’ the contextual turn in strategy research’ (C. White, Schramm, & Uhl Chamot, 2007, p. 94).

With the advent of metacognitive approaches, semi-structured interviews were used to pursue beliefs as metacognitive knowledge. The assumption was that participants were ‘able to articulate some of their beliefs’, and that they were then able to use this information to support their metacognitive strategies to ‘manage, direct, regulate and guide’ their actions (Barcelos, 2003, p. 18). Interviews were tools to infer beliefs from intentions and statements (Block, 1997), as they gave participants the opportunity to elaborate and reflect on their experience. However, used alone they did not infer beliefs from actions, nor did they observe and take participants’ context into account (Barcelos, 2003). Benson and Voller (1997) saw the concept of beliefs as
metacognitive knowledge as limited, as able only of almost conjuring decontextualized ideal behaviours – be it of learning or of teaching. In contextual approaches, beliefs are perceived as ‘lenses through which participants frame their experiences’ (Barcelos, 2003, p. 20; Ellis, 2008). Within this approach, beliefs, context and actions are closely interconnected whilst researchers attempt to reconstruct participants’ representation of the reality underpinning their actions and decisions. The basis is that ‘(a) language use is action-oriented, (b) language creates reality, and (c) scientific knowledge and lay conceptions’ (Barcelos, 2003, p. 21) are ‘social constructions of the world’ (Kalaja, 1995, p. 196) in a discrete, yet crucial context. Interviews have been amply used to research both teacher cognition and the particular curricular area of grammar teaching in Second Language Acquisition (Phipps & Borg, 2009; Zhou, 2009).

3.4.1.2. My tool

The initial interview (Appendix 3.2.c.) consisted of 23 questions. To ‘foster’ participants’ reflection, explore the topic and ‘fit the participant’s experience’, I divided the questions around four theoretical concepts:

1. The role of grammar in foreign languages
2. Teachers’ pedagogical practices
3. Teacher education
4. Teacher context

I allowed some themes to overlap and enrich previous answers on generic topics. For example, I tried to articulate ‘grammar teaching’ in questions containing either the expression ‘role of grammar’, ‘grammar teaching’, ‘KAL’, ‘use of grammar’, ‘learning grammar’, in order to evoke as many possible contexts and procedures that teachers might wish to produce or develop. The teacher context overlapped the first three themes, as I wanted to probe whether the emerging of a contextual factor modified or confirmed a belief; for example something that happened and modified or confirmed their belief systems. Teachers were asked to report which, to their knowledge, contextual factors (policy and local school-based included) were at the root of their teachers’ declarations. These could be in previous employment, or at the start of their teaching career. This was inspired by the beginning of my teaching career, after which some of my beliefs had to be set aside altogether. It was very much to do with the
context where I was working, as it demanded a different interpretation of foreign languages teaching.

For the role of grammar in foreign languages, pursued in the first part, I wanted questions to elicit teachers’ beliefs regarding:

- Teachers’ conceptualisation of grammar teaching;
- The emerging of teacher beliefs;
- The emerging and recalling of contextual factors, such as school policy, the national policy and the local factors at the root of teachers’ declarations.

In the second part, questions tried to elicit teachers’ beliefs about their own pedagogical practices to explore the relationship between teachers’ espoused beliefs and their reported pedagogical strategies. The questions referring to how they believed their students to perceive grammar teaching aimed to investigate possible links between teachers’ beliefs and their perceptions of student learning and also to elicit any beliefs on the social and wider context of foreign languages teaching in England. Here I tried to tease out teachers’ reported strategies for teaching grammar; their confidence in and their value of teachers’ subject knowledge; their beliefs about how students learn grammar; and whether their school promoted a certain style of grammar teaching.

The third part wished to elicit teachers’ views on how their language education influenced their current practices. I tried to keep the contextual element alive, once more, with the intention to see whether this agreed or clashed with their declared pedagogical beliefs and practices. This concluding section asked teachers to voice their beliefs on whether their education and training influenced their current practices; what changed their practices and how important they deemed teacher subject and pedagogic content knowledge in teacher formation; their possible or desired links with the subject English curriculum. One participant for example believed in teaching grammar but found himself dealing with behaviour issues and not teaching at all. Another, instead, was confirmed in her beliefs after teaching in the first school: she set off to do her own scheme of learning (instead of scheme of work), and was able to progress coherently with her core beliefs.
As a 'Novice' researcher (Charmaz, 2003a, p. 311), I found it useful to colour code the three parts of the interview. It helped me concentrate on the topic at hand, evaluating how the participants were adding ideas and issues emerging from the questions I asked. It was also subconsciously reminding me of the time that each section was taking to develop. Each question had further articulations. It was reassuring for me to know that should I have hesitated, I would have key lexicon in italics, under each question, helping me to rephrase as accurately as possible. It was also useful in case participants found themselves confused, as I would have consistently prompted them when they asked: ‘what do you mean?’ The readiness of the lexicon would also detract from appearing to linger on or stressing the significance of particular items, whilst instead having problems remembering all of them in as neutral a manner as possible. Question 6 below is an example, showing the key lexicon in italics. Creswell (2009, p. 30) suggested ending a qualitative interview protocol 'with an additional wrap up or summary question', suggesting the one used in Asmussen and Cresswell, (1995; in: Creswell, 2009, p. 30): 'Who should I turn to, to learn more about this topic?'. I therefore felt encouraged asking my participants and colleagues the following question in an attempt to grasp their beliefs on 'the next step to learn more about foreign languages:

How would you see research helping foreign languages teachers?

A final thank-you statement acknowledged the time, the rich contribution to my research and to the reflection on foreign languages theory and practice (Cresswell, 2009).

3.4.1.3. In the field

I aimed to take from 40 to maximum 45 minutes. The three sections finally contained respectively eight, nine and seven questions, for a total of 24. The language aimed to contain exploratory verbs evoking processes, experiences and personal stories. I tried to use open-ended questions that did not contain reference to literature or theory (Cresswell, 2009); however, I referred to KAL (Carter, 1990) to see whether it was used in or formed part of their subject knowledge or pedagogical practices. At the same time, I asked participants to freely refer to either literature or theory at their will. In time, my language must have changed, but I strived to keep as neutral as possible. Charmaz's (2003a) examples of interview protocols contained more and longer
questions. Although eager to include as many ‘belief-catching’ questions as possible, I resisted the temptation to cramp the protocol, as I feared that hurried, or worse, incomplete data sets would result.

3.4.2. Lesson observations

I used observations as part of the interpretive design to create a picture that represented teachers’ classroom practice of a specific curricular area: grammar teaching. Observing teachers in action aimed to capture episodes displaying their strategic thinking behind the selection of the cognitive tools they believed appropriate to solve the problem of allowing their students to be successful language learners. Is grammar one of these tools, within the entangled, grammar-debated foreign languages education domain? Is grammar teaching one of the pedagogical, cognitive tools that teachers adopt? If so, what kind of grammar teaching? Is it possible to ‘observe’ their pedagogical beliefs on the pedagogical value (or lack thereof) of their grammar teaching in ‘action’? In this section, I will present issues of sampling, representativeness and systematicity concerned in the adoption of observations as one of the main research methodology (Everston & Green, 1986, p. 189).

3.4.2.1. Theory

Barcelos indicated the need for a thorough review of common methodologies applied in the investigation of beliefs about Second Language Acquisition, while Borg indicated the gap in research into teachers’ beliefs based on the observation of teachers’ classroom practices. This study aims to contribute to teacher cognition by reflecting on gathered beliefs and the observation of classroom practices by deploying methodologies reviewed within the fields of Applied Linguistics and Cognitive Studies (Barcelos, 2006; Borg, 2003a, 2006; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Pajares, 1992). In the field of grammar teaching, Borg (2006) reviewed studies of teacher cognition in the last two decades, observing the need to focus on formal instruction. Borg (1999) used lesson observations recordings as stimulus to interview teachers on their use of grammar terminology in lessons. Subsequent studies confirmed and stressed the impact of research on teacher cognition on educational research, where it contributes to the better understanding of the nature of instruction through exploring ‘the store of
believes, knowledge, assumptions, theories, and attitudes about all aspects of their work which teachers hold and which have a powerful impact on teachers’ classroom practices’ (Borg, 1999, p. 19).

Studies have focused mainly on ESL and EFL, therefore my study makes a case for research on teacher cognition and classroom research in secondary school grammar teaching in England. It responds to the need to focus on understanding how teachers approach formal foreign languages instruction in class, observing their pedagogical choices for grammar teaching, and investigating any contextual or educational impacts on their choices of treating grammar. My research hopes that my and my participants’ contribution to understanding the nature of grammar teaching as teachers perceive it can be put to effective use in teacher education and secondary foreign languages development programmes.

3.4.2.2. My tool

The first lesson observation protocol (Appendix 3.3.a.) included numberless codes and acronyms, which were simplified to include my observations, the salient teaching episodes, and the students’ responses. When I eventually piloted it, I realised that whilst the events were captured by the recorders, my observations and memos were the events I really needed to write down, and therefore I modified the grid again to record the following information to guide the final interview reflection (Appendix 3.3.b.):

- The language learning hoped to achieve
- The grammar used; whether it was necessary or not for the intended learning outcome
- The grammar opportunities missed; when metalinguistic explanations or feedback would be helpful
- Teacher activities of interest
- Teacher response to pupils; teacher’s reasons to respond in that way
- Student responses, and what teachers thought about them.

Observations constituted a tool to examine the relationship between the stated beliefs in the initial interviews, and their possible pedagogical translation in practice. Lessons were recorded with both digital voice-recorder and voice-recording camera in order to maximise the stimulus recall and their transcription.
3.4.2.3. **In the field**

An important initial plan was to use the recordings as stimuli for the final interviews; however, this was not possible due to time limitations. Often, teachers indicated that their free time was immediately after the lessons, which gave me and them no time to analyse the data prior or during the final interview. Each participant was observed teaching two consecutive lessons with classes ranging from year 7 to year 11. When approached, teachers were informed that there were no requirements on the type of lesson or teaching approach to be observed. The teachers were aware from the title of my research that grammar teaching in foreign languages was the pedagogical aspect I was focusing on. When I approached participants, I clarified that the focus was their beliefs on how this pedagogical aspect needed to be approached, if at all. I made clear that what I was after was not the observation of a lesson where grammar was taught, but their chosen strategies to address foreign languages teaching and learning – no matter how they decided to achieve this.

3.4.3. **Think-alouds**

To further document the observation and coding of possible congruencies or discrepancies between stated beliefs and pedagogical practices, I asked teachers to record themselves whilst correcting six selected pieces of written work. This activity hoped to capture the consideration that teachers give to the grammatical element of their foreign languages teaching and learning (Pajares, 1992; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999, p. 499)

3.4.3.1. **Theory**

In the field of research on teaching, the think-aloud method has been 'encompassing studies of teacher planning, classroom processes, teaching outcomes, and the multilevel contexts that form the environment for teaching (e.g., classrooms, schools)' (Shavelson, Webb, & Burstein, 1986, p. 50). The think-aloud method aims to trace the cognitive process by asking participants to either (a) ‘think-aloud’ or talk aloud’ while performing a task, (b) recall thoughts after having completed a task, or (c) think-aloud
while viewing a videotape' of themselves performing a task (Shavelson et al., 1986, p. 79).

The think-aloud method was developed in psychological research from the introspection method. Introspective methods aimed to observe events that took place in consciousness, 'more or less as one can observe events in the outside world' (Someren, Barnard, & Sandberg, 1994, p. 29). It consists of asking participants to voice-record themselves thinking aloud while solving a problem, in order to obtain a verbal protocol that is then analysed. This method has applications in psychological and educational research on cognitive processes, 'but also for the knowledge acquisition in the context of building knowledge-based computer systems' (Someren et al., 1994, p. xi). As observed for the interview method earlier, think-alouds have been used in Second Language Acquisition to obtain knowledge on how participants interpreted methods used in predominantly normative studies. Think-aloud methods themselves can be analysed statistically or interpretively (C. White et al., 2007).

Lumley (2002) applied think-alouds to gauge how teachers interpreted and rated assessment scales. White et al. (2007) observed that think-alouds became prevalent methods in emerging qualitative research of mixed-method designs, exploring context-sensitive research. They highlighted issues in transcribing think-aloud data (p. 104), which needs to be as detailed as possible to gain insight in the language learning and teaching process. In teacher cognition and language education studies, Borg (2006, pp. 220-221) described think-aloud protocols as ‘a written record of thoughts verbalised while a task is being performed; they are thus introspective’. As such, they elicit ‘verbal commentaries from teachers about what they are doing while they are engaged in particular tasks’ (ibid). Johnson (2003) instead applied think-alouds to study teachers’ decision-making process in designing pedagogical tasks in language teaching. Johnson discussed the main advantage of this method to allow studying cognitive processes usually concealed or suppressed. In discussing the criticism of this tool, Johnson mentioned that the forced and unnatural conditions in which participants conducted the cognitive process might have forced the purpose of the activity and corrupted the data collected. Johnson also added the challenge to generate instructions for the think-aloud leading participants to have as homogeneous responses as possible. Leow and Morgan-Short (2004) addressed the effects of
thinking aloud methods on cognitive processes, particularly those occurring during the reading process on learners’ comprehension, intake, and controlled written production. Participants were first-year college level students of Spanish exposed to the same passage, pre-test, and post-test assessment tasks but differed on type of condition (think-aloud). Their results indicated that reactivity to the think-aloud method did not play a significant role in learners’ subsequent performances.

In a recent ESRC study on the effects of grammar teaching in first language acquisition, think-aloud protocols were one of the research methods used to study subject English teachers’ cognitive processes whilst assessing their students’ written work, in the broader aim to explore teachers’ voiced and enacted beliefs on grammar teaching’ (Watson, 2012a).

In foreign language teaching research, think-alouds have been used to track what students notice when acquiring writing skills. Findings indicated that the most proficient participants appeared to pay more attention to grammar and relied more on applying grammatical rules than the least proficient participants, suggesting that L2 proficiency may play a role in linguistic awareness (Qi & Lapkin, 2001).

3.4.3.2. My tool

Teachers were asked to record themselves whilst verbalising their thoughts as they completed the task of correcting or giving feedback on six pieces of written work from the Language classes that they taught. They could choose any work; however, I advised them to equally consider work from lower, middle and higher achieving students. The instructions that I gave participants to complete the think-aloud method are in Appendix 3.4. My aim was to use the method to gather data on the criteria used by teachers for correcting six pieces of written homework, to see what teachers valued in the process of evaluating language production. Initially, I planned to use these data to recall teachers’ thoughts during the final interview, corresponding to rationales (a) ‘think-aloud’ or talk aloud’ while performing a task; and (b) recall thoughts after having completed a task (Shavelson et al., 1986, p. 79). This tool aimed to triangulate the focus on teachers’ beliefs by flanking verbal reports and observations with teachers’
own commentaries on their pedagogical processes. It hoped to gather data on whether grammar was one of the principles valued in the pedagogical task at hand.

3.4.3.3. In the field

Participants were informed that as part of the research process they had to record themselves whilst correcting their students' written work. Teachers were offered a voice-recorder in case they did not have one. The choice of the work would be up to them, but preferably they would have chosen work from the class observed to allow data-collection continuity. Time restrictions imposed that the activity be performed once, and that it took teachers from 20 to 30 minutes. Teachers therefore chose six pieces of work from lower, middle and upper range abilities. The recordings were meant to be transcribed and analysed before the final interview method. Unfortunately, further homework timetabling restrictions meant teachers completed this exercise whenever they could collect books, or tasks. In two cases, this happened after the allocated time for the final interview. In the absence of a think-aloud protocol from which to evince questions, I decided to include in the final interview questions on their opinions and thoughts on the process of completing the think-aloud. I used the think-aloud protocols to match the lesson observations, and as a cue in the final interview data, where I matched it with their reflections on their pedagogical aims of the lesson observed. Despite the drawback, I thought it would be very useful to have evidence of teachers' thinking processes whilst completing a fundamental task of their pedagogical practice: correcting their students' output. My hypothesis was that it would give me important data on whether teachers valued their students' correctness, and therefore grammatical correctness; their students' communicative attempt; the need for them to address the learning objective; their reflections on whether they taught effectively; their thoughts on students' grammar learning strategies. Participants were left to complete the think-aloud by themselves, which reinforced the 'contextualisation' procedure. They pursued the activity in their authentic contexts and remain as close as possible to their real aims. One participant's reaction was very interesting. I believe I noticed a sense of reluctance towards completing the activity from the start. All participants had doubts about how to do it, and whether there was a correct way to do it. All were told to stay as close as possible to the task, and try to verbalise their thoughts. Ruud handed in the recording a few months after my visit to his case study. As none of the
protocols had been used to inform the final interviews, this did not impact on the research design. I found his recording extremely interesting, as his perspective on the work was very distinctly centred on the students, his pedagogical rationale and on his motivation to teaching language. He reported having to stop the recording, as the voicing of his thoughts was interfering with his priority to give his students feedback. Ruud’s reaction raises the question whether the verbalisation accurately reflects the mental processes which normally underlay problem-solving tasks, or whether the act of spelling out one’s thoughts alters those processes. The think-aloud methods were used to elicit thinking processes that the participants would have later been asked to explain in the retrospective final interviews. Eventually, this method more than all the others made me think of Nunan’s words: researchers ‘(if they are honest) often have to confront the possibility that their results are in some ways artefacts of the procedures they have used’ (Nunan, 1992, p. 117).

3.4.4. Final interviews

3.4.4.1. Theory

This interview shared the same constructivist theoretical underpinning of the initial interview protocol. Clark and Peterson (1986) reviewed the use of stimulated recall interviews to elicit teachers' thoughts and decisions. They reported how researchers used videotaped lesson observations as stimulus, and how several taped only one lesson for each teacher. Their review was important in deciding the format of my final interview, as I will explain in the next section. Golombeck’s (1998) study used data from lesson observations, interviews, and stimulus recall reports to examine how ESL teachers' personal practical knowledge informed their practice. Golombeck (ibid; p. 447) asked teachers to describe a ‘tension’ dealt with in lesson to generate a reflection whereby ‘teachers articulated their personal practical knowledge’. It resulted in a personalized narrative reconstruction of their experiences as learners, teachers, and participants. In accordance with Borg (2006) and Nespor's (1985) claims, Golombec's conclusion converges to indicate that the ‘knowledge’ obtained by the recalled reflection informed teachers' practice, and that teachers become aware of their pedagogical choices through telling their stories. In English Language Teaching (ELT), Phipps and Borg (2009) reported data from a multiple-source qualitative study based
on initial interviews and classroom observations followed by post-observation interviews. In the latter, teachers were asked to report their views of the lesson, the activities they undertook and the rationale for their pedagogical decisions taken in class. Phipps and Borg defended the ‘benefits of grounding the study of tensions between stated beliefs and classroom behaviours in the qualitative analyses of teachers’ actual classroom practices’ (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 380). Borg (2001) reported a study on teachers’ beliefs and classroom practices in ELT grammar teaching, where the methods used were lesson observations, followed by interviews. Teachers were asked about their approach to grammar work, as the aim of the interviews was to gain insights into the factors which influenced teachers’ instructional decisions in teaching grammar through a discussion of classroom practices.

3.4.4.2. My tool

I tried to elicit as many thoughts as possible on 1) the lessons observed and their noticing any convergences or inconsistencies with their initially declared beliefs about and their classroom pedagogy of grammar teaching; 2) the think-aloud protocol. Clark and Peterson’s (1986) analysis of 12 studies using stimulated recall indicated types of questions that best stimulated the recall of teachers’ thoughts and decisions, listed in Table 3. I used the list to guide the composition of my tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Stimulus recall questions. Adapted from Clark and Peterson (1986, p. 268).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What were you doing and why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where you thinking of any alternative strategy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were you noticing about the students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you think students responded?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did reactions prompt you to act differently than you planned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you have any particular objectives in mind in this lesson, and what were they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you remember any aspects that affected your pedagogical decisions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final interview (Appendix 3.5.) aimed to employ from 40 to maximum 45 minutes, and consisted of 14 questions, focused on the research objective to elicit beliefs about grammar teaching in foreign languages. I. As in the initial interview, the language aimed to contain exploratory verbs evoking processes, experiences and personal
stories. Following Clark and Peterson’s (1986) question model, I tried to formulate questions that directed back teachers to their processes and their thoughts for making their choices of chosen grammar pedagogy. I tried to use questions that constantly referred to the observed lessons, discrete teaching interventions, particular questions that students asked, and teachers’ criteria for choosing lesson materials. The ‘wrap up or summary question’ (Cresswell, 2009, p. 30) was:

*What do you see as the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching?*

A final thank-you statement acknowledged the time and the generous contribution to my research and to the reflection on foreign languages theory and practice. I strongly invited participants to remain in touch, and I committed to communicate any developments. Although shorter than the initial, the final interview elicited more elaborated answers, as it aimed to lead teachers through a reflection on the whole research process. Instead of the four theoretical concepts that served the initial interview, this time I included the research questions on the side. Teachers were given the questions shortly before the interview, and they were asked to make any comments on the topics included in my research questions.

The interview was divided into three main sections, reflecting a) on the lesson observed; b) on the thinkaloud. The final, ‘wrap up’ reflection was c) on the role of grammar in foreign languages. The reflection on the lesson observed aimed to elicit as many recalls and reflections as possible on their pedagogical rationale and the role of grammar in their foreign languages teaching. The first question aimed to recall their intended learning outcomes. It tried to elicit whether teachers aimed to construct a single or a combination of the four competencies listed in Table 4 (following).

The second question aimed to recall specific teaching episodes, eliciting thoughts and beliefs on a) particular activities chosen to deal or avoid dealing with grammar (Appendix 3.5.b); b) their beliefs on how students learn or successfully deal with grammar, and how their pedagogical choices best help (Appendix 3.5.c.). All questions aimed to create opportunities to reflect on beliefs declared in the initial interview. This hoped to observe and infer possible consistent or discrepant stances on their beliefs and their influencing factors, such as context, education, experience.
Table 4. Adapted from Canale (1983, pp. 7-11)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>grammatical competence and mastery of the language code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>sociolinguistic competence and ability to produce language which is appropriate to the socio-contextual factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>discourse competence and ability to combine grammatical forms and meanings to produce language appropriate to spoken or written text in different genres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>strategic competence and the ability to a) negotiate meaning in communication; b) enhance the effectiveness of their communication (e.g. paraphrasing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second part, the reflection focused on the completion of the think-aloud, and on finding out what teachers sought or valued in the contents of their students’ language productions. The reflections yielded further descriptions of their pedagogical rationales, including their plans to include grammar, their frustration or happiness for their students’ productions, their effective addressing students’ needs, and the role that GCSE requirements played in determining their choices. These will be discussed in the next chapter. The last question (Appendix 3.5.d.) aimed to gather any conclusive thoughts on the primary focus on my research: the role of grammar teaching in foreign languages. The closing questions aimed to maximise the reflection on the potential tensions, consistencies and inconsistencies between declared beliefs and classroom practice of grammar teaching. I reported participants’ salient contributions to this question in Appendix 3.5.d.

3.4.4.3. In the field

Due to teachers’ very busy schedules, two final interviews took place by phone instead of personally. This was a way to meet my participants’ priorities and deadlines, and maximise their willing participation (Shuy, 2003). Qualitatively, the disadvantage of not having a visual of participant involvement was lessened by the personal relationship built during the research process. This time, all teachers kept the questions in front of them. I believed that lessening the element of ‘surprise’ by allowing them to glance at
the questions enabled them to concentrate more on their thoughts, feeling less ‘questioned’ and more dialoguing.

3.5. **Data analysis strategies.**

3.5.1. **Inductive approach for analysing qualitative data**

This approach has some links to grounded theory as conceived by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Although not providing the ‘more detailed set of procedures for analysing and reporting qualitative data’ in grounded theory, the general inductive approach shares the three broad tasks of ‘data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification’ (Thomas, 2006, p. 239). Table 5 shows how the general inductive approach is most similar to grounded theory, but does not separate open coding and axial coding as distinct procedures. It also includes a literature review for and theoretical background of the most important research themes explored by the research questions.

Table 5. Adapted from Thomas (2006, p. 242, Table 1). Qualitative Analysis Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Inductive Approach</th>
<th>Grounded Theory</th>
<th>Discourse Analysis</th>
<th>Phenomenology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analytic strategies and questions</strong></td>
<td>What are the core meanings and ideas in the text, relevant to research or evaluation objectives?</td>
<td>To generate or discover theory using open and axial coding and theoretical sampling</td>
<td>Concerned with talk and texts as social practices and their rhetorical or argumentative organization</td>
<td>Seeks to uncover the meaning that lives within experience and convey felt understanding in words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome of analysis</strong></td>
<td>Themes or categories most relevant to research objectives identified</td>
<td>A theory that includes themes or categories</td>
<td>Multiple meanings of language and text identified and described</td>
<td>A description of lived experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation of findings</strong></td>
<td>Description of most important themes</td>
<td>Description of theory that includes core themes</td>
<td>Descriptive account of multiple meanings in text</td>
<td>A coherent story or narrative about the experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the data analysis, the criteria followed are illustrated in Table 6. My research follows the inductive principles outlined by Charmaz (2003a, pp. 311-312) in her description of Grounded Theory methods as consisting of guidelines that aid the
researcher ‘(a) to study social and social psychological processes, (b) to direct data collection, (c) to manage data analysis, and (d) to develop an abstract theoretical framework that explains the studied process’. Charmaz also illustrated how grounded theory methods differentiated between constructivist and objectivist. The constructivist approach is relevant to my study, as it prioritises the researched phenomenon, conceiving both data and analysis as created from the shared experiences of researcher, participants and the researcher’s relationships with participants. Constructivists study how participants construct meanings and actions, and they do so from as close to the inside of the experience as they can get. Constructivist researchers use data analysis to evince contextual, cultural and historic proprieties, but it also reflect the researcher's thinking.

Table 6. Adapted from Strauss and Corbin (1998; p. 265-274)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The process of generating concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have they been systematically related to the research objectives and the research design?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do categories have conceptual and theoretical density?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have concepts been studied under different conditions and tested for its range of dimensions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the study allow for the variations of methods and conditions above?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have chronological and contextual factors been taken into account in evaluating their impact on the field and the reality studied?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the findings relevant insights?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are they relevant to the research community and the discipline fields?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I decided to adopt a ‘general inductive approach for analysing qualitative’ data, as conceptualised by Thomas (2006, p. 238), who described it as a ‘systematic procedure for analysing qualitative data in which the analysis is likely to be guided by specific evaluation objectives’ (2006, p. 238):

‘The primary purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies’. […] The following are some of the purposes underlying the development of the general inductive analysis approach.
- To condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format;
- To establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and to ensure that these links are both transparent (able to be demonstrated to others) and defensible (justifiable given the objectives of the research); and
- To develop a model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the data’.

Table 7. A three-phased system of textual analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>open inductive coding</td>
<td>axial coding</td>
<td>selective coding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data analysis technique I used consists of a three-phased system of textual analysis (Table 7): the first is of ‘open inductive coding’, noticing how I labelled and changed labels, merged and divided nodes. This is followed by ‘axial coding’, where according to emerging themes, the nodes are clustered. The open and axial coding system of textual analysis prepared all tools for a third phase of analysis, called selective coding and pursued in the cross-case study design of analysis and synthesis (Chapter 4). My research was guided by objectives represented by my research questions, extensively researched in my literature review. These objectives were not models to be tested, but served as labels and guidelines even in my research grant application. They stemmed from my experience; however, they did not impose any preconceptions. They were a guide to communicate my research proposal and justify my research design to my supervisor, my sponsor, the wider educational research community and other stakeholders.

3.5.1.1. Data preparation

The first data to be prepared were the initial and final interviews. These data consisted of 8 initial and 8 final interviews, for a total of 16 interviews. Each interview took from 40 to 45 minutes, for an approximate total of 720 minutes of interviews to be transcribed. All the data collected via the initial and final interview methods were transcribed into word documents and successively uploaded in NVivo (3.5.1.2.).
During supervision, I was advised that all transcripts’ corrections needed to be done outside NVivo. This, however, proved impossible. Although I commissioned a transcriber to help with the transcription of the 16 interviews, I soon realised that my instructions to transcribe verbatim had not been observed, and that many segments of important data had been omitted. Although I re-transcribed most of the interviews outside NVivo, the tightness of time meant that many corrections had to be done in NVivo, where it is possible to edit texts.

I subsequently prepared the data from think-alouds and final interviews. The data from think-alouds consisted of 8 recordings of roughly 20 minutes, for an approximate total of 160 minutes. Only relevant segments were transcribed directly in NVivo. The lesson observations yielded roughly 16 hours of voice and video recording. The segments of relevant observed episodes were transcribed directly in NVivo, where it is possible to synchronise the transcription and the corresponding video and voice-recorded episode. This process was not without various setbacks of mainly technical nature. Nevertheless, the lessons’ coding and transcriptions were enriched with data in the form of pictures, snapshots from the teacher’s writing on the board, lesson material and memos.

During supervision I was advised to complete a table of participants’ profiles, and it was agreed that participants would not be labelled with pseudonyms, but that their real names would be used to keep the data as alive as possible; their data would be eventually anonymised by means of culture-relative pseudonyms. Appendix 4.1. is a summary of participants’ factual information. Each participant’s profile was subsequently developed in a written account as part of the cases’ descriptions in Chapter 4.

3.5.1.2. NVivo

Learning to use software appropriately is mandated by the ESRC via its Training Guidelines (ESRC, 2009). ESRC funded students should be trained in CAQDAS (Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software), although it is not mandatory for them – or their supervisors – to use it. The qualitative data analysis software I used is NVivo, a computer software package produced by QSR International (2014).
Johnston and Branley (2006) recommended it as a tool assisting in organising a research project ‘at a simple logistical level’, as ‘it explores data far more quickly than a manual method could, enabling a potentially more nuanced analysis’ (Slide 3). I greatly benefited from the easy access NVivo allows to data; the practical search and retrieval of data. However, I am conscious that I have only used a minimal part of this resource, and failed to explore the rest for lack of time and technical support. Johnston and Branley warned that students are often left isolated with no direct departmental support to use software appropriately. The University of Exeter, SSIS Graduate Research Scheme has actively addressed the need to train researchers in line with ESRC guidelines. One or two-day training workshops are organised with the aim to provide a productive and sustainable level of support.

The most iconic function of NVivo is the coding function, illustrated in Appendix 3.6.a. Johnston and Branley observed that literature on qualitative research methods has been found as failing to integrate software and method. However, grounded theorists have emphasized the use of computers in qualitative analysis in the last decade (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). They have considered also the ‘quality challenge’ of gaining analytical value and avoiding the ‘coding trap’, so called after the excessive use and exploration of the software that leads to a mere description of the data, instead of a reflection-led, rich qualitative data analysis (Johnston & Branley, 2006). This concern was also addressed by Webb (Webb, 1999), speaking of possible alienation from the data, whereby researchers risk losing touch with the context of the data by working intensely on the isolated codes created in CAQDAS software. Webb talks about the dangerous tendency to ‘reify’ the code and consider it as a phenomenon in itself, as in a ‘quantitative approach of content analysis’, where the research product is reduced ‘to statistics which summarize the data’ (Webb, 1999, p. 325). As I explain later on, my use of NVivo software was mainly aimed at facilitating the search and the retrieval of data which I had previously entirely transcribed myself. I endeavoured to keep my familiarity with the data alive by strategies that during field work were aimed to retain as much of a personal flavour as possible of the context and participants’ contribution. These included voice recording their interviews, recording my memos, taking photos and collecting school work and policy documents. Furthermore, my immersion in the data was greatly enhanced by my transcribing all interview and relevant lesson observation segments.
3.5.1.3. Coding

Within an inductive approach, the coding process is divided into a series of activities conducted in three phases: Open, Axial and Selective (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 101-161). Table 8 gives an overview of the process of inductive coding that I followed. The examples refer to the process of coding initial interviews, exemplifying the one used also in the analysis of the other mixed methods.

Table 8. The coding process in Inductive Analysis. Adapted from Cresswell (2002, p. 266, Figure 9.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Coding Process in Inductive Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial reading of text data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many pages of text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. List of symbols for the reproduction of discursive, non-verbal, proxemics interview contents.

| … | Abandoned sentence; pause in participants’ answers. Hesitation. |
| : | Protracted sound; it could be due to hesitation, or thinking, as above. |
| ..? | Tentative reply; almost asking themselves if what they say is what they mean..? Could it be it..? |
| ABC | Emphasis |
| [#] | Inaudible |

Prior to the coding process, all voice-recorded initial interviews were transcribed. Blake (2003, p. 268) points out that transcription quality is paramount, and that it is vital to ensure ‘the accuracy of verbatim accounts by minimizing sources of error in the transcription process’. The transcription therefore aimed to report verbatim both the question asked and the participants’ answers. Each participant’s utterance was transcribed therefore as literally as possible. I created a list of symbols for the reproduction of discursive, non-verbal and proxemics interview contents (Blake, 2003; Flick, 2009; Silverman, 1993), illustrated in Table 9 My inspiration came from Blake’s and Flick’s lists, and from concepts learned from discourse analysis theory, albeit not reflecting their rigorous procedures and coding conventions (Potter, 1996). Finally, all
data were backed up, and the transcribed initial interviews were eventually put in standard format as word documents (Thomas, 2006) before being uploaded in NVivo software.

After attempting coding of the first interview, I piloted the coding process with my first supervisor, who advised as follows. Firstly, she advised me to create freenodes (bottom-level nodes) first, to be grouped later under parent nodes reflecting the theoretical construct, the concepts probed by my research questions. Secondly, she reminded me that following a wholly inductive approach meant not to impose anything on the data. This meant not to interpret, but just describe and staying very close to my data and what the participants said. I should ask myself: ‘how can I represent it as clearly as possible before interpreting it?’’. She confirmed that the three-steps analysis involved:

a) a first level analysis, where I would just define without interpretation;

b) a 2nd level analysis, where I would classify notes into broader themes;

c) a 3rd level analysis, consisting of writing up and interpreting.

At this level, it was important not to impose the first level on the third one too soon, but to carefully select which themes would have framed the case study discussion, and which parent nodes and sub nodes would have constituted the emerging theories.

She then recommended that I drew a table with the summary of all the data. The resulting tables can be viewed in Appendix 3.6.c., where the parent nodes identified at the coding of the initial interview method were kept as a framework in which to gather the subnodes identified in the analysis and coding of each method.

At a later supervision, the above was revised and she gave me the following advice:

a) beware creating too many codes, as too much labelling revealed a lack of in depth analysis and condensing of the data at first-level analysis; b) distinguish between statements and declarative beliefs. The first would be descriptions of procedures, such as their account of how participants taught a certain grammatical point, for example: by colour coding, by explicitly describing rules. The second would have consisted of statements containing personal views flagged by ‘I think’, or ‘I believe’, or ‘in my opinion’. This proved crucial in creating the concept and bottom-level node initially
called ‘OWN pedagogical practice – STRATEGIES for g teaching’, and later called ‘Teachers’ pedagogical strategies for grammar teaching’ (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Statements of beliefs and declarative beliefs.

If at first the node contained both segments 1 and 2, at a later stage segment 1 was not included, as it did not report the teacher’s belief about, but the account of a practice, as illustrated in Table 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>I use lots of colour whenever I can. I colour-code the structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I would say that I have always used the methods that I am using now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Examples of 1) statement and 2) beliefs about pedagogical practice.

3.5.1.4. Memos

‘Memo writing links coding to the writing of the first draft of the analysis’, according to Charmaz (2003a, p. 323). It also helps linking field work and successive phases of interpretation, once the researcher is removed from the context and the participants. Memo writing records the events that justified the later process of linking one code to a particular conceptual category. It also keeps tracks of the reasons for assigning codes to certain categories during axial coding, according to the properties and the
qualities that memos help tagging to codes when the data is fractured and opened up for analysis. NVivo software granted the flexibility to sort the pieces of the opened-up text, the meaning-puzzle inherent in the interview (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). ‘Memos’ are important actions to record the analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions and directions for further data collection. They assist the labelling of each segment of data, helping to ‘discern the range of potential meanings contained within the words used by respondents and develop them more fully in terms of their properties and dimensions’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, pp. 109-110). Memos recall the interpretation of the meaning that led to its labelling. My memos were not necessarily written, but voice-recorded in raw impressions of the interview process, of the quality of the data, and my perceptions of the contextual impact on the teachers, on myself, and the educational setting in general. Voice-recordings, pictures taken at school; memos of impressions entered in my research journal, and notes written at margin of the interview protocol were eventually either kept or filed according to their theoretical relevance and interplay with the concepts, the nodes, the classifications and the research question guiding the method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Examples of memos are in Appendix 3.6.h.

3.5.2. Initial interviews

The primary purpose of the inductive analysis of the initial interviews was to allow ‘summary themes’ (Thomas, 2006, p. 3) to be created from the frequent, dominant or significant meanings ‘inherent’ in raw data. Here I describe the process followed to prepare the data for the inductive analytical process. An inductive approach for analysing qualitative data is conducted cyclically, at several points in the research process. These points culminate with the findings from one phase, or method, feeding the analysis of the successive phases, or methods. The analysis implies various stages of condensing raw data, linking the findings with the research objectives and developing a structure representing the story ‘told’ by the raw data (Charmaz, 2003a, p. 319; Thomas, 2006, p. 2).
Transcribing naturally implied closely reading the texts and considering the multiple inherent meanings (Blake, 2003; Thomas, 2006). It was the first step of the analytic process through which concepts were identified, and their properties and dimensions discovered to yield subcategories for subsequent classifications (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 102) define open coding as the process by which the data is opened up to ‘expose the thoughts, ideas and meanings contained therein’. Flick exemplified the process of line-by-line text opening, whereby each text is segmented, and each line is analysed and matched to an event or phenomenon by means of applying a representing code (Flick, 2009). Re-transcribing allowed me to immerse myself in the data, later closely analysed through line-by-line analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Walker & Myric, 2006). Opening up the interview texts in discrete, coded parts exposed thoughts, ideas, and meanings which were preliminarily labelled under the same concepts/nodes for containing similar conceptual properties. Each node, therefore, corresponded to an identified concept. The concepts identified served to create the NVivo nodes used to code interview segments.

I analysed each interview in chronological order by date of interview. Bearing in mind the first central research questions and related sub questions (3.2.), I created and assigned a node each time a segment contained a meaningful comment. For example, the ‘abstract representation’ of the event/concept of ‘Teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in communicative language teaching’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102) was matched to segments in the interview texts that expressed concepts which, at first analysis, revealed similarities with communicative language teaching concepts. At times, more than one node was attached to a line or a passage, as illustrated in Figure 4, where 3 sub-nodes overlap: 1) grammar in communicative language teaching; 2) foreign languages policy; 3) declarative beliefs about grammar teaching.

Figure 4. Overlapping sub-nodes.
Nodes were given definitions and were memoed. Gradually, they were refined into the final list of bottom level nodes. In turn, the conceptual affinities amongst sub-nodes enabled preliminary classification of categories of nodes, also called parent nodes, due to observed node similarities. This process of relating bottom level nodes to parent nodes is defined as axial coding. It is not necessarily conducted sequentially, and it will be described in the next paragraph.

An example of axial coding was the coding of teachers’ beliefs of how students learned grammar, initially conceptualised as two nodes: one grouping conceptual statements of beliefs; another grouping the strategies that teachers thought helped or hindered students’ learning of grammatical concepts. A closer analysis revealed that some statements did not match my focus on beliefs about grammar teaching, and were therefore un-coded as plain text. Others revealed closer and closer similarities, justifying the merging of the two initially conceived sub-nodes into one parent node, defining the phenomenon called ‘Teachers’ beliefs about how students learn grammar’, containing sub-nodes related to students’ learning and their pedagogical strategies to address it.

In this first stage of open coding, node definitions (Appendix 3.6.g.) were gradually being decided and contained keywords evocative of the concept or event holding the similarity. The initial definitions were wordy, made of a grammar of reminiscing words, often spanning over four languages. The bottom level nodes described above were inductively created, as they were conceptualised and evolved from the process of opening up data, finding meaningful segments, and labelling them. The labelling changed frequently in this first stage as the data was explored. Bottom level nodes were finally reviewed and merged into categories that converged towards the research aims. These constituted the upper categories. Often in a process of qualitative coding a segment of text may contain or flag up more than one implied meaning. Consequently, evidence of segments containing more than one code exists. On the other hand, chunks of text turned out to be of no relevance to the research objectives, and were left blank and not considered when data was searched and retrieved in NVivo. Supervision was a precious check point that prevented the ‘overcoding’ of some segments, ensuring that clear links were established between the research
objectives and the coded concepts. It was a moment where the interpretation of the meanings was triangulated and refined to reflect the phenomenon observed.

3.5.2.2. **Axial Coding. Linking subcategories to categories**

The term ‘axial’ refers to the properties and ‘dimensions’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123) along which the sub categories are linked. As mentioned previously, axial coding is not sequential, and can start during the phase of open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). After opening up the data to identify sub categories labelled as nodes, I started exploring if and how the properties of each sub category related to one another (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process is called axial coding and its purpose is to relate sub categories to categories representing a phenomenon within which various events are gathered. If the data was beforehand opened, this process sought to reassemble it around a category/parent node, which stands for a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In NVivo it is possible to recall all segments under the same code or sub node. It is also possible to recall and consult all the codes applied to each participant’s text. This allowed me to revise and refine the choice of node to file under a category system, eliminating contradictory nodes from some segments, or moving segments of text under nodes and categories of more appropriate descriptions. It was also the moment when core categories were finalised and defined.

I checked my coding and categorisation with my supervisor, who offered a different perspective to my interpretation, and reminded me where the focus on the research questions needed refining. Participants were also involved. Reports were created on the interpretation of the relevance of their statements within either nodes or categories. These reports were either individually sent to single participants, or made anonymous, grouped and sent to the interested participants individually for validation of my interpretation, also in the light and comparison of other participants’ contributions (see Appendix 3.6.j). June showed great initiative and responded to each report, forwarding also precious evidence of ongoing reflection on the shared field activity in her school and her classes. Response was optional, but taking participants’ views into account.
helped modifying and further refining my interpretation of nodes and resulting categories. Examples or participants’ responses are also in Appendix 3.6.j.

Appendix 3.6.h., ‘Initial interviews’ illustrates the organizational scheme of phenomena(categories), represented by the following five identified parent nodes (Table 11):

Table 11. Five research themes emerging from the condensed data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2) Declarative beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Grammar in teacher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Teachers’ beliefs about students’ strategies to learn grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Teachers’ beliefs about the role of English in grammar teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such a scheme aimed to represent what Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 129) called the ‘paradigm’: the ‘perspective taken toward data, another analytic stance that helps to systematically gather and order data in such a way that structure and process are integrated’. Each of the five categories identified retained lower level categories in the coding of each method, elaborating and constituting sub chapters of the story told by each method. Appendix 3.6.g. illustrates the parent nodes representing the main structure/event, the phenomenon, the ‘what is going on here’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 130), in turn encapsulating the actions/interactions represented by the sub nodes of each method, answering the ‘why, where, how come and when’ (ibid, p. 128). This process prepared the initial interview method to be integrated with the process of selective coding and interpretation of the sub categories emerging from the analysis of the subsequent methods.

3.5.3. Lesson observations

The five research themes emerging from the condensed initial interview data functioned as reference for the coding of the lesson observation data.

3.5.3.1. Open Coding
Each of the 16 lessons were both video and voice recorded. Eventually only the voice recording was uploaded and coded due to technical problems in uploading videos in NVivo. Each lesson was analysed and salient episodes were transcribed following the same verbatim guidelines recommended for the transcription of the initial interviews (Blake, 2003). I developed lesson observation grids to help my coding, allowing me to glance and either circle the corresponding descriptors, or annotate my memos on the side, or in my diary. The first grid (Appendix 3.6.c.) just captured grammar teaching modes if and when they happened. The second one (Appendix 3.6.d.) helped me circle and fix in my memory what I observed. It was very useful in the data analysis phase, as it provided the first phase of labelling. I ticked it, or circled it during observation. I also wrote memos on it. The third grid (Appendix 3.6.e.) helped me to quickly label and memo the unfolding events, keeping a specific focus on one of the bivalent research objective: the type of grammar teaching mode adopted by the teacher. In Appendix 3.3.c., I give an excerpt of a lesson transcription.

In ‘transcribe’ mode, NVivo allows to match the transcription to the voice-recorded message corresponding. Each participant’s utterance was transcribed therefore as literally as possible, following the list of symbols for the reproduction of discursive, non-verbal and proxemics interview contents (Blake, 2003; Potter, 1996; Silverman, 1993), illustrated in Table 11. The NVivo lesson observations’ project was backed up by sending updated versions to my first supervisor. She recommended that for each lesson I completed a lesson observation report (Appendix 4.3., Chapter 4.), briefly summarising the aim and objective of the lesson; the character of teacher-student interaction; the teacher activities, the students’ activities. Rather than following a time frame recording teacher’s and students’ activities, I divided these themes in the three episodes that characterise foreign languages lesson planning currently used in secondary school: Intended Learning Outcomes, Main lesson and Plenary (Pachler & Barnes, 2009).

The first level of analysis considered the five emerging themes from the initial interviews (Figure 5). Within these themes, I used descriptors from Ellis (2010) and Oxford and Lee (2007) as a guide for identifying the grammar teaching modes observed (Appendix 3.6.c.-f.). I was not imposing structured methodologies on the data, but allowing my observation to identify links between the findings derived from
the raw data and the research objectives. Eventually, the grid was a de-coding interface between myself and the research community. Unlike in deductive approaches, this grid was not used as a set of objectives, or tested models (Thomas, 2006). They were labels of broadly accepted, comprehensive models of inductive, deductive; explicit and implicit grammar teaching, to which emerging concepts and categories were associated as and if they occurred in the teachers' pedagogical strategies. After coding the first recordings, the representation of the data in the tool resulted to yield rich data on the teachers' considerations for the concepts and categories in Figure 5:

![Figure 5. Nodes at 19 Feb 2013. First nodes.](image)

I analysed each lesson in the same chronological order by date observed for the initial interviews, to allow equal time spans between the analyses of each participants. Bearing in mind the second and third central research questions and related sub questions (3.2.) nodes were gradually refined into the final list of bottom level nodes,
which were also given definitions (Appendix 3.6.f.). Bottom level nodes were finally reviewed and merged into the five categories identified in the initial interviews’ analysis, adopted as reference for the concepts and categories emerging across the methods (Figure 5.).

In the initial interviews, segments of text containing more than one implied meaning – and therefore code – could mean lack of synthetic analysis. In lesson observations, due to the density of processes within each teaching episode, this became rather common. Segments therefore were coded at more than one sub node. This, however, varied significantly from one teacher to another. An emerging hypothesis was that it was due to the coherent approach and systematic method used by some teachers. Target language use, for example, was minor in most cases except three, where it was predominant and where it was necessary to code the whole lesson as target language-based, with minor instances of translations or usage of English. Target language and translation became two inversely proportional modes of foreign languages delivery. Here I exemplify how the incidence of the ‘Target Language’ sub-code made it emerge as category first, and one of the themes later (Table 12):

Table 12. TL reference code cross-participant percentages. Lesson 1.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enise</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>51.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>6.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruud</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>18.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>61.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hettie</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.3.2. Axial Coding. Linking categories to subcategories

A second level analysis classified nodes into broader themes, identified in the initial interviews. It was particularly important not to overcode by applying the same code more than once, which would have indicated the recurrence of the same phenomenon too often within the same segment. For example, if grammar teaching was happening,
it was coded once, and not every time the teacher made a statement. Whilst in the initial interview the caution was to distinguish between statements and declarative beliefs, in the lesson observation method all content consisted in teachers’ strategies and actualizations of their ‘procedures’. Although not stating ‘I think’, or ‘I believe’, or ‘in my opinion’, all their actions were if not enactment of a belief, they were enactments of a pedagogical plan, including their strategies for grammar teaching, and their concern for either grammatical appropriateness or communicative content.

After opening up the data to identify sub categories labelled as nodes, I started exploring if and how the properties of each sub category related to one another (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This process confirmed the main categories identified in the initial interview analysis, with lesson observations nodes reassembled mainly around the phenomena related to teachers’ pedagogical practices. Two categories contained only one node: Contextual influences on grammar teaching and Grammar in Teacher education (see Figure 5 above); however, these would be added later to the nodes identified within the same category (parent node) in the other methods, contributing to the story told by all its relative nodes. In the case of the sub node ‘FonF’ and ‘FonM’ (Focus on Meaning), although it applied only to two (potentially three) participants, its absence in other participant’s statement generated an important discussion and finding.

Participants were sent the précis of their lessons (Appendix 4.3., Chapter 4.), and were asked to forward anonymous and voluntary feedback. Reports were created on the interpretation of the relevance of their statements within either nodes or categories. These reports were either sent individually to single participants, or anonymised, grouped and sent to the interested participants for validation of my interpretation, also in the light and comparison of other participants’ contributions. This process the analysis from induction to deduction, preparing this tool to be integrated with the process of selective coding and interpretation of the categories emerging from the analysis of the subsequent methods (Chapter 4).

3.5.4. Think-alouds

The think-alouds were linked to the second and third research questions (3.2.).
3.5.4.1. Open Coding

The recordings of each think-aloud were uploaded as audio files in NVivo and transcribed following the same verbatim guidelines recommended for the transcription of the initial interviews (Blake, 2003). The NVivo think-alouds project was backed up by sending updated versions to my first supervisor. In Appendix 3.6.f. are the examples of homework attached to the think-aloud recordings, and examples of think-aloud transcriptions.

The main concern was that the method’s process was not completed by all participants equally before the final interview. My supervisor stressed the importance of not imposing anything on the data, and we started considering whether it was possible to rely on the data for a wholly inductive analysis. I analysed each think-aloud in the same chronological order by date observed for the initial interviews. After coding the first recordings, the representation of the data in the tool resulted in yielding rich data on the teachers’ thoughts about:

- GCSE assessment criteria
- creative use of the language
- scaffolded learning
- student linguistic background
- communicative intent
- completion of task
- grammatical accuracy
- frustration due to mistakes
- happiness at students’ achievement
- planning reinforcement based on students’ mistakes
- self-doubt

Bearing in mind the second and third central research questions and related sub questions, I created and assigned a node each time a segment contained a meaningful comment. In this first stage of open coding, node definitions were gradually decided and contained keywords evocative of the concept or event holding the similarity. Copies of the corrected homework were obtained from most participants (Appendix
3.6.f. Figure 6 below shows the think-aloud sub nodes gathered around the five categories of parent nodes identified in the initial interviews.

Figure 6. Nodes arranged in the 5-Theme paradigm emerging from INI.

3.5.4.2. **Axial Coding. Linking categories to subcategories**

Whilst in the initial interview the caution was to distinguish between statements and declarative beliefs, in the think-aloud method all content was teachers’ verbalisation of their ‘procedures’. Although not stating ‘I think’, or ‘I believe’, or ‘in my opinion’, all their statements were recollections of their own pedagogical practices, their strategies for grammar teaching, and their concern for either grammatical appropriateness or communicative content. After opening up the data to identify sub categories labelled as nodes, I started exploring if and how they gathered around the parent nodes the events identified in the analysis of the first interviews. This process confirmed that the think-aloud nodes reasssembled around only the phenomena related to teachers’ pedagogical practices. During the node-refining stage, I noticed the sub node ‘happiness at students’ achievement’ applied only two participants, and had no significant continuum across participants. Its absence from other participants’ statements generated an important discussion and finding, and therefore it was not
eliminated. Reports were created on the interpretation of the relevance of their statements within either nodes or categories. These reports were sent to participants for validation of my interpretation, also in the light and comparison of other participants’ contributions. Their response was optional and anonymous.

3.5.5. Final interviews

The analysis of final interviews shared the same preparation procedures of the initial interviews. The sub categories emerged from the open and axial coding of final interviews were related to the themes emerged from the initial interviews, which functioned as framework for the coding of all successive phases and methods.

3.5.5.1. Open and Axial Coding

In open coding, concepts were recognized under the five categories identified in the coding of the initial interviews (Table 12). The outcome of this process was to refine the created subnodes and their integration in the paradigm of the five categories carried from the condensation of the raw data gathered around the five research themes in the initial interview method analysis, through the other methods. In Appendix 3.6.g. is a representation of the five-categories’ paradigm under which all sub nodes emerging from the analysis of the research methods were gathered.

3.6. From induction to deduction: emerging themes

Because no researcher enters into the process with a completely blank and empty mind, interpretations are the researcher’s abstractions of what is in the data. These interpretations, which take the form of concepts and relationships, are continuously validated through comparisons with new data. As I related the relationships I noticed evolving from data, and whenever I conceptualised nodes and meanings, I developed hypotheses about it, interpreting it to some degree. Strauss and Corbin describe interpretation as a form of deduction, not because the researcher imposes an interpretation on the data, but rather because of the emerging of a ‘human element in analysis and the potential for possible distortion of meaning’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1998,
That is why Strauss and Corbin felt that it is important that analysts validate their interpretations through constantly comparing one piece of data to another. I protracted such comparison among the categories emerging from each method employed, which constituted a further triangulation. Each method therefore functioned as a further lens refracting and converging on created meanings from different angles. Further lenses and triangulation were provided by supervision and participant response.

This process prepared this tool for the process of selective coding and interpretation of the categories emerging from the analysis of the other methods. The selective coding will assist the writing up of the story traced by the integrated and refined categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in the cross-case study data analysis and synthesis (Yin, 2009), which will be described in Chapter 4.

3.7. Limitations

As observed in 3.1.2., contextualisation reinforces the quality of the data by allowing participants to remain as close as possible to the task. My presence was therefore the intrusive element potentially contaminating the veracity of data gathered in each case study. I already observed how Pring (2000) defends the theoretical validity of qualitative research conducted by researchers as insiders within educational sciences. As much as there are drawbacks and limitations, there are also positive aspects in entering the field as insider researchers. Beliefs and preconceptions are balanced by experience and familiarity of participants’ subject knowledge and pedagogical procedures. Mine helped me strike a trusting relationship with colleagues; understand the dynamic of the lessons; be sympathetic to the teachers’ priority to transfer knowledge above any other agenda. It helped me understand the lesson material and teachers’ pedagogical rationales, even when the lessons were in a language that I do not know.

In Second Language Acquisition, both Brumfit (Brumfit, 1991, 2001) and Macaro defended the case of teachers as independent practitioners actively involved in research. It is applied Vygotskyian teacher cognition (Manning & Payne, 1993). Personally, it was an opportunity of personal growth and of making sense of my own
experiences. My participants and I reflected on our theories, otherwise left in the anonymity of our isolated attempts to make sense of things. In the following parts, I will illustrate method-specific limitations. In hindsight, I believe that the best course of action was to allow teachers to give their availability as their busy timetables allowed them to, lest forcing them to a participation that would not have been as spontaneous and generous as it turned out to be. This leads to the consideration of the need to maximise a culture of research participation in secondary schools, where teachers are either personally involved in research, or participate in an established culture of dialogue between research and practice in educational, cognitive and linguistic research.

3.7.1. *Initial interviews*

Time constraints meant that two Initial interviews, and various final ones, took place by phone instead of personally. This was a way to meet my participants’ priorities and deadlines, and maximise their willing participation (Shuy, 2003). Technically, the limitations of phone interviews are that instruments may not record voices as vividly. I used two recorders to obviate the problem. Qualitatively, I think a disadvantage is not to have a visual measure of the involvement of the participant. There is also the risk of not being able to ‘bracket’ as successfully, due to the need to enunciate words which are not understood. Whilst the first time the participant teacher did not have a protocol in front, the second time I emailed the teacher the interview protocol to ensure access to all questions and prompts. This may have contaminated the data collected, as my being more experienced and the access to the questions might made teachers express their beliefs differently.

3.7.2. *Lesson observations*

Ideally, more observations should have taken place to accustom both teachers and students to my presence. Twice students objected to my video-recording; none of them objected to voice recording. In one instance, a student kept commenting on the presence of the video camera; this disrupted to the point that I turned it off and visibly put it away to minimise contaminating the teaching episode.
In the field I began to ask myself whether what I observed were beliefs in practice, as initially planned, or a teaching practice regardless of teachers’ beliefs, and strongly driven by contextual and political factors. Only in two cases there was enough theoretical continuity between participants’ beliefs reported during the initial interviews and participants’ observed classroom practice. Most contexts left teachers fully accountable of their strategies. However, only in two cases teacher independence was contiguous to having agreed to share language teaching theoretical and methodological principles endorsed by the school policy on foreign language learning, albeit aiming towards national GCSE attainment targets.

3.7.3. Think-aloud

With one exception, all participants reported that ‘verbalizing’ their thoughts brought them closer to the exercise of correcting, by adding a deeper level of reflection (Appendix 3.4.b). Enise reported that the think-aloud did not change her usual processes of marking. Carol appreciated the method’s teasing out her reflection, but also a deeper analysis of the problematic arising from the students’ work. Elliot reported how the think-aloud made him appreciate his students’ production, and his sense of pride in their achievements. Like Elliot, Carla reported how the think-aloud made her appreciate her students’ achievements. She also reflected on her method and students’ reactions to her teaching. Ruud found it really hard. However, his modification did not detract in the list from the rich data collected on his processes. June also found it initially hard, but reported that the process helped her being ‘more methodical’. Heather’s reflection also focused on how she could change her intervention to improve students’ understanding of grammar.

3.7.4. Final interviews

Due to limited teacher time availability, the stimulated recall element risked to be altogether missing from this tool. This activity often happened within hours from the observations, and often without available data from the think-alouds, leaving little time to elaborate stimuli from them. On the other hand, the types of questions adhered closely to the one modelled in Clark and Peterson (1986), who also reported how various studies used one lesson observation and one recording only. Particularly, I
was careful to use words and verbs inviting teachers to think and relate to their choices, their rationales for their actions in class and their actions and thoughts during the think-aloud recording. I asked participants to focus on their intended learning outcomes and their reasons for including or not grammar treatment in their lessons.

3.8. Ethical research conduct

All aspects of the research design and conduct adhere to the Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research by BERA (British Educational Research Association (BERA), 2004). Furthermore, the proposed study is informed by the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (ESRC, 2010). In addition, in awareness of the University of Exeter, Graduate School of Education’s ethical position, I have sought ethical approval prior to starting any activity planned for the present qualitative research agenda, which entails pursuing close collaboration, personal and professional data from the participants (Mason, 1996). I will be accountable at all times for my values and responsibilities whilst engaged in studying my participants’ beliefs, opinions and behaviours (Silverman, 2005). BERA ethical guidelines are structured around three fundamental criteria and my considerations will follow the same order.

3.8.1. Responsibilities to participants

The methodology adopted within an exploratory-interpretative paradigm presupposed that valid data could only be obtained when an appropriate relationship were established between the researcher and the ‘informant’, who, as a knowing subject, ‘has equal rights with the researcher and whose subjective theories are of central importance for the process of theory construction’ (Grotjahn, 1987, p. 65). I obtained informed, voluntary consent from all participants, who had the option to withdraw at any time. The research aims, the methodology and the data emerging from the analysis process were available at all times to all participants. As the research planned to observe classes being taught, students were indirectly involved, therefore parents were informed according to the schools’ internal delegations of responsibilities, as participants deemed appropriate. Furthermore, in order to avoid feelings of uncertainty or deception (Gans, 1982), once the data were triangulated with the participants, clear distinctions were made between raw data, researcher’s interpretations and conclusions. Further consent was asked when conducting observations requiring the
video recording of lessons or participants’ activities (Punch, 1994). These methods in fact might have increased their sensitivity even if consent had already been obtained. Great care was taken in ensuring that the methods and materials employed for observations and interviews did not detract students from genuine participation in the teaching and learning event. The circular nature of the inductive approach adopted required giving particular consideration to ethical issues arising as a consequence of reformulations of questions, due to new themes or aspects arising at each stage (Flick, 2009). Anonymity was guaranteed by referring to the participants with pseudonyms and by referring to their context in terms of the corresponding case study, in respect of the widely accepted ethical principle of confidentiality (Pring, 2000). Potential damage to the participants, therefore, was assessed at every stage, as the intense interest in personal views and circumstances could not trespass the individual’s right to their private space, nor could it ‘outweigh injury to a person exposed’ (Stake, 2005, p. 447). Moreover, conscious of the researcher’s role as guest in the reality of the people involved, I aimed to devise and conduct observations and interviews in a way that did not entail exposure, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem. Such commitment was renewed with each participant verbally, but also in writing. It was also stressed that any data would be kept securely and be accessible to participants’ scrutiny under the Data Protection Act (House of Parliament, 1998). Pring (2000) argued that research should benefit the participants; hence incentives were suggested in terms of personal or career improvement through the reflections in the teachers’ own performance. The study also ensured that participation would not entail additional, unreasonable workload or burden.

3.8.2. Responsibility to sponsors

The ESRC provided funding and resources for the duration of the study, hence the need for meticulous planning, analysis and reporting of its findings, which ensured that the time span and deadlines agreed were respected. Furthermore, the participants were informed as to who was providing the funding and what it entailed (Cheek, 2000).

3.8.3. Responsibility to the community of educational researchers
The grounded quality of this research conceived participants as experts in their field, therefore this study aspired to empower them by reflecting on and better understanding of the circumstances of their personal and professional lives. The openness of the communication and exchange of views hopefully encouraged exposing, accepting, challenging and defending issues arising from the convergence or incongruence of beliefs and practices. The ethical considerations here exposed hopefully engaged and encouraged participants to do so in the interest of reciprocal, professional progress (Davis, 2003).

3.9. Conclusion

The methodology chapter illustrated how previous studies identified in the literature review have informed the theoretical stance and the methodological strategies of my study. I related how my research questions respond to an increased focus on teachers’ interpretations of classroom events. Moreover, I explained how, instead of generalising, my study aims to illustrate the situated nature of participant teachers’ beliefs, aiming to have resonance for future teacher cognition studies contextualised in anglophone, foreign language teaching.

The chapter further illustrated how my data collection strategies aimed to triangulate my focus on teachers’ beliefs and practices, and how the principle of triangulation motivated my inductive approach for analysing qualitative data, leading to further triangulation underpinning the choices of cross-case study analysis (Chapter 4) and synthesis (Chapter 5). Method-specific limitations are considered at the end of the chapter, together with the Ethical principles observed towards my participants, my sponsor and the research community.

The next chapter presents the description and analysis of each case study, framed by the research questions discussed along the paradigm of themes created from the analysis and coding of the initial interviews and successively framing all methods employed.
Chapter 4. Teachers’ beliefs about and pedagogical practices of grammar teaching.

Foreword

Each case description will open with the presentation of the teacher, the school and contextual influences on grammar teaching. Schools and Teacher brief profiles are outlined together in Appendix 4.1. In Appendix 4.2. are some pictures illustrating significant foreign languages events and messages displayed in three of the five contexts visited. Lesson précis are in Appendix 4.3. The structure of the case study is founded on the research questions and their pursuit through each research method of data collection employed, that is, initial interviews, lesson observations, think-alouds and final interviews. Question one focuses on the reported beliefs recorded in the initial interviews. Question two drew on the observed pedagogical practice: lesson observation and the think-aloud data; the latter will be added at the end of each theme description. Question three focuses on the retrospective data from the final interviews. References to the grammar teaching modes refer to Ellis (2010) and Oxford and Lee (2007), and illustrated in Appendices 3.6.c.–e. Each case study will be analysed along the five-themes paradigm created from the analysis and coding of the initial interviews, framing all methods employed:

1. Context
2. Declarative beliefs
3. Grammar in teacher education
4. Teachers’ beliefs about students’ strategies for learning grammar
5. Teachers’ beliefs about the role of English in grammar teaching

The cross-case synthesis of participants’ views and practices will be presented in Chapter Five, following the order of the five themes above. The structure of this chapter follows Yin’s rationale for cross-case study data analysis and synthesis (Yin, 2009), and it is illustrated in Table 13. The selective coding traces each case study description by selecting and refining the themes and categories emerged from the open and axial coding described in Chapter 3 (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The research questions and sub questions are in Chapter 3 (3.2.). The themes and related sub-
categories of nodes are presented and defined in Chapter 3 (3.5.2.), and Appendix 3.6.h.

Table 13. Case study structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research methods of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial interviews</th>
<th>Lesson observations and Think-alouds</th>
<th>Final interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1</th>
<th>Theme 2</th>
<th>Theme 3</th>
<th>Theme 4</th>
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4.1. Case 1: Enise

4.1.1. The teacher, the school and the policy

Enise was in her mid-30s and was a French national. Her experience was of 10 years and her role was classroom teacher of French. Enise was educated in France up to university level. She described her language education as strongly grammar-based. Her degree included English and Spanish. Her multilingual background included
Turkish, Italian and Modern Greek. She completed her PGCE in England in 2001, and she remembered focusing one of her assessments on ‘communicative grammar teaching’. She recounted that the task was not based on the PGCE content course, however, but that it involved producing material to teach grammar ‘communicatively’ according to her interpretation of the concept and her reflection on her practice. Enise seemed to have a consistent, friendly and practical approach to teaching. Her students responded well and there was a high degree of cooperation in her classes.

Enise’s school was an inner-London school, described by the 2009 Ofsted report as a ‘good’, and ‘larger-than-average-sized’ secondary. Both teachers observed here reported receiving backup from management, although they were also aware that foreign languages had a limited range of initiative due to the school’s struggle to attain good literacy levels in English. Students came from a wide range of ethnic groups, with many speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of students supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs were ‘well above average’, and a higher proportion of students than usual joined the school ‘at times other than the start of Year 7’. The school was coming out of a special measure period, but was increasingly showing encouraging signs of improvement throughout the curricular and social life.

Enise did not express beliefs or views about the influence that foreign languages policy might have had on grammar teaching. She reported that within her foreign languages department grammar teaching was not discussed, but that collectively they taught grammar ‘communicatively in a way in which students can actually reuse and apply these rules; in a way that they can actually understand it and use it in real context’. She described how the school promoted community language teaching to Turkish-speaking students, besides the teaching of French and Spanish. Moreover, students could ‘take their GCSE in other community languages’, such as Polish and Modern Greek, although these were not taught as curricular subjects. Enise expressed concern regarding the lack of ‘real context’ in which foreign languages teaching generally happens, and reported believing that often foreign languages meant ‘teaching it from a textbook, from resources, from an interactive whiteboard’ and therefore very differently from learning ‘a language in real context, [like] when you’re in the country itself’.
4.1.2. Question 1: The role of grammar in foreign languages teaching

Reflecting on the role of grammar teaching, Enise reported that in an instructional foreign languages learning context, deprived from target language real communication, grammar was the means to teach students how ‘to learn another language’; a process that she valued more than the end-product of teaching them ‘French’. Enise viewed the role of grammar as fundamental in understanding and learning a language, which manifested as the ability to ‘apply the rules to be able to make sense… to be able to write and to speak it’. Enise likened teaching grammar to teaching structures and the rules of the language. She saw grammar as important for transmitting units of meaning, and the teaching of grammar as teaching the regular features through which the meaning is transmitted. Her reported method was inductive, asking students to ‘put together’ the ‘bits’. What Enise would categorise as the ‘bits’, ‘grammatical structures’, is unclear.

Ok, grammar teaching… Teaching sentence structure..? … Ehm… teaching… the rules of the language..? Grammar teaching… To me, what comes first to mind would be a bit like… maths, really… give rules, give few bits… that the students have to put together to apply them, if that makes sense? This is what grammar is to me.

When asked if grammar teaching was prescriptive or descriptive, Enise replied that grammar’s purpose was ‘definitely to describe and use language more effectively’. Enise believed that the teaching of grammar was ultimately enabling students to use the language effectively, and this was done through teaching them how to apply grammatical rules.

When Enise discussed her pedagogical strategies for teaching grammar, she made various references to interdisciplinary issues with subject English. The main pedagogical strategy she recalled using for teaching grammar was the comparison with English grammar; not only to make students grasp structures better, but also to compensate the lack of grammar teaching in Subject English. She confidently asserted that this was the main problem that students encountered when learning grammar. She stressed it was very important to teach tenses ‘when teaching the GCSE.'
Another strategy she reported using consistently was colour coding of target language structures, which she subsequently compared with English grammatical structures. Enise believed in grammar teaching as a key strategy of foreign languages learning, believing that the decisive element for its efficiency was the teacher’s method, which she was convinced could ‘help as well as hinder the students’ learning’. When asked to elaborate on her teaching mode, Enise seemed to report an inductive way to teach grammar by asking students to infer the rule from observing the patterns emerging from her colour coding. Interestingly, she seemed therefore to use colour coding instead of grammatical terminology. Moreover, she used English to teach French grammar:

Let’s say… the negative in a sentence, I would put the negative words in a colour and ask them what do they notice about it, where is it… is it before or after the verb…

Enise reported her method to be ‘communicative’, as she taught students to re-use the structures she taught them in real contexts. Enise believed that her method was not derived from theories learnt at university in France, as her present teaching context demanded different strategies ‘because in English schools they don’t learnt it that way’. Enise reported focusing on grammar systematically in each lesson, which meant that she covered all of it in equal measures. She believed that grammar pedagogy needed to be differentiated according to age and ability; however, teaching grammar consisted of presenting a rule and asking students to apply it, like in ‘maths’.

Enise spoke very confidently about her pedagogical strategies for grammar teaching, which seemed to include both inductive and deductive modes; direct grammar teaching as well as communicative strategies. The readiness of her examples suggested a methodical approach.

When I asked Enise how she would feel about grammar being taught as curricular subject, she reacted very favourably, saying she thought it would be very useful, and she compared it to the situation in her home country. When asked if she had a suggestion for research to be focused on, Enise firstly replied that she did not feel research would help her in any way for any aspect of her teaching. She then reflected
and added that research should focus on ‘the way grammar is taught in English schools to English students’.

Enise’s education was grammar-based throughout whilst in France. She recalled that in France ‘you would do spelling tests; you would have grammar lessons’, whilst ‘in English schools they don’t learn it that way’. Enise reported strongly believing that grammar should be part of a foreign languages teacher’s formation. Having done her PGCE in the UK, she recalled that grammar was not part of the training, as ‘you’re just thrown in schools and you learn… you just learn it by yourself, I’d say […] from scratch’. She confidently described her grammar-based education as the source of her French and English grammar content knowledge. As far as her grammar pedagogical content knowledge is concerned, she reported that it came from experience, as opposed to theories encountered during her education or during her PGCE: ‘I’ve been teaching now for the last ten years… and seen what works best’. She reported having to adapt her grammar-based linguistic content knowledge to the UK context, as ‘they don’t use it here [UK], so I would not use it’. She was confident of her method, and believed that her experience and results confirmed it. Enise related how her confident knowledge of grammar enabled her to teach it successfully to students who were not familiar with grammar teaching because of their educational context. Although her grammar-based language education could not be used directly in her context, it enabled her to adapt her knowledge to her contextual pedagogical needs. Finally, she believed that her knowledge of grammar was the reason for the continuity in her grammar teaching pedagogy.

I strongly believe that the way I was taught grammar influenced the way that I teach it… because I was taught it in so much detail and so well… and I can actually reuse all this to teach it now, knowing that the students I teach do not actually know a lot about grammar.

When we reflected on how students learn and perceive grammar, Enise reported believing in a direct pedagogical mode, consisting of teacher presentation ‘of rules’ and students’ learning by copying and memorising, and then re-employing the given model. She also reported a recent teaching experience with her year 11, where she declared that students learnt by practising rules in different exercises:
They were given the rules and they were given a text with lots of gaps and... they had to put them in the past tense. I would say with practice, or maybe seeing the structure in a text, by using it... by reapplying it... in context.

Furthermore, she believed that students did not have expectations of being taught grammar, attributing it to their lack of grammar learning experience in subject English. She added that she was not sure that students knew ‘it’s grammar’, when taught.

4.1.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?

Assessment guidance was a strong contextual influence in Enise’s practice, and she gave precise indications of GCSE requirements during both lessons. Students were familiar with previous and present set learning objectives, and the reason for being set that particular task, which was to prepare the writing assessment. She gave examples of sentences satisfying the writing assessment requirements, and students had ‘to write something similar. Instead of [...] making’ their ‘own text from scratch’, the could copy the ‘different structures’ and ‘reuse’ them. Enise used the word ‘structures’ to refer to modelled sentences, not grammatical structures that can be learned and used independently. The ‘structures’ were ready-made assessment models which can be adapted by changing a few words. A typical GCSE written assessment does not require students to prove that they can form verbal tenses independently. It requires writing a piece on agreed topics and subtopics. Students have to know enough vocabulary to modify models prepared in lesson, as identical pieces would be penalised. Students piece all the models they prepared or copied in class, and then memorise it in view of the controlled-conditions assessment. For example, during the second lesson, students started writing up the section of written assessment about the topic ‘Lifestyle’. Enise started from an example in the power point and she asked students to make some changes on the same sentences, helping them by providing the vocabulary and the verbs they did not know.

In her think-aloud, Enise recorded her concern with assessment criteria, counting whether all the recommended criteria were included in the task: three tenses, time references and connectives. She observed that there were ‘some mistakes with
tenses, but the *structure* is there... the time markers are there as well... quand... actuellement...'. Grammatical accuracy and focus on forms was her main concern throughout the recording.

In Enise’s observed grammatical teaching practice there was no evidence of implicit focus on meaning, or incidental focus on structures during communication-oriented activities. Exposure to the target language was exclusively aimed to assessment-targeted models of target language, which were read, analysed and immediately translated. Other instances were limited to classroom language, such as greetings and brief instructions: ‘Assieds-toi’, ‘Asseyez vous’. Three instances of communication in the target language were observed, lasting only a few seconds each. Sometimes longer instructions were given in the target language, which were immediately translated into English, such as ‘ehm... j’attends... I am waiting’.

Enise’s treatment of grammar was predominantly explicit. She started from a modelled task in the target language aimed to prepare students for the written assessment, and proceeded to translate it. Subsequently, she asked students to justify the use of certain vocabulary or verbal structures. In the two lessons I observed, she proposed a series of sentences in the present tense and imperfect tense. She taught students some connectives to link these sentences, explaining that in the GCSE these were key criteria for obtaining higher grades, such as levels 5 or 6, corresponding to the A and B grades. She then recapitulated the formation of particular verb tenses. Finally, she asked students to change certain words in a sentence whilst keeping the same verbs already conjugated. She recommended that the students do not attempt new language, but that they stick to the model by changing only a few words. Enise’s main teaching mode was proactive, deductive form-focused instruction (Ellis, 2010; Oxford & Lee, 2007). She asked questions to see if the students could correct themselves, but eventually provided the correction. She used metalanguage consistently, such as verbal tenses, gender and number.

In her think-aloud, Enise’s recorded monitoring was concerned with both explicit and implicit output of her form focused instruction. 83% of Enise’s think-aloud was coded as reactive deductive explicit form-focused feedback, as it consisted in the explicit provision of the correct forms, containing either comments or information related to the
well-formedness of the students' output (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). At the same time, Enise often recorded thoughts on the communicative intent achieved by the students' output. She guessed at the communicative intent, at the same time providing the correct form and feeding back as if she had aimed to teach incidental, meaning-focused feedback of implicit knowledge of forms (Oxford & Lee, 2007, p. 121).

Enise: The accent is in the wrong place... and the apostrophe... he probably meant je faisais beaucoup de sport... [repeats as she provides the correct form] et du vélo, mais maintenant... suis paresseux... again, the pronoun is not there, but the tense is correct this time.

Enise once referred to interdisciplinary aspects between foreign languages and subject English. She made many comparisons with English grammar in the first lesson, one of which referred to the reason behind the accented ‘ô’ in ‘hôpital’, leading to reflections on the current spelling of the English word ‘hospital’. Enise’s main strategy seemed to be translation of main vocabulary. Every example on the board was translated into English first word by word, and then the entire sentence. All observations and exploration of new vocabulary was conducted in English.

Enise reported that her strongly grammar-based education was a strong influence on her current practice. However, she also created opportunities to reflect on non-structural aspects of language teaching. One episode was reported in the previous paragraph; another focused on discourse and sociolinguistic competence, when an expression caught her and the students by surprise:

Enise: je ne fais plus rien et e m'en fou un peu... oh, this one, do not use it in your coursework because that's a bit... ehm...

Student: slangy... it's like I don't care...

Enise: yea, it's a bit stronger than that... well, it's stronger than I don't care...

Student: I don't give a rubbish [French mother-language speaker playing with the English language to find a substitute expression].
In the think-aloud, Enise recorded a reflection linked to both Themes 4 and 5: grammar in teacher education, and how students learn grammar. Enise's feedback was very consistent with her teaching. Her evaluation was factual, informative and stripped of any partiality. Her main concern was with her students' accurate or inaccurate task performance. She did not record any thoughts on her learning experience, or the reasons behind students' poor or good performance. Her thoughts were focused on students' output.

Enise seemed to address students’ grammar and language learning by adopting a translation pedagogical strategy whereby all ‘set structures’ were consistently presented and translated until completion of a model of the written assessment task at hand. Enise conducted various reflections on the fundamental aspect of verbal endings, entailing reflections on linguistic properties and structures, and the students seemed to follow her with their observations. For example, she reminded them how to form the imperfect tense by taking ‘away –ER and add –ais’, and she reminded them of the function that the tense has of recalling actions that ‘used to be’. If students recalled the wrong grammatical rule, such as ‘you take away –ER, and put the accent’, she would correct and explain the rule again explicitly. Figures 7 and 8 are examples of how Enise used colour-coding instead of or integratively to an explicit metalinguistic explanation.

Figure 7: Colour coding as ‘visual’ metalinguistic explanation.
Students’ independent work was very guided in the second lesson, where students wrote their individual paragraph describing their lifestyle, with precise instructions to include present tenses, imperfect tenses, connective words and time references. Students had been taught how to form the two tenses; however, they also had a collection of ready-made examples that they adapted by changing the age, the gender, or other nouns, without having to change the sentence structurally. Enise used recast to reinforce students’ spelling and pronunciation, and made reference to rote-learning activities during both lessons. In the first, she referred to explicit knowledge of memorised verbal forms (Conjugaison, in French).

Écoutez et répétez: je travaillais, tu travaillais, il travaillait, elle travaillait... nous travaillons, vous travaillez, ils travaillaient.

Whatever is in brackets, you do not pronounce [Enise put in brackets the letters of the verbal endings which are not pronounced, such as the ending –aient for the third person plural: ils/elles].

In the second lesson, Enise asked students to memorise the ‘structures’ used to write up the written assessment for the role play as part of the speaking assessments. There were no grammatical structures (i.e. linguistic properties) or rules listed in the homework, but full sentences that had to be re-used to compose the role-play.

4.1.4. Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?
When asked to recall if there were contextual influences on her grammar teaching, Enise confirmed how exam requirements played a significant part in her pedagogical strategies. Despite the belief stated in the initial interview that grammar is a pivotal aspect of foreign languages teaching and learning, Enise seemed to sacrifice both students’ creativity and her propensity to teach target language grammar to exam requirements. She wanted to avoid students’ inaccurate literal translations, often downloaded from the internet, and she invited them to use only the ‘structures’ studied in class. Enise explicitly told students that they were ‘not expected to write it as well as you write in English’, as to get ‘the best grades’ they had to prove to the examiner that they could ‘reuse the sentences that [they had] been taught in class’. Students therefore needed to ‘take the structures, change a few words, change the linking words’ and so on. Enise reported believing that this was frustrating students’ creativity, as in subject English they were allowed a wider range of tools for expressing themselves independently. Re-using and memorising the ‘structures’ (full sentences) that she taught prevented students from failing their exam, as she believed that they would not be capable of independently mastering the grammar necessary to form the same type of sentences to express themselves individually. Rote learning was also necessary due to another issue that Enise raised with the lack of time: the imperfect tense was ‘just one tenth’ of the requirements to cover on the examination board’s list, therefore memorising ready-made ‘structures’ was necessary to move on and cover the next set of ‘structures’ containing other exam requirements. Time and students’ lack of exposure to grammar teaching in subject English were the reasons she felt she could not ‘go into so much details’ of grammatical explanations. In her final interview Enise still referred to ‘structures’ as template sentences that students had to memorise for specific assessment parts, and not as grammatical structures that once learned would be independently used communicatively.

The intended learning outcome that Enise reported was ‘for them to be able to understand the structure of the imperfect tense in opposition to the present tense… and being able to use it in the same sentence; saying what they used to do before and oppose it to what they do now’, which I coded under discourse competence and grammatical competence intended learning outcomes. Enise reported believing in a pedagogical rationale of explicit grammar teaching. Her lessons were strongly anchored on previous learning and her method consistently included explicit grammar
teaching and translation into English. Moreover, she reported believing in a pedagogical strategy that avoids grammar with low ability students. In this case, the strategy for communication is for children to memorise chunks of language that they learn to match to specific exam questions. This especially ‘if there is no evident comparison with English’, as it might confuse students. This strategy, however, seemed to be used across the students’ ability range. Enise reported that the role of explicit grammar teaching was to provide students with the means to express themselves more freely and creatively by being aware of the different communicative functions of two verbal tenses, and of the time references and connectives necessary to link them. She reported refraining from teaching any grammatical aspects not directly relevant to the exam module in preparation, as in her opinion this would just prove unnecessarily confusing. The explicit teaching of grammar came after the presentation of ‘structures’/examples of formed sentences which were punctually translated.

Enise reported a negative perception of grammar interdisciplinary issues, particularly regarding the lack of grammar teaching in subject English. She believed it reflected on students’ limited understanding of target language grammar, and consequently on her limited ability to teach grammar explicitly in more detail. Enise reported using translation as both a shortcut and as means to make the lesson accessible to the less able. She also used it to make them understand that the target language cannot be ‘as the English’ language. Enise’s main teaching mode was in English, translating each example. Students seemed comfortable, however, with her use of the target language, and felt confident when reading single words out to ask their meaning. Some felt very confident and used it to joke about the target language and its use.

Enise was very confident that her education and experience assisted her to make the right pedagogical decision regarding including grammar as one of the fundamental contents. She reported that upon reflection she would not have changed anything about her lessons based on the satisfactory results she believed she had obtained: she was happy with students’ responses and their progress on their GCSE modules. She also believed that consistency of method was a key ingredient. Enise’s reflection on the think-aloud highlighted her focus on the ‘structures’ that she presented, and her belief that the students’ success consisted in ‘following the structure’; in sticking to the
‘correct’ structure that she presented as a template. She reported that the method made her reflect on her teaching. She was aware that some students ‘did now get the tense correct’, but she was ‘quite happy’ with most of her students’ results.

She believed that students found grammar difficult to understand, and that manifested in their literal translation from English. Reflecting on how students learn grammar, Enise thought that most students understood the ‘structure’ and could use it in context. However, she also believed that too much detail could prove confusing mainly due to their unfamiliarity with subject English grammar teaching. It was earlier observed how Enise gave lists of sentences to memorise in view of an assessment to obviate the difficulties of in-depth grammatical explanations, ensuring that input was available to more and less able students at once. From the students’ talks, it was evident that the classroom was multicultural and plurilingual, with French, Portuguese, Polish and Turkish spoken in little groups, all interacting in English. Enise told me that there were a few students with parents speaking French at home. This seemed only marginally exploited in the lesson I observed, as one student asked often to translate, or spontaneously translated vocabulary and short sentences. Students were recorded freely asking grammar-related questions and answering Enise’s quizzesing them on why certain vocabulary and grammatical structures in her examples. They were keen to repeat exam requirements and the implication they had on the task at hand. Enise’s students displayed inquisitiveness and cooperation both with her and amongst themselves.

4.2. Case 2: Jo

4.2.1. The teacher, the school and the policy

Jo was head of foreign languages in Enise’s school (Case Study 1). She was in her mid-40s and was an English national, educated in England up to university level, with six years’ foreign languages teaching experience. She thought that ‘generally... the English system is not [for] explicit grammar’. Her degree was in Spanish and Portuguese, but studied French and German at secondary school. She completed her PGCE in England in 2005, and she had been Head of Department since 2010. Jo was aware that the school management’s priority rested with literacy in subject English and
numeracy, and that ‘on the curriculum they are looking where to save hours’. She nevertheless committed to changing the scheme of work to make it more explicitly based on an analytic approach to language study. As a Head of foreign languages, she provided ‘show and tell’ opportunities for teachers to share ‘ideas that work’ in departmental meetings. Her foreign languages team was ethnically very diverse and appeared to be strongly cohesive at personal and professional level. Jo left grammar teaching to each individual teacher’s ‘strengths’ and knowledge of the GCSE requirements. She thought teachers differed as some taught grammar and others just a ‘few phrases’ necessary to pass a GCSE. Jo believed that foreign languages teachers generally thought ‘it’s ok to have a few phrases’; that they reacted negatively to new ideas and concepts, but that ‘the best practitioners are those who are open to whatever suggestions are made’.

Jo believed that foreign languages was ‘working better’ as elective subject, as it was very difficult to ‘get all the students through with very low motivation up to the GCSE’. She believed the GCSE was changing; whilst previously students ‘could […] practically copy it, change some words’, now they had ‘to be able to see their own mistakes as they are writing. […] If they don’t do different tenses they cannot access the top marks, and we have [unprecedented] control over 60% of their’ assessment’. Due to timetable challenges, the department so far had taught ‘towards an assessment’ with a ‘communicative approach’, which was just ‘about being able to rote-learn phrases without learning ‘how to say the next bit, like ‘he goes’ or ‘she goes’, or ‘we go’’. Instead, the new assessment required students to ‘create things; write things down; understand how the language comes together’.

4.2.2. Question 1: What are teachers’ reported beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching?

For Jo grammar was ‘the skeleton of a language that you put together; that you need to make sense; … that communicates. For me it is the language’. She reported having to remind herself that grammar was a concept ‘as complex as calculus for the students’, but having to insist ‘because otherwise they will not pass their GCSE, and after five years of a language’, that would be ‘tragic’.
Jo believed that she was teaching grammar explicitly as she learnt it at university:

today we’re going to do the imperfect tense… we’re going to learn how to say ‘I used to do this’ […] so I would start with the present, then we go to the imperfect…. I would give some examples [to see] ‘where are the verbs’ – coz we have to start with the basics. Then […] I give some examples with the endings that have been changed for the same –ER verbs, -AR verbs; I would do one at a time. And then ‘we take the infinitive and we remove this’… trying to get them work out what the pattern is.

She reported telling students to ‘translate this from the present to the past’; by starting ‘with English’ and relating it ‘to verbs in Spanish that fit this pattern, because otherwise that doesn’t work either’.

Jo believed grammar teaching had to be done either in a foreign languages or subject English context, but not on its own, ‘spending lessons literally teaching them’. She reported that planning to teach grammar required starting ‘with English, very simple’ and then relating them to ‘verbs in Spanish that fit this pattern, […] otherwise that doesn’t work’. She reported avoiding explicit metalinguistic explanations with bottom sets, who ‘just learn the phrases that they need to be able to communicate’. Explicit grammar teaching was ‘for the most able students’, to understand ‘how the language goes together’ and go ‘past the short phrases […] from the textbook’. This year she was going ‘to combine grammar with content’, and ‘have these explicit lessons on […] things… like imperfect tense… and the direct object’ because related to the next topic and because the most able students would have access to ‘knowledge that they haven’t had before’. Jo believed that understanding grammar was ‘a way to be successful in language learning’, but had reservations about it suiting everybody. She reported grammar teaching gave students the ‘options for creativity’ by trying ‘and experiment as a result of understanding where the words come from’. Jo reported that she was trying to pilot a more explicit grammar teaching strategy with selected year 10 classes, in order to align with the ‘new assessment’ requirements whereby students had ‘to be able to understand much more about the concept [of grammar]’. She reported time and cognitive difficulties encountered when trying to explain the
imperfect tense when ‘no one’s got a clue and’ having to fit in ‘the direct and indirect object at some point’. Moreover, she told me she ‘tried [...] to spend much more on grammar in the year 11 teaching’ as she realised ‘just how important it’s going to be for them’.

Jo recounted believing that foreign languages and subject English were linked, but that ‘the problem [was] that they do not teach explicitly grammar in English lessons’. As a consequence, when she tried to explain ‘what the direct object is’, it had no ‘relevance at all’ once students went ‘downstairs to their English class’. For her it was not just learning what ‘a verb’ is; it had relevance in all of their subjects, at some level, were it not for the limited ‘time and the depth’ allowed by the GCSE. Students’ reactions confirmed there was no cross-curricular communication, as they would ask: ‘what is the imperfect tense?! What does that mean?’ She reported that sometimes she felt like ‘doing two jobs in one’ explaining ‘what a direct object is in a sentence’ from scratch. Jo reported that students’ expression in English was not ‘particularly proper’ either, which did ‘not necessarily assist their constructions of sentences’ in the target language.

Jo valued grammatical knowledge both as a pedagogical tool and as a learning strategy/aid: ‘I find it particularly interesting, and I find it really necessary’. She thought important to keep improving one’s practice, including teaching grammar, and believed teachers should have a sound knowledge of the structure of the language they teach. She remembered that her PGCE instructor made the students reflect on what grammar was for them, and that for some trainee teachers it did not mean anything. She, however, found it ‘particularly interesting, and [...] really necessary [to] be creative and flexible’, and wished she was ‘able to say it in a sentence’ what some metalinguistic terminology referred to. Jo reported how her PGCE tutor said that the ‘default setting’ for teaching was ‘how you were taught’. She felt that she ‘naturally emulated’ the way that she learnt, which did ‘not necessarily suit’ her students’ different learning preferences. She reported not having learnt grammar at school, but at University, where she remembered initially struggling with ‘explicit grammar teaching’. Jo stated feeling uncertain about her knowledge of some grammar terminology, which she attributed it to her lack of explicit grammar studies, typical of ‘the English system’. She reported feeling confident in her written performance in
Spanish and having ‘implicit knowledge, but not a fully developed declarative knowledge of some grammatical terminology’. However, she stated that she liked grammar, and that it was the key to her success at becoming fluent. Finally, Jo remembered fondly her university ‘Latin American Studies’, where ‘at least 50% was language, and the rest was politics, arts and literature’.

She believed that both most able students and ‘those who come from another country, with another language’ understood grammar better. Jo thought students saw ‘grammar as a separate concept from the language’, just as ‘a bunch of words’, as they did ‘not see the mistakes at all’. She felt it was not addressed in either English or foreign languages, and therefore students found hard to ‘make the connection between ‘me gusta ver’ and ‘me gusta veo’ even in year 10 after four years of Spanish’. Students would look at the mistakes and say ‘I don't really know what is wrong with that sentence’. Nevertheless, she believed she had to offer students the ‘opportunity to love their [foreign languages] language’ without restricting them to learning set phrases. Jo reported teaching the rules explicitly, but that teaching it explicitly did not mean that students would understand. She expressed delight at seeing students understanding grammar, although it puzzled her to see that this understanding did not make the GCSE grades:

one got a B grade last year. Her grammar was sound. She was just shocked she got a B. Her grammar was simple. She didn’t go mad creatively, but she understood that a verb had to be conjugated… that an adjective has to agree with a noun. I wish I knew how to get them all to understand these things.

Jo reported feeling greatly frustrated at students’ most basic mistakes, thinking ‘how can they not understand it? We’ve been over it 100 times!’ , as well as delight at their successes: ‘oh my god… that’s great’.

4.2.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?

Jo’s assessment recommendations were entirely embedded in the task, and delivered in the target language: ‘¿Qué más necesitamos? ¡OPINIONES!… Una introducción, una conclusión también… los personajes...’ The lesson was strongly anchored on a very enticing film review task, and Jo asked students to supply both content-based
and metalinguistic information in the target language. When recording her think-aloud, Jo recorded only one instance of worry for the assessment regarding one student who consistently did not ‘pay attention to’ the detail necessary to obtain satisfactory grades.

Jo’s observed pedagogical mode invited students to cope with language forms incidentally, in a communication-oriented activity. The explicit grammar teaching was therefore part of the task, delivered spontaneously and unobtrusively, as it was aimed to help students negotiate appropriate meaning. The metalinguistic explanation was concise and used simple metalanguage (Type D, in Ellis, 2010, p. 444) and it also contained clues hinting at regularities, such as the recasts and the emphasis on the pronunciation of adjectival endings and verbal forms (Type C, ibid). The attention to the linguistic elements required for the successful completion of the task was incidental, arising in overriding focus on meaning and communication (Long, 1997, p. 1; Oxford & Lee, 2007, p. 122). Both focus-on-form and metalinguistic feedback were provided in the target language, sustained through recasts, input enhancement by clearly illustrated slides (Figures 9 and 10) and by use of synonyms, and by input flood of well-formed answers:

Jo: Dame unos adjetivos para describir María... ah, sí, es ingenua... ¡es muy ingenua! ¿Qué más, para describir María? María es...

S: valiente...

Jo: sí, ella lucha bastante, ¿no? es valiente... ¿qué más?

S: no sé...

Jo: ¡Cómo que no sabes!
S: es aburrida…
Jo: ¡¿Cómo que es aburrida?! Es una persona aburrida, ¿por qué?!? Ah, ustedes no saben nada…
S: he’s so rude…
Jo: ¿Como que María es rude?
S: no, Andy is rude…
Jo: ah, Andy sí… [all laugh] es maleducado. Entonces, vamos a escribir una crítica…

Figure 10: Input enhancement and example.

Jo’s lesson had all the characteristics of strong task-based instructions, (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011) as it was primarily implicit. She focused students on meaning and on incidental linguistic elements which were pertinent to the context and aimed to help students communicate their own opinions. The task was written, but constructed on a single example through dialogue in the target language, ranging from metalinguistic aspects, to jokes, and to daily communication; sustained even when the students responded in English. When students eventually started writing, and she went round helping them individually, she was still mainly addressing them in Spanish. With a few students, she gave clues in English to avoid confusing them. During the production-based activity, Jo’s teaching was more intentional, aiming at raising conscious metalinguistic awareness of structures by seeding the input with the target
structures. Occasionally she translanguaged when addressing the whole class, switching between English and Spanish:

Jo: Tenemos que tener cuidado en que verb endings... muy bien, primero verb endings... adjetivos, muy bien... adjectival agreement, ¿qué significa? where do they go?, ¿antes o detrás?

Student: they go behind the noun...

Jo: or sentence structure; what things do you remember followed by an infinitive? Prefiero... qué... más rules that we did... me gusta... aburrido... Ok, entonces, vamos a empezar...

Students proceeded to create their version of film critique using a single example that Jo had on the board, which students were not asked to copy. Students eventually read their examples in target language, applauded by the class. At this point Jo corrected students’ output alternating explicit corrections containing metalinguistic feedback, and recasting or reformulating their erroneous utterances with the correct form highlighted intonationally (Doughty & Varela, 1998 in Ellis, 2010, p. 443). This is when Jo used English more often; its role was limited to speed up students’ understanding:

La historia, ¿es de? la historia CUENTA DE... is about... the story of... es sobre... […] Ok, el verbo es dejar... because we're talking about... See if you can change that verb for the right one... […] aquí es femenino... fabrica... una fábrica... trabaja en una fábrica...

Whilst the first lesson was conducted almost entirely in the target language, Jo used comparisons with English structures at the end of the second lessons. Students were asked to write sentences on the topic of drugs, alternating present and imperfect tenses. Jo conducted the first part of the lesson entirely in target language for the reading comprehension tasks. However, in the final part she used English to explain the meaning and the function of the imperfect tense, drawing various comparisons with English.

In her think-aloud, Jo recorded explicit provisions of the correct forms and clear indications when what the learners wrote was incorrect. She gave metalinguistic
explanations justifying students’ accurate or incorrect output, and her concern with accuracy characterised the entire recording.

*mucha más dinero*... agreement [...] *María vive* – the verb is right. [...] the tilde on *n* is missing [...] *María recibe* - brilliant verb! [...] *que* missing in *que se llama*... una chica que se llama lucy... [...] good for agreement.

Jo reported that she was teaching grammar explicitly as she learnt it at university when interviewed; however, Jo constantly constructed meaning with students in mainly inductive tasks that involved both content and metalinguistic negotiations of meaning. Explicit feedback and explanations were conducted mainly in target language, building on the construction of classroom communication which was always on ‘task’. Students’ responses showed that Jo evidently built on previous learning. Students were asked to re-employ language independently and creatively; subsequently, they were asked to communicate their contents, which were monitored mainly in the target language. There was no evidence of rote-learning; instead, students seemed to conduct a reflection on previously learned linguistic features.

In her think-aloud recordings, Jo’s main concerns were with students’ communicating their opinions and the grammatical structures used to that effect. Jo punctually recorded consideration for the students’ mother language background: ‘Student 2 is an English speaker... he is keen but he’s not finding it easy... he took a lot of note’. She often recorded reflections on the origins of the students’ mistakes: ‘she is trying to translate literally’; or: ‘they do not know how to form the indirect object yet’. Equally, she appreciated their communicative attempt over their accuracy. She recorded feelings of frustration and disappointment when coming across structures that students did not pick up, or because ‘she does not get the details [...] *él viaja* instead of *el viaje*... [...] last sentence is missing the verb, which is something that makes me go potty!’. She punctually planned to ‘remember to tell them again’.

4.2.4. *Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?*

Apart from explaining that the observed lessons were in preparation of a topic relevant to the controlled assessment, Jo did not feel prompted to make any other references
to exam requirements by any of my questions. However, she made references to the various difficulties the school had been through, like recovering from a 7% GCSE passes in mathematics to ‘about 45% in just six years’. She also observed that the diverse student background and the adoption of mixed sets might have contributed to the lack of ‘cliques’ in the classroom and its supportive spirit.

Jo reported intended language learning outcome was to achieve students’ independent discourse and grammatical competence whereby students would have paid ‘attention to the mistakes they made previously; taken the feedback on board’ in order to ‘put sentences together using the dictionary, [...] into some kind of coherent expression of what they wanted to say’. When commenting on her pedagogical rationale, Jo reported that teaching grammar was never a waste of time, as it might be picked up by talented students in the mixed set who ‘wanted to know more’. However, Jo felt ‘at a bit of a loss’ as for to why students were still unable to apply grammatical rules: ‘Me gusta followed by an infinitive. I have done it I don't know how many times... they still don't get it...’ She painstakingly tried to understand the reasons behind each student’s case; hence her ‘exasperation’ at students just putting ‘-s in front of everything and other ‘random things... endings... I thought they learned more than that’. Jo wished she could have ‘one to one interviews’, just to ask them the thought process behind their random mistakes. However, students were too many. Jo confirmed believing that she taught languages ‘partly explicitly’, how she was taught at university, whereby she might do ‘the whole lesson on the imperfect’, and partly ‘to fit with the GCSE teaching’ to ensure students’ progression. Later, however, her reported rationale was mainly inductive, saying that she taught students to ‘recognise new [grammar] in context. [...] In lesson I would rather they absorbed it a little, instead of repeating the same thing [i.e. the grammar explanation]. I would not stop a lesson to teach a grammar point based on a single question’, as she would come back to it later. She felt every lesson ought to include ‘something quite explicit about verbs, otherwise they will never be able to say something individually’. She expressed the intention to include grammar that fit with the topic, in her next lessons, as it was an opportunity to merge the grammar knowledge with ‘what they need to know’ for exam purposes. Jo reported the role of grammar for her to be ‘central... otherwise it is just a collection of random words you cannot put together [to] develop... or have autonomy’. Her antidote to the intimidation accompanying the notion of grammar was her PGCE
tutor’s advice not to ‘let the language control you. […] What you have to do is take control of the language’ For Jo, ‘If you really can understand some grammar, you can put things together... that is what you are doing; taking some control of the language’.

During the final interview, Jo did not feel prompted to forward any reflections on interdisciplinary issues between foreign languages and subject English. She reflected on her use of English in lesson and believed she would have never taught ‘grammar in Spanish to the weaker students. […] It would be a complete waste of time to speak in Spanish to some of them. They would just feel more insecure’. Nevertheless, she was observed doing exactly that in both lessons when speaking to the whole class, which she reported being a mixed set; and using English with individual students, who perhaps were the weaker students. Exposure to target language grammar teaching was available to all students, therefore, and mediated in target language only with the weaker ones.

Students were inquisitive and took risks in Jo’s class. She believed their confidence was also due to being ‘mixed up with students they do not know’ in year 10 across the school. As a consequence, ‘in general students do not mind reading out, they are very supportive and nobody is afraid of being corrected. I would not put certain students on the spot, but all of them have to speak at some point’.

Jo found the think-aloud reflection very useful and immediately recalled her frustration at seeing that students were not able to re-employ grammar previously explored in class, wondering why her endless explanations were not enough: ‘How frustrating it is when you think ‘they’re still no getting this; I got to do this in a different way’. […] This girl put -s in front of everything... I didn’t understand why she put an -s at the end of everything... She understands loads, but her writing!!’ She thought the reason was that unlike teachers, students were not ‘linguists’. She feared that ‘some students will never understand it’, despite liking the subject very much and choosing to continue after year 9 for other reasons, like ‘the sound of it’, or for feeling ‘safe in her lessons’ and ‘used to the things I do’.
4.3. Case 3: Carol

4.3.1. The teacher, the school and the policy

Carol was in her late 30s and she had been teaching for ‘six to seven years’. She was educated in the UK, and vividly remembered taking charge of her language education by basing her approach on studying grammar. She recalls her teacher using ‘boring’ flashcards she did not pay attention to, and her mum revolutionising her learning by teaching her the structures: ‘[the teacher] had pieces… she put them together’. She studied French, Spanish and German at secondary, pursuing French, German and Italian at university. Carol had lived abroad, in Italy and Germany, before coming back to the UK and completing a PGCE. After two years as classroom teacher, she had gone ‘from classroom teacher, to second in faculty, to head of languages’ in the last three years.

In 2009, Ofsted described Carol’s school as a large girls’ school in a central urban area of the South West. The great majority of pupils were White British, a few pupils spoke languages other than English at home, and the proportion of pupils with diverse learning difficulties and/or disabilities was average. Carol, Head of ‘Languages’, declared that her initiative and the new ‘schemes of learning’ were fully backed up by school management. The Languages department had to downsize due to past unpopularity, but they were now thriving and well above the governmental guidelines for GCSE entry. Spanish, German and French were curricular. Other languages offered were Mandarin, Arabic and Latin.

Albeit becoming a ‘smaller faculty’, she reported that languages during her headship had become more popular, due to a complete review of the ‘scheme of learning’, based on grammar teaching, which she thought being the key to creative language learning. Carol re-designed the ‘scheme of learning’ in terms of the national curriculum levels’ to avoid students being ‘stuck in the present tense’ by dry textbooks, as other schools did. Teachers were left to devise their own way to teach what written down in the scheme of learning. The plan was to use all tenses from year 8 through ‘set language phrases that are for use in the classroom’, allowing students to operate ‘at ‘level 6’ already if they are saying ‘I have forgotten my book’’. Carole was proud of having met
the ‘50% uptake target at KS4 even before the EBacc’ was introduced, and believed foreign languages teachers nationwide had to take a more daring approach to scheme of learning design.

4.3.2. Question 1: What are teachers’ reported beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching?

Carol reported believing in explicit grammar and metalanguage teaching brought ‘long term benefits’. She did not believe in ‘disguising’ grammar terminology, as it led to confusion. She believed her method was to integrate both communicative and explicit instruction; that metalanguage was ‘part and parcel of the languages’ classroom’. She avoided textbooks and taught ‘as much grammar as required for the assessment and more, because we want to push our more able students’. Carol reported that her memory of communicative language teaching was her teachers’ ‘boring flash cards’. She also associated it with immersion, which could not be done in her foreign languages context of ‘five lessons a week in school’. She added believing in a ‘communicative teaching’ whereby the focus is communication, not grammatical accuracy, ‘to reach the other person and share what it is that you are trying to share’.

Carol reported frustration for the existing lack of collaboration between foreign languages and English faculties, resulting in her having to ‘go over’ basic metalanguage, such as adjective, infinitive, adverb, noun, when ‘this knowledge should be imported’ from subject English.

She believed that learning grammar through her foreign languages made her appreciate English, and that her department too was leading students to explore and appreciate their own language. She believed that foreign languages and English were still ‘at odds with each other’, and that research should address ‘how English and languages could work together so much better [...] because we can learn so much more from each other’. She believed that research had to focus also on target language use in the classroom, as she believed target language use helped students contextualise their grammar knowledge: ‘if you give the language currency in your classroom, [...] it means that the students understand those structures so much more’.
She rewarded students for using the target language, as it gave ‘extra mileage’ to the purpose of her lessons. Finally, she believed research should look into improving how grammar can be taught as part of ‘a drive on learning skills… learning to learn, you know, sort of approach’.

Her personal experience taught her that knowing grammar opened her doors to independent, successful and rewarding language learning; it also opened the door to learning across the curriculum. Without the grammar tools, ‘I would not have known what I needed to go and do it independently’. Carol believed grammar to be essential content knowledge for foreign languages teachers:

> grammar teaching is vital; absolutely vital. For me, teaching a language without giving the students access to grammar, is like holding the biggest secret away from the students.

At PGCE she was ‘told something’ about ‘communicative grammar’, which she, however, processed through her beliefs to teach both through examples of patterns and explicit rules: ‘this is the rule; here are some examples; do some practice’. Carol remembered her lecturer saying that ‘she’d always taught grammar, although it had been unfashionable all of these years’, and that ‘grammar was coming back into fashion’.

When asked how she believed students learn grammar, she reported that her departmental policy was to treat students ‘like they are linguists’, giving them ‘grammatical definition and structures’ as the tools to ‘make proper sense’. ‘Although the girls find that initially hard to take on board’, Carol believed that teaching students to have the ‘right attitude’ to explicit grammar teaching was ‘about empowering people, giving them what they can then make other things with’. She was driven by giving ‘learning skills… learning to learn’ tools. She introduced the FCSE (Foundation Certificate of Secondary Education) at year 9 to recognise her students’ pre-GCSE achievements, providing a concrete proof and reward of their work, but also providing those students who carried on to study languages at GCSE the opportunity to practise in the key four language skills and to experience controlled assessment conditions. She therefore aimed to maintain students’ motivation by pushing students up to level 7 through ‘teacher-assessed projects’ which avoided the repetition of the same topics.
Moreover, she introduced grammar, despite there being ‘a fear of grammar teaching’ that she sensed since completing her PGCE. Carol reported asking students to write down ‘everything that requires doing’ for the exam. She introduced the making of ‘verb books’ (Table 14), adopted by all in the department. It consisted in ‘projecting the verb’ in all its tenses. Carole believed students did not ‘mind sitting down and copying down this verbs’.

Table 14: The Verb Book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Präsenz</th>
<th>Perfekt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Used for actions at the moment or permanent</td>
<td>• Used for actions finished in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Form the stem from the infinitive, ie take off the en.</td>
<td>• Generally A-B movement (gehen/fahren/bleiben) verbs use SEIN as an auxiliary verb all the others use HABEN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weak verbs: Add ich- e, du – st, er/sie-t, wir – en, ihr – t, Sie/sie- en</td>
<td>• Past participle generally formed by adding ge to the beginning of the stem but weak verbs end the past participle in t but strong verbs end it in en. The past participle goes to the end of the clause/sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong verbs: Add the same endings but sometimes inthe du and er/sie form there is a vowel change or the vowel takes an umlaut.</td>
<td>• Expressions of time: gestern, letztes Wochenende, früher. am Wochenende, am Dienstag, heute, Vormittag, letzten Sommer....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expressions of time: am Wochenende, am Dienstag, heute, nie, immer, regelmässig, mittwochs, jeden Tag, normalweise, ...</td>
<td>• REMEMBER if the expression of time is at the beginning, SWAP the verb and subject around!!!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REMEmber if the expression of time is at the beginning, SWAP the verb and subject around!!!

The making of the booklet was differentiated for lower ability students, who were still ‘taught the core’ grammatical elements and tenses because vital in terms of level progression from 4 to 6’. Lower ability students were given less detail, as they needed more rote learning of templates to reproduce from memory in the exam. Carol believed students learned grammar ‘through practice, looking at different contexts’. She avoided repeating topics as grammar was the ‘glue of the language’ allowing students to transfer their knowledge to another context or topic. She believed that students had no ‘particular expectations’ of being taught grammar, as she did not think they knew ‘what grammar is’.

4.3.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?
The teaching of both lessons was exam driven. Students were preparing for the last batch of FCSE tests on the theme ‘New Technologies’. Carol briefly reminded exam requirements by asking students questions on the reached stage; students answered confidently. At the end of the lesson, she checked students knew they needed three tenses to achieve the higher grades.

Figure 11: First lesson. Power Point slide introducing key vocabulary.

In her think-aloud, grammatical accuracy and focus on forms was her main concern throughout the recording, and she recorded counting that all assessment criteria were there, tallying them as ‘items’:

‘She has an opinion. She has in total 10 items. She only needs 8.
She must have an opinion, a past, a future and a present tense.
She has, so she has level 6: 30 marks.

In Carol’s observed teaching practice there was no evidence of implicit focus on meaning, or communication-oriented activities. Exposure to the target language included task requirements and classroom language, such as ‘stet auf’, and ‘genau’. Explanations were in English, and longer instructions in the target language were immediately translated into English, like ‘Dies ist unsere letzte Einheit heute, this is our final unit now’. Carol’s treatment of grammar was predominantly explicit. She started by inductively raising consciousness of the grammatical structures used in her examples, asking students for a grammatical analysis. At times she asked to justify the use of certain vocabulary or structures, or to change their grammatical construction, testing their ability to manipulate the grammar. She asked students to arrive at explicit understanding of the world classes in the Power Point (Figure 11). In
the second lesson, students were asked to ‘translate the following three sentences’ (Figura 13), which were then analysed. If correct, carol would recast. If wrong, Carol asked students to make a cognitive comparison between students’ output and the correct version; she would then give the explicit correction with metalinguistic feedback.

Carol: Lucy, what is this a list of?
Student: Adjectives

Carol: Adjectiven, super!!! FANTASTISCH... some of these are going to be... what do you think they mean? these are specific words for technology... so nützlich... nein? So nutzen... ich habe mein Handy... Anna? Gute Idee... Dies ist modern... so it is linked with being fast... yeah but... nützlich... think about what they are...

Student: Quick
Carol: And therefore they are..? YEA, useful!!! you can only say it for a person, not a thing. you’ve got to use useful now, ok? Super!

Carol: If we are making it into a noun, as in listening... normally as a verb it would be like this... so sprechen, schrieben... there is another one that we do in our test... these are all the skills that you have. What’s the other one?

Student: Writing?
Students tended to respond in English, at times translating the examples.

Carol: Ok, so letters, Briefe. So Telephone, was ist das?

Student: Telephones...

Carol: So let’s check. These two here, sprechen und schreiben, what do these mean?

Student: Listening and writing

Carol: This isn’t to speak or to write. What would they look like if they were the verbs?

Student: Ehm… I don’t understand…

Carol: Emily, you could write it like this, or you could write it like this... this is listening, what’s this one?

Student: To listen

Carol: To listen, ok. Is that what you’ve been saying Molly? Ok, fine. Gut, TV, super. If you wanted to change it to ‘a TV’, what would you change there? What would you write in front instead of der?

Student: Ein

Carol: Ein, Ja, super, good. But if you write the number, the spelling is slightly different. But otherwise it changes... eine... so masculine, feminine, neuter…

Ihr seid dran!

1. Mobiles are useful and practical because you can talk to friends, send texts and take photos.

2. The internet is useful because you can find info.

3. I like the internet because I can sell products I don’t need.

Figure 13: Translating opinions and reasons.
Carol’s think-aloud contained explicit analysis of students’ work, which she often literally translated to English to understand the origin of the mistakes. 100% of it was coded as reactive deductive explicit form-focused feedback, providing explicit corrections of forms, comments or information related to the well-formedness of the students’ output (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). There were no recorded concerns for the communicative efforts of the students. However, Carol rejoiced of her students’ grammatical successes, exclaiming ‘excellent’, or ‘this candidate has not struggled with tenses throughout the year’.

Carol’s lessons were a mixture of direct teaching, collective grammatical analysis and students’ group work. She presented structures and students either reflected with her or with their peers (Figure 14). Students often worked independently from the presentation of an example, its inductive, explicit grammatical analysis, and Carol’s reactive metalinguistic feedback and corrective recasts. Carol’s explicit teaching was often aided by color-coding of key morphemes, reinforcing visually her explicit grammar teaching. Students were asked to read out their work and be corrected in front of the whole class; to listen and repeat single words; and to rote-learn the main vocabulary and adjectives. Students’ grammatical knowledge appeared scaffolded from Carol’s punctual references to metalanguage in her metalinguistic explanations.

Caro: can you just say es ist Spass? No, because it is a noun. you can use this noun in conjunction with a verb. You can only say es macht Spass... if you want to say ‘what you are saying is fun’

Student: i-pod...

Carol: ipod machen Spass... they do fun... is that singular or plural?
In her think-aloud, Carol recorded considering the students’ linguistic background when analysing their performance. Her concern was with the language they spoke, but also with their previous attainment in previous years, appreciating their improvement.

This candidate has dyslexia. She enjoys German; she has done very well in the last year. She got a level 6 for her speaking.

4.3.4. Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?

Carol confirmed that her planning aimed to cover all aspects of assessment requirements, and that she successfully used the FCSE as a motivational factor, whether or not students decided to continue after year 9:

I know that the tests FCSE are not terribly interesting, but they are for the purpose of them to have something under their belt. Especially if they are not doing a GCSE, I think it is worth it for the kids.

Carol reflected that the more creative teacher-assessed projects combined exam requirements and communicative purposes.

Carol’s intended learning outcome was discourse competence and grammatical competence, as she reported that she aimed for students to be able to express their opinions going beyond the formulaic 'it is nice because it is nice', fulfilling their need to
express ‘specific reasons that go with technology’, such as 'I find the Internet is useful because one can do this or that'. She also reported aiming to build on the previously acquired knowledge of adjectives, agreement and verbs. Moreover, Carol reported making students aware of the use of the formal pronoun ‘Sie’, which is used in Germany after the age of 18, although not used in class: ‘they call me du’. Carol felt ‘obliged to point it out, otherwise it causes confusion later on’, but also because students found it interesting, being different from their own cultural use of 'you'. 'There is not a lot of learning involved in that, but it is interesting for them. I coded her aim as sociolinguistic. Carol stated that her pedagogical rationale was to give students ‘a certain amount of things’ beyond which they would have been independent to express themselves freely, as long as they met the required GCSE criteria. Otherwise she thought failing students in terms of their qualifications. ‘Life is like that. At some point it is about meeting criteria for all. It is a life skill’. Carol recalled that her pedagogical rationale always planned to include explicit grammar, as it was fundamental for enabling students to be independent learners. She reported clear, consistent steps for presenting new language, new structures and following up students' output. She reported that both lesson and scheme of learning planning entailed building on previous knowledge that could be systematically imparted and readily accessible to students via their projects, their notes and the work done towards the FCSE.

Reflecting on the role of grammar, Carol believed that explicit grammar was a transferable skill without which ‘students would struggle even more’. She defined grammar ‘the essential glue to language learning. [...] It is like doing something with wood but not knowing that wood is from a tree. For me is something so fundamental’. Carol reported using as much target language as possible, but when teaching grammar she believed she would ‘dip in and out’, as ‘it would be too much to try and conduct the whole think in target language’. She believed more in having a consistent method. She ‘would not accept certain phrases in English at all’, because she taught and used them as part of a reward system. In the observed lessons, students used the target language when reading, or for classroom language.

Carol recalled having a negative perception of the grammar focus in subject English, believing ‘it was a foolish move to take grammar away... that grammar became unfashionable... untaught’. She did not know ‘how much grammar’ they were teaching
in English, but she thought ‘it went away from English to start with’, around the same
time when the GCSE were introduced, and now it was ‘acceptable’ again.

Although recalling enjoying learning grammar, Carol thought that nowadays its
teaching was more exciting. She believed students expected the teaching to ‘be more
lively and entertaining especially considering the technology available now’. She
believed her students thrived ‘on the challenge’ and that they ‘had had enough of food-
and-drink’ notional-functional approaches, as they were eager to ‘move on to a new
context now’. Carol reported that her confident language and pedagogical content
knowledge allowed her to teach sometimes inductively ‘for them to identify the
grammar’, or deductively, depending ‘on the stage of the teaching’.

Carol asked voluntarily to comment on the think-aloud method, reporting that she
found reflecting on the otherwise mechanic process of marking very interesting. It
helped her identify ‘problems with the levels for not having enough items’. She
believed having focused on students’ problems more than successes, as the works
were all FCSE retakes. She realised they were struggling with tenses, and that they
were not checking ‘how many sentences they had’, consequently limiting their
attainment level. She reflected that it reinforced her belief that ‘those students would
struggle even more if there were no elements of explicit grammar teaching’; that
explicit grammar helped them identify their mistakes. Although slowing her down, the
think-aloud made her concentrate on her ‘way of operating,’ often overlooked due to
‘so much going on around’ her.

Recalling her beliefs on how students learned grammar, Carole said that she was
‘trying to create independent linguists’, empowered by acquiring transferable language
learning skills to learn other languages as well’. She encouraged students to mark
their work using ‘language-specific’ ‘correction codes […] linked with the whole school
literacy plan’. Students could apply them in lesson and change ‘everything in a
different colour pen on top’, using colour coding alongside explicit metalinguistic
explanations. Carol adopted this strategy across all key stages, as well as the ‘Four
Rs’ to encourage them to be ‘Resilient, Resourceful by using dictionaries; Reciprocal
in pair work; Reflective in thinking about what they have done’. She aimed to develop
a ‘sense of ownership and creativity and their independence’. Carol did not want
students to feel ‘intimidated by the pressure that they have to find the right answer’, and believed that together they were ‘just trying to puzzle the right answer out and that is why they are not intimidated to put their hand up’.

4.4. Case 4: Elliot

4.4.1. The teacher, the school and the policy

Elliot described himself as ‘just a standard French and Spanish teacher’. He was in charge of extra-curricular activities, information technology, and technical support within the department. He was in his late 20s, British and educated in England. He remembered studying grammar at secondary school only in the foreign languages, not in subject English. When in Spain, Elliot found that he ‘was learning Spanish again’, as it was spoken ‘quickly, slurred, with non-standard vocabulary’. However, he believed that in an instruction context, simplification and slower pace were necessary, as ‘we learn by exposure to slow, clear and finely tuned vocabulary slowly evolving to sentences’.

Elliot taught in the same school as Carol (Case 3). He described the school as ‘a state’, ‘comprehensive’ school ‘open to all students’ of a catchment area of ‘a good quality city’, with ‘a nice way of life’, therefore providing ‘better quality students’. He reported behaviour not being an issue, ‘as it would be in a mixed school’. He explained that every term, the department named the ‘most improving’ students ‘Lush Linguists’. Elliot was very pleased with the GCSE uptake in the current year 10: ‘65 to 70 wanting to do Spanish as a single subject’; […] 25 for French and 25 for German’.

Elliot reported believing that in the foreign languages teaching profession there was no consensus on the role of grammar teaching. He thought it was ‘not a focus’, as teachers were ‘not interested’ and therefore not using it. Elliot believed that in his department, all teachers taught grammar, and therefore students would have left school ‘having an idea about grammar’. However, he doubted that ‘in practice’ grammar teaching was pursued ‘as much as it could be’. Elliott believed the department did ‘not necessarily have a policy on’ grammar, but that in the ‘Scheme of Learning’ there was ‘always a section’ covering grammar aspects. Moreover, all
teachers produced and used the ‘verb books’ introduced by the head of department, as they were a successful resource. Elliot believed the department also made sure students could make an ‘informed decision about which GCSEs’ to take by providing students with equal exposure to dual linguists from year 7 to year 9.

4.4.2. Question 1: The role of grammar in foreign languages teaching

Elliot said he was not sure what communicative language teaching meant; that when it came to education, he found there were lots of ‘jargon’ for methods, and therefore he preferred relying on his experience. He questioned whether ‘communicative’ language teaching had become antonym of ‘just giving them the work’. If properly done, Elliot believed it had to consist in more than just teaching ‘set phrases’ and make sure that ‘every step of the way you are going through the learning process with them, rather than just saying that’s the word, write it in your book, now learn it, you have a test next week’. Elliot believed grammar to be ‘a priority over’ the teaching of vocabulary. Moreover, he believed grammar to be relevant to all subjects; perhaps less to more ‘physical subjects, like drama, or design and technology’, but used in all humanity subjects. He did not believe grammar was either prescriptive or descriptive in ‘black and white’ terms, but that by using grammar students leaned to ‘eradicate’ mistakes independently. Teachers needed to ‘guide’ and focus’ students ‘on the grammatical side of things’.

When asked to report his strategies to teach grammar, Elliot reported ‘ensuring students understood ‘the categories of words’ and ‘word order’. For instance, if he had to teach ‘I have blue eyes’, he would teach first ‘how an infinitive works, how it’s conjugated, what tenses are available to them’, otherwise students ‘would not make the connection between I have and he or she has’. Students would not be able to produce their sentences independently, ‘because they have not understood what is an adjective, what is an adverb’. He believed he started ‘from the basics’ and helped students add verbs, nouns and adjectives by working with them at the board, instead of asking them to copy sentences down.

Reflecting on interdisciplinary issues, Elliot reported understanding his language only when he started learning a foreign one, because in English they did not teach that ‘I
have eaten’ is using *have* as an auxiliary verb followed by the past participle’. He believed that students said ‘I seen,’ instead of ‘I saw’; ‘I done’ instead of ‘I did’ because they were not taught how their ‘language is structured’. Elliot had a negative opinion of how grammar was ‘covered’ by the English department, as he found himself teaching ‘students what an adjective, and a noun and a verb is’. The English department would say ‘we don’t cover that’; ‘we haven’t got enough time’, and that it is done in the primary curriculum. However ‘only a quarter of pupils in year seven knew what an adjective is’. Elliot believed that English and foreign languages should ‘overlap what they’re covering’. However, this could be pursued only with a national policy, not by a single school initiative taking even more time and commitment than presently. Elliot believed research was very important, and it should help teachers ‘understand how to teach better’. He thought ‘teachers don’t have the time to do research. If I was told to do it by the head teacher, I would say I have enough to do as it is’.

Elliot believed students learned grammar by carefully posed questions helping them ‘figuring it out themselves’: ‘Is it masculine, feminine?’, ‘is that what you want to say?’, ‘who is speaking at the moment?’ This process ensured ‘that when it comes to GCSE, […] they are all producing their own work’. These resources helped students be ‘perfect in their work’, but also ‘better linguists’. Elliot believe grammatical understanding had to be built from an early stage, otherwise teachers would ‘play catch up for the rest of the’ language learning process. For this reason, Elliot made explicit comparisons with English:

\[
\text{I tell them that's not *my name is*; that is the reflexive first person to say *I call myself*, and *llamar* is the verb *to call*, and so on...}
\]

Elliot believed he knew ‘Spanish grammar better than English grammar’. He said he felt confident in explaining grammar to his students, but not ‘at degree level’ without doing ‘a lot of research and study’, as he had ‘forgotten most terminology’. Elliot reported that his pedagogy had not been inspired at all by the PGCE course, as his ‘way of doing things’ was inspired by his secondary school Spanish teacher, who had been his pedagogical model, and thanks to whom his A level Spanish grammar was more than enough to cope with the ‘patronising’ undergraduate grammar teaching.
Elliot believed grammar knowledge was a priority for foreign languages teachers’ formation, and that PGCEs should improve teachers’ ‘understanding of grammar’. He remembered that ‘we were not taught approaches to teach grammar. Not as far as I can remember’.

4.4.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?

Elliot’s case study comprised the observation of two class groups: year 7 and year 11. With year 7, Elliot made only one short reference to GCSE assessment criteria at the end of the second lesson, when he commented how their completed ‘Zoo Animals’ project scored against the assessment criteria: ‘present tense: level 4; future tense: level 5; past tense: level 6; including 3 different sentence… […] opinions - to achieve any levels you need opinions’. On the other hand, with year 11, Elliot had assessment criteria at hand during all observed lessons, as he was feeding back on the piece they composed for their written and oral assessment:

your focus is to score more than 15. We need to be averaging from five to three… ranges of… sentences… generally simple with some more complex… the language is more accurate than inaccurate.

This was the third lesson of six, dedicated to prepare 6 of the various GCSE questions; writing them in neat, ready to be memorised. The lesson consisted in giving individual students feedback on the first three GCSE questions completed regarding ‘Home and Town’. Elliot first gave implicit metalinguistic feedback, and then explicit corrections, suggesting them what to write to make it more accurate and accomplished. Whilst correcting students’ work and recording his think-aloud, Elliot often commented that a student was ‘probably looking at 23 or 24 out of 30’, equivalent to a ‘good B [grade] if she manages to learn and recite all of this’ by heart.

Elliot’s observed teaching practice did not include communication-oriented activities, implicit focus on meaning, or incidental focus on structures. Exposure to the target language was restricted to calling the register and encouraging statements, such as ‘Muy bien, gracias. Una estrella a las dos’. All language presented was otherwise immediately analysed and translated. Elliot’s grammar teaching was predominantly
explicit. He started the first year 7 lessons by asking students to produce or translate a sentence with the basic vocabulary and structures previously learned, such as ‘I have blue eyes’. Successively, students were gradually asked to add other grammatical elements, such as adjectives and adverbs, and insert all sentences in a table according to word class (Figure 15).

![Table with sentences arranged by word class](image)

Figure 15: Table with sentences arranged by word class

The second lesson started with the task to re-order a scrambled sentence:

‘TENGO PELO OJOS LARGO MI EL Y LISO PERO MADRE LOS TIENE MARRONES’

Students were asked to categorise word classes in tables; recognise mistakes and give explicit metalinguistic explanations about the specific grammatical rule to which they should have abided. Students were left to produce sentences independently, to read them out and receive explicit metalinguistic feedback, and often asked to explicitly provide the correct form themselves.

Year 7:

Elliot: Shana, what rule do we know about making words plural? To talk about *eyes* and not *eye*? Exercises books open to three lessons ago. Lauren?

Student: the –s at the end if it is plural.

Elliot: what's plural? Azul needs to be plural, you're absolutely right…

Student: you put –es at the end because anything other than… a vowel… you put –
es.

Elliot: well done! I'm very impressed. Well done. […] We need to
expand a bit. What is our infinitive in Spanish and in English for this verb?

Student: to have; *tener* [...].

Student: tengo el pelo liso y castaño. Tengo los ojos…

Student: tengo verde ojos…

Elliot: two things wrong

Student: ‘eyes’ are meant to be before

Elliot: and?

Student: verde needs to be plural.

Elliot: you do not have brown hair in Spanish. You have hair brown.

Year 11:

Elliot: whenever you got a word that ends in -ion the accent goes on that final o, ok? *Opinión* [...] Do you remember how to conjugate your regular -AR verbs? You need to ask people around you. [...] *el sábado pasado fui*... now, *cine*: masculine or feminine?

Student: masculine

Elliot's think-aloud recorded a punctilious concern with accuracy, together with his delight at students’ accuracy and creative use of language independently researched, resulting in ‘communicative’ success:

She put *mi gustaria* instead of *me gustaria*... no accent on the í but since they never used *me gustaria* it is quite impressive. [...] The student uses *ni... ni...* despite not having been taught how to say neither... nor...

Elliot’s main teaching mode was proactive, deductive form-focused instruction. He regularly compared Spanish structures with English ones:

we have *el* and *los*; make sure you use the word for *the*. In English you don’t say *I have the hair brown*, but is Spanish we do.

Moreover, he asked questions to see if the students could correct themselves,
eventually providing the correction. He consistently used metalanguage and metalinguistic explanations about specific linguistic properties that would help students correct their forms (Lyster & Ranta, 1997):

Year 7:

Elliot: we need to bear in mind the adjective needs to be agreeing in either masculine, feminine, singular or plural with whatever it is describing. That’s why we say ojos marrones. It is not ojos marron; that’s why we say el pelo liso, no el pelo lisos

Year 11:

Elliot: what do a+el become?

Student: al

Elliot: al, that’s it. […] In order to…?

Student: para

Elliot: yea, para, in order to, followed by infinitive[…] What’s our infinitive to fall over? It is a reflexive. How do you make it into she fell over?

Elliot used a minimalist approach by introducing basic structures and building up more complex sentences:

Elliot: we should be able to figure out which bits go together… for instance, if we take a few words out, like ojos and pelo, what do we also know goes with ojos and pelo?

Students: el and los.

Students’ recurrent use of metalanguage suggested they were familiar with receiving but also producing metalinguistic feedback. There was no anxiety in the lessons, and students felt comfortable asking for help or saying they did not know. Elliot often asked students to transfer knowledge from previous to current lessons and from one context to another, asking students to rely on the grammar they previously learned. He would introduce a task as ‘we’re applying what we’ve done before’, grammatically, ‘but we’re using new words for it’, which students had to search by themselves in the dictionaries.
In this instance, they had to search for the vocabulary they needed to describe themselves and their classmates, and recall their previous knowledge of the conjugation of the verb tener and adjectival agreement, studied when learning to describe zoo animals and pets. Elliot consistently used students’ exercise books, verb books and students’ projects. The latter were used to monitor students’ performance as summative assessment events in the form of games and creative projects combining both art and writing with the aim to ask students to re-employ their knowledge independently. Students were often either chosen or told to read out loud. They were often corrected and asked to analyse structures out loud. Moreover, they were asked to ‘get it neat and get it learned [by heart]’.

4.4.4. Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?

Reflecting on the weight of assessment on his teaching, Elliot recalled marking according to GCSE standards, ‘rather than marking for how they should be writing it properly’. Especially for year 11, Elliot felt he was focusing on ensuring students got ‘as many marks as possible. That's the nature of the game’. The lessons I observed had been about ‘establishing’ previous learning ‘in preparation for their assessment’. More than a learning objective, he pursued ‘an assessment related task’. He reported focusing ‘more on the content’ that students needed to cover, since the range of language that they were using was most the most determinant factor ‘to get the bigger marks’.

Elliot never reported aiming for his students to achieve discourse competence, as he was very much focused on all aspects of students’ grammatical competence. However, his students did not depend on textbook exercises, played very competitive language games in class, and produced projects where the language was entirely of their making, without following any modelled sets of phrases. Elliot’s reported goal was for students ‘to learn how to use adjectives successfully’, making sure they agree in the masculine, feminine and plural. Having intensely worked ‘on this for the last two weeks’, he was delighted that students were ‘picking it up’ and ‘learning a lot of new vocabulary’. He believed it was worth spending ‘two or three lessons on dictionary skills to make sure [students] use the dictionaries properly’, as it was a fundamental
skill towards independent writing of ‘more complex sentences’. ‘As long as they know about the [grammatical] structure’, they could find unknown words in the dictionary. Elliot reported having aimed to put in ‘practice’ and in ‘context what’ he previously taught. He felt students were ready to produce work on their own from what he presented in lesson. He believed this to be also good behavioural management, breaking from him standing ‘in front of them and teach them’. Questioning students was good when exploring language, but students then had to ‘think for themselves rather than’ being guided by his consciousness-raising questions. ‘Them asking themselves some questions’ would lead to students’ progress and independence.

Elliot’s pedagogical rationale was ‘explicit grammar teaching’. He was not sure it depended on how he learned a foreign languages, but it was his effective way to ‘communicate’ the learning to the students. He admitted he had ‘a few habits, like for instance’ reflecting that ‘it is not the red door, it’s the door red. Things like that make them think’. The purpose of explicit grammar teaching was, as he remembered saying in the initial interview, to start from the ‘simple basics’ to gain control of the learning:

what is ‘I have’? Then what is a... masculine, or feminine... If it gets too complicated, just go back to the simple bits again. I do not think this is something I am very conscious of. This is something I find it makes it easier for them to understand'. ‘Eventually, those little bits that you teach them get to the bigger picture. That is why I like grammar so much, because without the initial explanation of an infinitive... right back at year 7’, foreign languages learning would turn into a future game of ‘catch up from start to finish.

Elliot believed explicit grammar teaching was ‘relevant and important’; increasingly ‘becoming more of a focus for’ teachers and policy makers. Conversely, target language for Elliot was not essential for students’ independent learning. ‘Fearlessness’ of making mistakes allowed students ‘to progress by making mistakes. Grammatical knowledge gave students confidence: ‘that is why linguists are often confident people’, as they are willing to have a go. Elliot admitted that avoiding target language could be ‘cynicism’, as he knew he had ‘to explain it in English anyway. Moreover, ‘it’s just something I never got used to’ doing.
When recalling his beliefs about how students learn grammar, Elliot reported that asking students to ‘make the sentence up on the spot’ would ‘push them’ to ‘mix in’ and use a wider range of structures. He believed that by rooting their knowledge of adjectival agreement, he would not need to re-explain it whenever a new adjective was introduced. Elliot wanted students to think for themselves. Moreover, time and scheme of learning restrictions also imposed that learning was progressive without many chances to look back ‘at the mistakes’, but by moving on to another topic, where he would show how the same structures could be re-employed.

Elliot believed he was teaching grammar differently than how he learned it, as he asked ‘more questions and [made] sure everything is understood’, giving lots of examples. Moreover, he did not depend on the textbook as his school did. Reflecting on his think-aloud recording, Elliot said ‘It was interesting and it made marking easier’. He appreciated all the thought processes students went through and he remembered making plenty of references to grammar, ‘especially with year 11’. He enjoyed reflecting more about students’ putting ‘their learning into practice’, and he remembered being ‘proud of how things went well. There were more successes then failures’. He also believed the process highlighted ‘some of the problems with adjectives’ which he planned to address in the next context, instead of repeating it in this cycle of lessons.

4.5. Case 5: Ruud

4.5.1. The teacher, the school and the policy

Ruud was in his early 40s, born and educated in the ‘German-speaking part of Belgium’, where he completed two degrees. He had been teaching in secondary for ‘around five years’ since completing a PGCE in 1997-98, as he also completed a PhD on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) methodology, worked in educational publishing and taught at university. He was now teaching German as a foreign languages, and Geography through CLIL in French.
Ultimately, it’s about me as a teacher being able to create an environment which is hopefully engaging... My big theory, as part of my PhD, I looked into sociocultural theory, so I guess you could describe me as a neo Vygotskian... obviously doing it at a very different level than research, in school... What I am interested in is how I get the students to become who they can be in foreign languages.

The school was in a ‘well-off’ area, and the 2007 Ofsted inspection described it as ‘outstanding under every aspect’. This over-subscribed, international day and boarding school was ‘a specialist language and music college’ catering for home and overseas students whose attainment on entry was above average. A third of the students came from a wide spectrum of minority ethnic backgrounds but none at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students eligible for a free school meal, with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was low. Post-16 students enrolled the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme. Both participants were aware of ‘the very strong language ethos’ whereby learning a foreign language ‘is never questioned’, and endorsed the communicative language teaching approach adopted by the school’s language policy. The school had ‘a very long tradition of really good language teaching’, complemented by a ‘framework and environment’ supporting ‘us as language teachers in doing our job well’. ‘Students start off with either French or German in year 7. [...] From year 8 onwards, they can then choose a second language’, either ‘French or German, or Spanish, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese. [...] In year 9 they are taught History and Geography in their first foreign language’. ‘In year 7 they also have some music lessons in German’.

Ruud reported aiming ‘to get good grades’ for both himself and his students, ‘because that’s what they have to get, unfortunately, [and] because otherwise I lose my job’. He nevertheless hoped his teaching was interesting and got students ‘excited about the language’. He believed the school language policy applied ‘also to grammar teaching’, and that it had to be taught in the target language’ at all times. As head of German, he knew the policy was backed up by everybody in his department; he had reservations about the rigorous policy application in the other languages’ departments. Nationally,
he believed foreign languages teachers followed ‘different sorts of movements’ regarding the teaching of grammar. Ruud reported ‘constantly working’ on all GCSE criteria, such as ‘cases with verbs, with prepositions; word order […]’, and building complex sentences’.

4.5.2. Question 1: The role of grammar in foreign languages teaching

Ruud reported grammar to be ‘a tool to be able to manipulate the language’. Instead of teaching ‘grammar in itself’, he aimed to create ‘grammatical understanding’ of how to use grammar, which eventually would contribute to accuracy. He reported not having a ‘national view’ of extremes all-inductive or all-target language grammar teaching; or indeed the more ‘conservative’ teaching of target language grammar in English. He reported following his ‘clear vision of what makes good language teaching and good language learning’. His rationale was for students ‘to be able to become good communicators’, play with language and ‘enjoy language learning as well’.

Reflecting on the pedagogical strategies he believed effective, Ruud said:

> If for example I am teaching year 7 students how to use the accusative case with haben, I make them write a little method, almost like a grammatical formula.

Ruud reported teaching only the grammar students needed ‘at each point, and then gradually building it up’. This is how he reported teaching year 8 the difference between ‘the dative and the accusative’ for either ‘directions, or movement’, or place:

> I put a photo up of [City] Forest… just one sentence: IN+accusative. When I teach it, I draw a little stick man. I tend to add something silly to the stick man to get their attention. Let’s say ich bin in dem Wald – I go into the forest. They work out with movement… they need to use the accusative. Then I use the same sentence… then I draw a little stick man in the forest rather than walking towards the forest, and now I say Ich bin in dem Wald. So you are there no movement and you use the dative. That’s basically how I do it. I try to use visuals as much as I can. I try to reduce it down to as little grammar as I possibly can.
In the French Geography CLIL lessons, Ruud would not ‘teach any grammar at all’.

Ruud believed that grammar should be taught in English only in subject English, as it would help students identify grammatical categories. Otherwise, it did not ‘belong in the German lesson’. His lessons were ‘a space where the students speak German. […] I use target language in my lessons because that’s all they need’. However, he believed language teaching included talking about grammar, which ‘should be done and can easily be done in the target language’, as long as the ‘metalanguage’ is attuned to a level ‘accessible to the students’. In order to avoid English, he would use mathematical symbols ‘universally understood’, or ‘a simple sandwiching technique, by which you say something in German, then say it in English, and then say it in German again’. He would talk ‘about maskulin und feminin, and other cognate grammatical concepts but also more abstract talk about ‘DER, DIE, DAS’, if necessary’. However, teaching ‘German grammar in English […] would make it more complicated’ due to adding ‘another layer of metalanguage’ which ‘just diverts them from being able to communicate in the target language. And why shouldn’t they be able to talk about grammar in German? They can! Especially’ by simplifying the metalanguage, or using ‘humour, visuals, gestures… my knowledge of the language’. Ruud would compare differences between English and German structures very rarely, in case of communication breakdowns; for example with ‘how are you? I am well’; whereas in German you say Mir geht’s gut – me goes well’.

Ruud found his PGCE inspirational because based on ‘interactive […] communicative language teaching, with which I would still overall agree’. Whilst the PGCE drew from ‘Krashen’s theory’, which he thought ‘was probably never proven’, Ruud’s pedagogy moved ‘from Krashen, to CLIL, to sociocultural theory’. The ‘communicative language teaching’ enacted in his lessons consisted in ‘communicating about everything’ with his students in the target language, including grammar; in using ‘everything as an opportunity’. Ruud reported feeling ‘fairly confident’ of his language and pedagogical content knowledge. He believed his grammar-based education enabled him to ‘break down sentences for the students’, which he believed to be an essential pedagogical skill. He remembered the ‘formal grammar lesson’ in German challenged his native and ‘automatic’ use of German, ultimately leading to understanding his ‘own language better’. Initially he found French easier to teach because German was ‘automatic’ and
therefore difficult to ‘break down’ and ‘make accessible’ for the students. In England, his teacher training contained ‘a little bit on inductive grammar teaching’ which he later adopted as pedagogical strategy and research focus. The result was a synthesis of communicative, target language -based, and a ‘reductionist or minimalist’ approach leading students to inductively produce grammar rules from examples and mediation in the target language: ‘minimising the variables as much as possible’; using ‘simple grammatical language’. When Ruud completed his PGCE, ‘grammar teaching wasn’t really done at all in English schools at the time; we didn’t even have the literacy hours in primary schools, whereas now you’ve got some grammar teaching in primary schools’. As a PGCE tutor, Ruud remembered it ‘was quite depressing how little grammatical knowledge’ trainee teachers had, consequently being unable to ‘explain’ something they did not understand properly themselves’, and therefore deploying grammar as a pedagogical tool.

Reporting his beliefs about how students learned grammar, Ruud reported that handing out ‘sheets with a table’ full of grammatical endings could be harmful to students’ understanding if not contextualised. Starting from a simple sentence – ich gehe in den Wald- Ruud ‘would add additional information, like schönen Wald – the beautiful forest – focusing students on adjectival endings. Ruud would also give them an example of ‘how to write the formula’, successively letting them generalise other rules. ‘Then they have a huge toolbox’ of collectively constructed grammatical rules, each consisting in an ‘additional block for their language learning’, and ability to ‘manipulate language’. In the past he believed that teaching grammar ‘per se’ had a value, but his experience convinced him that grammar is necessary to widen students’ ability to manipulate language and to understand the functioning of the language. ‘For the students I am working with, I think grammar is important’, but Ruud would use ‘direct grammar teaching’ only when running after school GCSE clubs ‘to support more or less able students’. Ruud believed students did not expect him to teach grammar, nor would they ask him directly about grammar. Instead, they wanted to know ‘how things work’; they would have an ‘expectation’ to ask ‘why are we doing this, why does this work’.

4.5.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?
Ruud gave instructions ‘für das GCSE’ in target language, recapitulating previous ‘Thema für das kontrollierte Assessment’ taught on ‘Stadt und die Umwelt’, and the importance of including interesting and complex structures for the assessment. He gave advice in German on GCSE matters also to a student from another class who came in to ask his advice, as well as hints such as giving him a ‘Papire nicht mitnehmen’, or ‘Keine Panic, ja?’, or ‘das ist cheating’, or to describe the type of questions he would have asked in the oral controlled assessment. Students would reply in English, but he consistently spoke German. Once, communication broke down, prompting Ruud to use English to say that he would have been able to ‘point out but not comment’ on mistakes; advising ‘you need to change this and that’, but without explicitly giving corrected forms. In his think-aloud, Ruud recorded sometimes marking ‘them out of 10’, and sometimes using ‘the Middle Years [Baccalaureate] Programme criteria’. However, his overriding focus was on his students’ ability to ‘start improvising with language’, ‘language development and talking’.

Ruud’s main pedagogical modes were focus on meaning and implicit focus on form. Students’ hypotheses were positively or negatively confirmed in the target language. When instruction started, this was also delivered in target language, whereby the focus on form was implicitly also focus on meaning. Instruction consisted in explicit corrections and provisions of corrected form emphasising or pointing to the reason why the forwarded examples were mistaken. The resulting metalinguistic explanations were also in German, combining information about specific linguistic properties with target language exposure. Metalinguistic feedback in target language contained both comments on grammatical appropriateness and questions that forced students to deduct the correct form whilst conducting a conversation in German. Oral activities were monitored and mistakes were recast, with little explicit focus on form, often referring to previous learning which had been documented by means of classroom displays of ‘minimalist’ rules (Figure 16). Students freely replied either in English or German, and Ruud consistently replied or recast erroneous utterances in German.
The meaning of words was negotiated in German. Only after miming and drawing failed to convey difficult meaning, such as the word ‘Verkehrsverbindung’, a key word in English for ‘traffic connection’ was offered. Students seemed relaxed and enjoyed each challenge. If they lost focus, they were asked in the target language to keep joking as long as they did it in the target language. If the interactive board froze, Ruud recast even their jokes in German, observing sarcastically that John ‘ist gut mit Computern’, after John suggested ‘smacking’ the board. If students tried cutting themselves some slack in the controlled assessment, he replied ‘Das ist cheating’. If students asked him to dance for them if they did well in the GCSE, he did a ‘walk-like-an-Egyptian’ move and said ich kann nicht tanzen. Students often debated the appropriateness of their sentences, trying to defend their linguistic choices, often translanguaging freely in English and German.

Ruud’s pedagogical strategy was minimalist: he started from a basic structure, which was gradually developed into more complex ones and full sentences (Figure 17). Ruud started from introducing the topic in German and writing down the sentences that
students offered in recapitulation of the previous lessons. Successively, he wrote ‘[Region] ist interessant’, suggesting in German to add sentences with ‘however’ and ‘moreover’, and explaining about complex sentences. Ruud asked students to analyse the differences between sentences, and even debating about the appropriateness of choosing one structure instead of another. Students would listen to Ruud’s explanation in target language, negotiating the meaning with each other, and deciding the outcome on Ruud’s positive or negative feedback. The second lesson too started with a single simple sentence: ‘[city] ist schön’. Students started adding ‘in my opinion it is/it is not nice’, and so on, ultimately resulting in rather complex sentences and attempts to joke with outlandish characteristics. Ruud clarified what questions he would ask in the assessment with a diagram with ‘Fragen’ (questions) at the centre, and where, why, when, etc. around (see Figure 18 below).

![Image](image.png)

Figure 18: Type of controlled assessment questions.

Recording his think-aloud, Ruud expressed concern with ensuring he addressed students’ ‘mistakes’, as they ‘are something they can learn from’. He saw ‘their mark books as support in and out of class when they are revising’. Ruud also looked out for ‘content’, ‘language’, but most of all for ‘grammar that helps them with developing their language, as it is all about language development’. Students’ communicative intent was his main focus; therefore Ruud taught them more than necessary for the assessment to describe physical and emotional traits. Ruud reported to give both ‘formative and summative feedback: I correct students’ blatant mistakes and at the same time I give feedback about how they can improve what they are doing through techniques’. Moreover, Ruud reported ‘looking out for who is starting to use language in slightly more creative ways by adding additional deatails’, scaffolding and integrating language from previous work.
4.5.4. **Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?**

When asked to recall the intended learning outcomes pursued in the lessons I observed, Ruud reported as follows:

The language learning that I wanted them to achieve was ... [...] both linguistic and metalinguistic. It was linguistic in the sense that I wanted them to understand the vocabulary; make sure that the syntax and the grammar is ok... Cognitive in a way that they understand or think about the information that they give. I wanted to lead them beyond the stereotypical GCSE level where people talk about their cities and their houses in very banal ways... I wanted to give them the opportunity to build in some proper information... which makes it cognitively slightly more challenging, but also slightly more interesting. I wanted them to put on a sociologist's or historians' hat [...] at the level appropriate to them’.

‘The other level I am always trying to achieve, as I said in the first interview, is the metalinguistic and metacognitive, whereby students think how to use language; how they write and talk in the foreign language. I guess what I am trying to develop in class is not just speaking, but also classroom talk. Hence when the students make silly comments,[...] rather than seeing it as a problem, it is an opportunity for talk.

‘No matter how limited’ and at times incorrect, students were using a ‘German that is appropriate and correct for the situation that there is in the classroom. If you look at that from a sociocultural perspective, I could see the classroom as a particular setting. Just like a supermarket in Germany, or butchers' [...] I don't even pretend that... well, sometimes I pretend for role play that we are in a German restaurant, coffee, or bar, but we are in a classroom, it is our overarching setting and in many ways it would be absurd to deny that we are in a classroom. So I say, well we are in a classroom, but
we are in my classroom and in my classroom we speak German for everything. Considering the environment and its artificiality, rather than take that as a weakness, construe that as a strength where linguistic rules are out of action, but we are building towards a correct use of language, rather than insisting on correct use of language at all times.

Grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences were all important in Ruud’s intended learning outcome. ‘Communication [was] more important than grammar’, and correcting everything would ‘prevent learners from exploratory talk in the classroom’, which gave them the necessary confidence to ‘start playing with language’ at ‘a high cognitive level that is appropriate for the learner’. Fun was important in lesson, but ‘nought and crosses played with a low ability class’ for Ruud was ‘just a lazy way of teaching’ as it lacked the necessary pedagogical cognitive commitment.

Recalling his pedagogical rationale, Ruud said: ‘grammar is always in the back of my mind’, as part of the ‘4Cs framework: Content, Cognition, Communication and Culture, originally the 4 key components for a CLIL lesson (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). ‘Culture is problematic because it is such an intangible notion; […] Communication, Content and Cognition are things that I do think about, and I would consider grammar to be part of’ Content and Cognition, as it compelled students to think about how to manipulate language appropriately.

Ruud believed grammar was the ‘tool that you need for using language’, and it went together with ‘lexical items’ and ‘communication’, but it could not be ‘taught in isolation’; not until students ‘have understood how to use it’. Ruud made it ‘accessible’ by reducing it ‘to the minimum’, which can be built on consciously. ‘It is the language-making process that I want them to see’. Ruud reported a systematic inductive method for teaching German grammar in the target language:

> Basically, I use something that they already know […]. I do not introduce the terms dative or accusative. I have a picture of the forest and I start off with *ich gehe in den Wald* - into the forest - what I do as I am teaching this I draw a little stick man walking
towards the forest. Once I am there, I say *ich bin in dem Wald* - imagine all the clown stuff you need to do! [...] So I am there walking to and fro in the classroom. Then I draw another stickman [...] I repeat all that until a student asks what’s the difference? [...] Then they will see the difference. If they don’t see the difference, I will highlight the difference. Gradually they will start seeing patterns. [...] I then gradually ask them to develop with me a mathematical or a grammatical formula that they write down, so it is basically in+dem [...] or in+den. So that is the formula that I give them. Gradually you do that for the definite and indefinite articles and then the adjectives. You start with the very minimum that you can get away with.

Ruud recalled conducting all aspects of teaching in German, as ‘mixing two grammatical systems’ would confuse students:

If I start talking to them in English apart from using an example from the English language to talk about German grammar, I would be using a terminology which is a mix between the terminology needed for German grammar and the terminology needed for English grammar. And this would confuse them more. For example, in German there are cases which are required for different verbs and prepositions. It is a system that simply does not exist in English. If I start giving them an example in English of this, it is not going to help them at all. If anything, it is counterproductive. It is like pointing something out that does not exist. And I am trying to compare two different sets of rules.

By using only German Ruud could use ‘visuals’ and ‘very re-used language’, devise the rules and proceed to ‘apply’ them. Ruud reflected that translation was a last resort when he felt he needed to make sure all students understood, and he invited me to test his views with the students: ‘see what they think about my grammar teaching’.

Ruud recalled that the class I observed was ‘more reluctant to use German’ due to a previous ‘bad experience with their German’ teacher, who did not teach them in the
target language. He was confident that eventually he would ‘get them to the point when they will be all speaking in German’, even if it meant occasionally letting students ‘snap off’ in frustration. His confidence derived from his experience with year 7 and 8, who were responding very well to his target language teaching. Ruud did not believe in rote-learning of grammatical rules, but in continuous exposure to inductive consciousness-raising through practice activities such as ‘a long list of incomplete sentences where they have to choose between’ accusative and dative, for example, depending also on students’ ability. Ruud aimed to enable students to ‘recognise patterns’ and re-use the ‘grammatical formulas’ that students devised with his help.

Ruud recalled finding it very hard to record the think-aloud, attributing it to his marking being very ‘traditional’, and the difficulty of ‘doing two things... and not doing any of’ them well. He decided therefore to correct first, and record a reflection afterwards, as he ‘wanted to be slightly deeper’ than just recording that he underlined a mistake. During the correction, he realised that not all students understood the verbs and the connectives that the homework verified. The reflection, however, pointed out the usefulness of homework feedback, not on the think-aloud.

4.6. **Case 6: June**

4.6.1. *The teacher, the school and the policy*

June was in her late 40s and had been educated in England and Scotland up to degree level. She remembered her secondary education as grammar-based in foreign languages, ‘but not in the English language, ironically’. She completed an MA in French and German and she was teaching both languages. Her role was classroom teacher and ‘learning coordinator at KS3’, including supervising provision for gifted and talented and SEN. June believed that her grammar-based education enabled her to communicate effectively when she travelled abroad as a young graduate and language *assistante*, as her acquired target language grammatical competence only required her to look for and use the vocabulary that she needed for her communicative purposes. June demonstrated a keen and generous involvement in my research, responding with very useful insights that helped data triangulation.
The latest 2010 OFSTED inspection graded June’s school as ‘good’, describing it as ‘exceptionally large’ and ‘oversubscribed’. Few were the pupils ‘eligible for free school meals’, from minority ethnic groups, with special educational needs and in the early stages of English language acquisition. More pupils entered or left ‘the school part-way through their secondary school education than is typical nationally’. In 2004, the school gained specialist status for mathematics and computing. The school was in a popular seaside town in the South West of England. June reported it had students ‘from just about any possible social backgrounds and a whole range of abilities’. She reported at the time that more year 9 students than previously were not opting to continue with French, and that the ‘move within the school to make students more independent learners’ aimed to improve the subject’s intake and students’ perceptions. French was the only language on the main timetable whilst German and Spanish were offered as twilight classes. Additionally Spanish was available as semi-twilight, as part of a subject called ‘enrichment’. Students behaved politely; however at times some behaviour detracted from the lesson and the other engaged students, despite the teacher’s dedicated classroom management and differentiation.

June strongly believed in the ‘languages for all rationale’, but admitted that ‘students don’t all… manage to make it to’ acceptable levels. She recalled that in the first school she taught, ‘everybody had to do a foreign language all the way up to 16, even if it was not part of the National Curriculum’. She remembered students ‘never complained about it, despite not being ‘the brightest’, as these attended other grammar schools in the same city. Nowadays, June reported that most teachers would see grammar teaching as ‘important’. In her department, the ‘scheme of work’ indicated ‘quite clearly’ which ‘bits of grammar fit well, but we’re not told ‘this is how you do it’”. The document also indicated to teach ‘even the lower ability year 8 […] the ‘nous part of the present tense’; conversely, it did not include the past tense for that stage, which she believed was a ‘major aspect’. It was too soon to say whether a new teaching style would be introduced by the new head of department, albeit June did not think ‘people would feel they have to do it in a particular way’. June found ‘very attractive’ teaching both students with ‘very negative experience of languages’, and ‘those who are extremely supportive and who think that you should definitively leave with a qualification in languages’.
4.6.2. Question 1: The role of grammar in foreign languages teaching

June described grammar as ‘what makes the language hold together, and grammar teaching as ‘teaching the mechanics of the language so that you can manipulate the language for your own use, and being able to put it together accurately’ and independently. She believed grammar teaching could be made interesting by doing ‘lots of activities that hopefully will make it not so boring’, teaching students ‘to think’. June reported that ‘having a good knowledge of grammar’ enabled to ‘make a lot faster progress and to be able to communicate actually… well, as a student and as a teacher’. June reported that the value of grammar teaching could be appreciated ‘later on’, especially if learning other languages as well, as it allowed to ‘see much more clearly how language itself fits together’. Grammar was not the ‘be all and end all’, and she aimed to teach between ‘the two extremes’: ‘the system I’ve learnt under, and the system I started to teach’ in.

June reported that her pedagogical strategies for grammar teaching included asking students ‘to draw the rules out’ from examples, analysing texts and finding patterns. Moreover, June reported focusing students on relying on their previously acquired linguistic knowledge and ‘previous examples’. She mainly used resources of her making, and recalled teaching mostly verbal tenses, covering the scheme of work contents. If her students asked about language outside the scheme of work, she believed it was important to answer their calls. June believed in the need to devise activities that included both higher and lower achieving students, and that group activities achieved this better than teacher-centred activities or the ‘traditional flash-card work’ she did when she started teaching. She provided the initial ‘input’, but afterwards she asked students to ‘find the bits in the text’. She believed students needed to be engaged, not entertained, because ‘if they’re finding grammar boring, they’re not switched on into it’. June occasionally used metalanguage, but did not expect students to remember, or use it. Sometimes, she also taught grammar explicitly; instead of starting from examples she would give a metalinguistic explanation, like she did for the past tenses.

June’s education was grammar-based, and it did not include any ‘speaking’, as it focused on grammar and writing skills. Conversely, she started teaching 25 years
before, ‘in the communicative language teaching era’, when the emphasis was on communication and making languages ‘accessible to the whole ability range’. June reported realising that she had not ‘learned very much’ in her teacher training when she observed a teacher who was convinced that he was able to teach bottom sets a foreign languages by ‘communication-based language learning’ instead of trying to teach ‘about the grammar’. She found her colleagues and her new head of department’s teaching style inspiring, ‘geared towards active learning and use of ICT’. She recalled that in 1994 Teacher Training was about ‘communicative language teaching techniques’, like ‘gap-filling activities’ and ‘speaking… some of which we still do, but probably in a slightly different way’. In those times ‘the grammar did not matter’ and ‘the idea was to eliminate fear of making mistakes’. The emphasis was on ‘knowing vocabulary’, but not on ‘reusing language in a new context… In some way, I think it was quite limiting’. June observed that ‘if you were going to look at communicative language teaching and teaching grammar as being too extremes’, she thought most teachers ‘would aim somewhere in the middle’.

She reported feeling insecure at times about her grammatical content knowledge, as she felt she had not ‘used it for a long time’. However, ‘teachers her age’ would recover it very quickly, because they were taught in ‘quite a grammatical manner’; she saw ‘great value’ in it.

I still believe that what I learned was important because it allowed me to go to France at the age of 14 and still manage to understand what was going on even though I knew little vocabulary… I think it is a part of the grammar: you can cope with a lot of vocabulary… because you can rely on … I suppose… cognates and things like that.

June reported she could never use the same grammar-based teaching she received. Her teaching strategies changed dramatically – from teaching to memorise phrases by heart, to teaching grammar ‘more overtly now’, asking students to ‘have a look, what do you think the rules are’. She believed teacher training should research into improving teachers’ knowledge of grammar; how teachers could ‘pass it on’. The knowledge of grammar, however, needed to be instilled before the training stage, during language learning.
Reflecting on how students learn and perceive grammar, June reported that grammatical understanding enabled you ‘to construct your own phrases’, instead of ‘learning by heart’. However, using grammar ‘properly’ required ‘a fairly ordered mind’, ‘a certain amount of knowledge’ and the ability to ‘put it into practice’. She suspected students thought it was boring and of no ‘immediate interest’; they preferred text work, because ‘it’s a difficult subject’ that requires ‘more effort’. She believed only the more able students appreciated it. ‘Those who have illiteracy issues are really never gonna get it’, and would receive ‘shorter examples’ to work on. June believed that teaching terminology was not as useful as teaching the ‘discipline about the learning of grammar; that you actually don’t come across and probably would benefit students generally’. She believed students struggled learning metalanguage as it was not done cross-curricularly. Similarly to ‘maths’, June believed students struggled ‘because they are not focused’ and do not retain previous teaching, hence missing the ‘principles behind it’ that would make them ‘much more creative and much more independent’. June believed students preferred being involved ‘doing things during the lesson’, rather than ‘either listening, or speaking’. This difficulty in engaging students’ interest was also preventing subject English from being linked to foreign languages in the curriculum: a ‘challenge, because I think although it would be quite a valuable thing to do… how do we make it interesting and engaging?’

4.6.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?

June was not observed talking about assessment criteria to students. Whilst recording her think-aloud, she monitored that students included complex sentences, opinions, and other GCSE ingredients. June was also concerned with content, and that the task was completed in all its parts. Moreover, she observed that lack of accuracy added ‘an element of confusion’ bringing ‘the marks down’. She appreciated the effort some students made to look up vocabulary by themselves. Accuracy was her main concern, checking for ‘correct present and future tenses’, gender and number.

In both lessons observed, June’s use of target language was moderate. She introduced the learning objectives and the exercises in target language. When instruction started, June kept speaking in French, attempting to communicate the
meaning of vocabulary relating to weather. June helped individual students in English, and translated the most difficult vocabulary. She used very simple language, cognates and any props or gestures that would have helped.

June’s main instruction mode was inductive explicit, using consciousness-raising questions to guide students to translate various weather sentences in different tenses, which were displayed in lists. I did not observe her teaching grammar, and students were not required to conjugate verbs, or produce grammatical rules to derive tenses. Activities were mainly comprehension- and recognition-based. Exercises consisted in matching pictures and vocabulary, and completing a word puzzle. The word puzzle consisted in translating a list of sentences from English to French, and transferring them in a word puzzle. The correction implied translating all main vocabulary.

June: I think that we have had all of those phrases... I’ve not got quite all of them but I picked the major ones... [Shows a list of template sentences in the present and the future. Students need to recognise them and red them out].

June: how do we change from the present *il fait* into the future?

Student: *il fera*

June: right ok *il fera*... and what about... what happens to *il y a*?

Student: *il y aura*

In the second lesson, June’s teaching mode was deductive explicit, asking students to recognise the various tenses from a list presented on Power Point (Table 15). June explained at length the task to create a weather report, and left them plenty of time to draw weather symbols and composing the weather forecast from various hand-outs and power point slides. There were no observed grammatical explanations, but recapitulations of forms previously presented that students had to recognise. During group work, June replied to questions like ‘how do you say…?’ in turn asking ‘what is the word for...?’ and to think: ‘remember when I said..?’ providing inductive, incidental corrections.
June: if you said... *je fais du ski*, how you would you change *je fais du ski* into your past tense? [noise]... Can we stop one minute? Because what happened here showed me that we weren’t quite sure what the past participle was... yea? I CAN HEAR someone say something... right, so what happens if we change ‘il fait’ into... you need a part of *avoir* again, don’t you? So which bit is it?

Student: *il a*

June: *IL A!!* well done, Melissa!! right, *il a... il a fait*, right. *UNFORTUNATELY*, we have one or two verbs that do not follow the rule... *Neiger*, you are fine with it. How would you make it into a past tense? I can tell you it is an -ER verb and as far as this exercise, it follows the rules...

Student: *il a*

June: *il a...* and what happens to...

Student: *e* with an accent.

June: right, *neigé* with an accent... *IL A NEIGE*, right... *Unfortunately* the remaining three are all irregular verbs [apologetic ?]

Table 15. Weather phrases in different tenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Il a fait</th>
<th>Il a plu</th>
<th>Il a neigé</th>
<th>Il a été</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Il fera</td>
<td>Il pleuvra</td>
<td>Il neigera</td>
<td>Il sera</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Il faisait</th>
<th>Il pluvait</th>
<th>Il neigeait</th>
<th>C’était</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Il fait</td>
<td>Il pleut</td>
<td>Il neige</td>
<td>Il est</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

June asked students to relate the knowledge acquired in past lessons, and a few students demonstrated being able to use time phrases previously learned. June was
often required to remind students to stay focused, which at times affected the continuity of the reflection she tried to conduct.

In her think-aloud, June noticed that many students mistook ‘the same ending’. She recorded seeing ‘a pattern in the mistakes’, and recorded that she needed ‘to look at it again in the future and try to make them think about that’. For a moment, she doubted whether it depended from her: ‘the way I taught’, and she was reassured to notice that other students used the correct forms. She was very upset at the presence of English words: ‘a complete no - no!’. In most cases, she was pleased with their effort: there were ‘a few mistakes, although it looks like on the whole it is correct’.

June’s activities varied between reading, listening comprehension, and composing a weather forecast using weather phrases. The following are my transcriptions of phrases that June read out from the books of 4 different students working in group during the second lesson.

1. *Demain il pleura dans le nord, donc vous aurez besoin d’un parapluié.*
2. *Aujourd’hui il fait beau et il y a du soleil.*
3. *Dans l’ouest il y aura un tsunami.*
4. *Hier il a plu dans le sud, mais aujourd’hui il fait chaud et il y a du soleil.*

4.6.4. *Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?*

June reported the department had ‘a marking scheme [to mark] first on content and then on accuracy’. Another criterion was to ‘check whether the main point of the exercise has been carried out’. Sometimes she marked following the GCSE mark scheme, and students started realising what was needed to obtain ‘the better grades’.

Over time, particularly by looking at texts, we’ve dragged out words that we think are good […]. We said these are good things to include… They got more subordinate clauses… a wider range of tenses overall […] They know now that those are the sort of things they need to include.
June’s main intended language learning outcome was consistent with grammatical competence. She ‘wanted [students] to do more practices of the future tense’. She had previously ‘covered the immediate future’, and had ‘been doing the future tense for a week or so’. She had taught the future tense the previous year, but not ‘in a lot of detail’, and the ‘weather’ topic allowed revisiting it ‘in a new context’. The reason for not wanting to ‘do a lot of explicit teaching’ was that students were asked to reemploy grammatical knowledge. However, she declared that ‘unless you teach explicitly you will not encourage them to use [grammar] themselves... to write and to speak accurately’.

Reflecting on her pedagogical rationale, June reported an inductive method: she produced texts that students analysed, ‘unpacking bits of it’ from which they extracted grammatical rules to reemploy in other contexts and independently. If she taught grammar, she taught it ‘in context’ and responding to students’ perceived difficulties. June believed grammar enabled learners to be ‘more adventurous’. Vocabulary was easy to ‘look up’, but ‘understanding grammar’ helped independent use of language, such as coping with the use of verbs. She discouraged the use of ‘Google translate’, as it did not give ‘them any context’:

It is a building block to create language to speak, to communicate. You could try just to learn a lot of phrases, but I think that does not work. I think that what grammar does is enable you to communicate.

June recalled being taught ‘grammar point after grammar point. […] We had excellent exam results at the time, but we were taught very different skills and expected to translate from French into English, in the O Level. […] There was not a lot on communication.

June found challenging recording the think-aloud, as it required putting ‘into words what I was trying to do mentally’. She recalled having an expectation to see students ‘use the future tense in a particular context’, and being relieved to see that everybody ‘completed the task’. She reported it made her ‘more methodical’ in her marking, and that she tried to be as ‘honest’ as she could. She recalled disappointment at ‘some
mistakes’, and planning to go through’ the ‘piece’ because she realised what the problems were.

When June reflected on her beliefs about how students learn grammar, she reported that ‘a number of students’ strove for perfection and were ‘very concerned to know’ how to switch ‘between the immediate future and the simple future’, and were very concerned to know ‘when do we use this one? When do we use that one?’. She felt most students were able to ‘comfortably move from the past into the present… ok the future is a bit more... we've covered it a bit more recently... therefore they may be not quite confident at that, which is one of the main reasons for doing the activity - to make them see the patterns’. June believed students struggled to take notes and retain the information. She observed how boys wrote shorter but ‘more accurate’ pieces, whilst ‘girls had been more ambitious and made mistakes’. She was delighted that one of the boys used ‘recevra’, independently, but wondered whether he found it in Google. She reported that in another class students asked ‘how to use the direct object pronoun... not quite like that, but ‘how do you say...”.

4.7. Case 7. Carla

4.7.1. The teacher, the school and the policy

Carla taught in the same school as Ruud (Case 5). She was in her early 40s and had been educated in Spain up to degree level. She completed a PhD in linguistics in England and taught Spanish since 1993 in a British university. Carla re-trained as a secondary school teacher via a GTP in 2009-2010, so she was an NQT at the time, but with 15 years’ teaching experience as ‘a linguist’, university teacher, translator and researcher. Carla liked ‘teaching inductively, so the students are like language spies and they try to observe language, identify and try to remember the rules’. However, she also believed that grammar teaching was part of communicative language teaching, both inductively and deductively, so long as the ultimate goal was communicative.

Carla reported that the foreign languages department’s policy emphasised a ‘communicative approach [including] more than grammar’, which had to be taught ‘in
context' and in the target language. The ‘rationale’ of the school curriculum instructed two overarching aims: a) teaching students that the main aim to learn a language is ‘to communicate in this language’; b) teaching students to be ‘confident, to be happy’ when communicating in Spanish. For this reason her lesson planning tried to answer the questions: ‘what can I do with this bit of language that I am learning? What do I need to learn this? What use is it for me?’ She believed that grammar was ‘part’ of students’ assessment as it required ‘accuracy’. It needed therefore to be taught ‘regardless’ of her opinion about it. Generally, she believed that language teachers taught ‘very much subject to timetables, exam pressures’, and to ‘produce exam results’.

4.7.2. Question 1: The role of grammar in foreign languages teaching

Carla believed grammar to be ‘the skeleton’ of language teaching and learning; a fundamental interface between teachers and students; and the ‘foundation’ on which to keep laying ‘building blocks’ to eventually ‘go on and communicate’. She thought grammar consisted of ‘guidelines’ and ‘rules that the students can remember, hopefully, and reapply’. She believed that as ‘a subject’ it had ‘gone in and out of fashion’ from its initial traditional inclusion in the teaching of Latin and Greek. Carla, however, believed that teaching grammar out of context was ‘meaningless’, as it helped producing ‘accurate structures’, but not ‘communicative strategies’ or ‘spontaneity’, which were context-based. In one of her think-aloud recordings, her communication-driven rationale emerged as she observed that despite the student ‘got most of the grammar correctly’, ‘the actual language’ produced ‘communicated’ less than his previous attempts. Carla reported that grammar was ‘one component’ of the composite communicative language pedagogy, and that teachers needed to create a ‘positive expectation of grammar’, leading students to ‘accept it as part of learning the language’. Moreover, teaching students Spanish included ‘teaching them about language learning’ as much as ‘about how language is constructed’. Carla believed grammar teaching and communication to be ‘complementary’, as the purpose was ultimately to ‘communicate accurately’, and as communication had ‘structures and rules’.
Carla stated that her chosen pedagogical strategy consisted in ‘teaching grammar inductively’, for example by exposing students to ‘certain texts, and ask them to identify any patterns they might see’. If students initiated the ‘noticing’ of ‘structures’, they would be able to retain knowledge. Carla aimed at ‘positive thinking and learning’ by giving ‘students control’ of their performance for a ‘more effective use of language’, instead of focusing on ‘error’. Instead of teaching about ‘accuracy’, she invited ‘to produce a piece of writing that is close to a native speaker’s’ and ‘to communicate effectively in a language’. Carla reported still needing ‘to explore [the] best strategies to integrate the teaching of grammar’ so that it was ‘embedded’ in students’ learning, rather than it just being ‘something self-standing’. Teaching ‘communicatively’ meant to ‘match both’.

Reflecting on interdisciplinary issues, Carla recalled that even teaching university students she found that they were not familiar with grammar terminology, which she consequently needed to explain in English. Nationally, she believed that secondary foreign languages teachers were divided about the use of teaching grammar terminology; conversely, she believed that teaching students ‘to label terms’ was helpful. She would not teach complex terminology, but its ‘function’: instead of ‘pronominalisation’, for example, she taught the process of saying ‘I like it’, or I bought it’. She believed that the use of the first language could ‘be a hindrance’ in foreign languages teaching ‘if you rely too heavily on it’. However, if it helped students ‘making links’ and ‘access knowledge’, occasionally she would ‘switch’ to English, very briefly. Carla believed that there was ‘a value in teaching comparatively’, especially ‘intermediate and advanced students who are trying to have a more sophisticated knowledge of Spanish’. Carla believed that both foreign languages and subject English should teach about ‘language as an object of study’, inclusive of ‘how to study and how to talk about’ it; and the different types of languages, like the ‘language for maths’ and its own ‘metalanguage’.

Carla believed research would help facilitating the gradual passage from first-language to target language-mediated grammar teaching in foreign languages teaching context. Whilst ‘there is a lot of research in TEFL’, Carla believed there was none at foreign languages level, forcing teachers to emulate ‘what people were doing 20 years ago’,
as ‘all this modernity and innovations… all these publications’ had no relevance to her classroom teaching.

When asked about her beliefs of the role of grammar in teacher education and training, Carla reported that knowledge of grammar was essential pedagogical content knowledge for language teachers, as it allowed to plan both implicit and explicit language teaching strategies, and ‘explain why you do things in a certain way’. Being native-like fluent was not enough to ‘consistently prepare people to go further’; teachers also needed ‘knowledge about teaching strategies, [and] pedagogical tools’. The ability to teach and use metalanguage was fundamental to meet the needs of students from ‘different levels’, and ‘backgrounds’. A student with ‘Latin and German’ would ‘understand perfectly’ definitions such as ‘transitive, reflexive verbs’; however, ‘12 year old students might not’. Once they get to know terminology, ‘they know that if I say reflexive, I’ll be talking about me levanto, me despierto - all the verbs that got a reflexive pronoun’. Carla reported that her grammar-based education eventually helped her, as she ‘liked grammar’. What she lacked was ‘confidence to stand up and speak in a foreign language. I had a lot of rules in my head’, but no opportunities to express herself creatively. Carla was inspired as a student by a trainee teacher who covered just ‘a couple of lessons’ and used a ‘communicative approach’. She recalled thinking ‘Oh, this is great!’ as the teacher proceeded ‘creating the context’ and inducing students ‘to use the language’. In that moment, she realised ‘actually, I can say things… and I can do things’, and she committed to teaching ‘to communicate in a language that is alive and we need to use correctly; correctly!’

Carla believed that ‘grammar rules’ gave students ‘some sense of security, as by understanding ‘when it happens, why it happens’ students would ‘be able to create or experiment with that rule…in terms of being able to construct a sentence that makes sense’. She believed that ‘repetition and rote learning’ could have pedagogical value, but only in context and not as an ‘ok, let’s just copy’ activity. Students had ‘to see a structure more than once’ to remember and ‘be able to produce language themselves’, and homework metalinguistic and strategic learning feedbacks were ‘vital’ for the efficacy of this process. Imitation would not help, and ‘do it like this because that’s how it is’ would not be accepted by inquisitive students who ‘want to understand why’. Moreover, ‘you can imitate only one example’ without the ability to transfer knowledge
to other contexts’. Carla reported the school was a ‘special context, where students
dealt with grammar in various language learning contexts’; most having already
studied a ‘foreign language in the primary school’. She believed that with beginner
students it was not ‘worth wasting too much time on complexities’, as they would
respond better by being ‘involved in the language, in wanting to learn functions: how
to greet, how to say things…’. Carla did not think students ‘liked’ grammar that was
presented to them as ‘let’s just go and do verbs’; however, ‘being corrected in their
writing’ by both informative as well as explicitly metalinguistic feedback did not trouble
them.

4.7.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?

The lesson observed aimed to prepare for the GCSE oral exam. Carla introduced it
and explained it in target language, using the task as an opportunity for communicative
exchange. Eventually some of the information was also given in English: ‘remember,
you need to show off how much you know’, or ‘let’s practise this’. Most of the time,
Carla negotiated meaning with students using the target language to introduce both
the task and the process, using her intonation to emphasise key concepts:

Cuando hacemos un examen, ¿qué tenemos que hacer en un
examen? Vamos a utilizar CRITERIOS. El primero criterio va a
ser COMUNICACIÓN. Vamos a mirar también la INTERACCIÓN,
Y vamos a mirar la PRONUNCIACIÓN.

Carla questioned students in the past, present and future tenses, and students
seemed to reply confidently. Some answers were read out, but students seemed
mostly able to create their answer or identify which resources they needed in their
notes to do so. In her think-aloud, Carla recorded considerations for the inclusion of
assessment-specific grammatical contents: ‘lots of vocabulary, connectors, verbs’.
She considered students’ ‘trying to create compound sentences’, or ‘short, safe
sentences’. She commended ‘independent research for new expressions’, and
delighted at their attempts to be ‘funny! Very good, excellent’.

Carla’s observed pedagogy consisted in implicit communication-oriented activities
(Ellis, 2010, p. 438). The focus on grammar was both incidental and explicit (Oxford &
Lee, 2007, pp. 120-121); however, the exclusive use of the target language transformed both into opportunities to communicate about the language. The incidental form-focused instruction introduced the task and elicited key vocabulary and forms, whilst the meaning-focused communication explored sociocultural issues exchanging personal accounts about the topic of ‘problems in the school’:

Carla: ¿Hay algún problema en el instituto?

Student: ¡NO!

Carla: ¿NO? ¡Qué suerte!

Student: PERO ¡hay muchos problemas en el internado!

[laughter]

Carla: ¿En el internado hay muchos problemas!? [laughter] … El acoso... ¿qué es el acoso?

Student: BULLYING

Carla: PERO acoso es como harassment... es muy interesante porque en español se utiliza el término inglés. Why do you think it is? Yo cuando era pequeña, no me acuerdo de acoso escolar... no, nunca.... cuando yo estaba en el colegio.... no sé, pueden ser dos cosas... o que no se o que no hay...

Students were left to choose to communicate in either English or Spanish, whilst she kept speaking Spanish, using the students’ English to provide target language input:

Student: how do you say gardening?

Carla: Jardinería...

Student: como se dice to rehearse?

Carla: voy a ensayar...

Carla drew students’ attention by input flooding (Long, 1997, p. 1, in Oxford and Lee, :122) the target form; at the same time as keeping a meaningful conversation. Gradually, Carla started to add adjectives, connectives, and more complex language, finally eliciting students’ opinions, and constructing meaning together:

Carla: que hay? NO HAY campo de fútbol, no?
Student: sí, the astro… the astroturf
Carla: NO HAY una piscina, desafortunadamente, que pena […]
Carla: ¿qué opináis del uniforme? Liam, ¿te gusta el uniforme?
Student: LOS CALCETINES DE BOBBY SON ORRIBLE
Carla: son orribleSSSSS [recasts for plural]. ¿Por qué? […]
Student: es bien y me gusta porque es muy… ehm… elegante… y compare…
Carla: no comprendo…
Student: when you compare… compared to…
Carla: comparado con…
Student: y comparado con los otros colegios […]
Carla: ¿tú tienes estrés?? No, tú tranquila… ¿por los exámenes? ¿los profesores?
Student: tenemos mucho estrés porque hay muchos exámenes…

Explicit grammar teaching was elaborated and explicit guidance (Type B, in Sharwood Smith in Ellis 2010:444) conducted in the target language, as were also the corrections and the metalinguistic feedback. Occasionally she translated a difficult word, or concept, in English if it interrupted the communication:

Carla: ¿Qué me podéis decir que es importante recordar cuando se describe algo? What should we remember when we are describing… about the grammar… what is tricky?
Student: you can put ‘y’ and something, and you cannot put it again…
Carla: ah, ok, eso es algo interesante, sí […]
Carla: …y ¿qué es importante saber de los adjetivos? ¿Qué tenemos que recordar cuando usamos adjetivos?
Student: colores
Carla: si... pero ¿qué es importante cuando utilizamos un color?
Student: GENEROS
Carla: ¡géneros! muy bien, el género. Si es masculino, ¿en qué termina el adjetivo normalmente?
Student: -o
Carla: y ¿si es femenino?
Student: -a
Carla: pero hay adjetivos que no terminan en –o, o –a. Terminan en –e, o consonante […]
Carla: si una prenda de ropa es... de un color por ejemplo negro... el jersey?
Student: ... negro
Carla: hm... la falda?
Student: negra
Carla: NEGRA, ¡muy bien! la falda negra: ¡perfecto!

In her think-aloud, Carla recorded mostly concerns with students’ accuracy by commenting on ‘correct structures’, ‘wrong tenses’, ‘spelling’, ‘conjunctions’ and ‘the use of articles. She followed it up with very clear written feedback (Appendix 4.2., Figures 46.-49.). At textual level, Carla commented whether the work was ‘planned well’ or it displayed ‘independent research for new expressions’; she noticed the ‘sophisticated use of language’ and students’ attempts to ‘link paragraphs’. Carla also recorded appreciation for her students’ communicative attempts, such as ‘I can understand’, or ‘he manages to transmit the message clearly’, or whether a student ‘got most of the grammar correctly, but the amount he’s communicated’ was ‘quite less’ than the norm. Carla’s think-aloud, like Elliot’s, recorded various instances of happiness and satisfaction for their students’ achievements, and was pleasantly surprised at their improvements.

Carla’s pedagogy was rooted in her belief that students learned grammar by exposure
to enhanced, context-relevant and communicative-oriented input. Another strategy was to start by presenting very basic meanings and structures, systematically delivered in target language and reinforced by repetition, and gradually built on with more complex meanings and structures. Students often repeated Carla’s recasts, controlling increasingly longer sentences. Carla played games like ‘pass the parcel’ to rehearse the speaking exam questions, requiring students to understand the rules of the game explained in target language, and to rely on previously learned content, which was unpredictably prompted.

4.7.4. **Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?**

Carla reported that her first point for lesson planning was the departmental syllabus outlining all the topics to be covered. She decided the ‘lesson aims and the activities that fulfilled them at best’. Secondly, she believed that all teachers had to follow exam boards’ ‘evaluation criteria’, as students were assessed on their ability to ‘produce accurate pieces of writing’. In the wider ‘context of secondary education’, Carla believed ‘grammar’ should not be taught in isolation, but as ‘just another element that you need to learn, as in happens also in other subjects’. Learning a language meant also learning its ‘rules and structure’; however, grammar should not ‘dominate the process of learning or the process of teaching either’.

Carla’s recalled intended learning outcomes seemed to comprise all communicative competences: discourse, grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic. Her foremost language learning outcome was for students to ‘become functionally competent in the use of language’; ‘feel comfortable communicating’ in the target language without feeling ‘scared of having a go. Moreover, she wanted them to gradually learn ‘about the culture, how Spanish people are’, and ‘see the language as something that is real’ and ‘used in a real context’, instead of a ‘communicative’ exercise about ‘going to go to the bank, or going to go shopping’, or ‘a set of rules’. Carla wanted to motivate students to ‘say meaningful things about themselves’ when preparing for the speaking test as much as for the forthcoming ‘exchange with Spanish students’. She expected students to think: ‘let’s see how much I will be able to communicate about myself when I go to Spain’. Carla reported that her experience of learning ‘Galician’ for the first time
at school made her appreciate how communication also meant ‘obviously’ to speak ‘correctly’. Galician had been banned ‘during Franco’s dictatorship’, and although she was fluent, she had no knowledge of Galician grammar, or of its ‘different styles’. She believed that language instruction should enable the passage from implicit fluency to the ability to master the ‘formal’ language’ and its ‘higher register’.

Reflecting on her pedagogical rationale, Carla believed that teachers had to deal with students’ ‘insecurities’ from the very beginning. She mentioned giving ‘lists of expressions’ that clarified ‘how in English you would say that and how the Spanish does it’. If dealt with properly from the beginning, grammar could be then ‘built on’; otherwise, teachers would ‘always come back to the same problem’. Although grammar was ‘not the main aim’ of her pedagogical rationale, it was part of it: it needed presenting and explaining explicitly, but only after inviting students ‘to find the rules inductively’. Once the understanding became ‘a bit more sophisticated’, then she thought it was ‘important to talk explicitly about grammar’ to understand ‘how language is put together’, subsequently allowing students to ‘create it themselves’. She believed it could ‘definitively’ be done in Spanish, but that it also required turning ‘to English’ when it proved ‘too ambitious’. She recalled how giving them a ‘jumbled sentence they had to put in order’ triggered an incidental ‘excuse to talk and explain about grammar’, where students ‘realised that actually if you do know your grammar it is quite easy to work out’ how language works.

Carla reported that the role of teaching grammar was to enable students to monitor their output, leading to ‘speeding up learning’ (Ellis, 2010). This was especially relevant to her students who were ‘doing GCSEs in two years’, without ‘the luxury of time to’ let target language exposure alone trigger understanding and independent language use. Carla reported that this strategy was also used ‘in teaching TEFL’, despite it having become ‘all communication, communication, communication, to the cost of grammar’. She wondered whether the success of the teaching of English as a foreign language benefited of a more ‘systematic approach’, or whether the perceived motivational ‘need to learn English’ was stronger than the perceived need to learn another foreign language, as the global feature of the English language prompted learners’ needs ‘to communicate and function in the language’.
Reflecting on interdisciplinary issues, Carla believed that the role of grammar teaching was also to enable the student to reflect on how first and second languages were used. She believed that having native-like fluency was not ‘enough’ for teachers to be up to the task of devising a pedagogy enabling students to understand about language. Foreign languages teachers had to teach terminology by ‘the same principle’ whereby ‘teaching literature’ entailed requiring students to understand and learn about ‘metaphors, and the different rhyme patterns’; or in Physics requiring students ‘to recount the formulation of one phenomenon or other’. She observed how in those subjects teachers believed there was ‘value in being able to recount a rule’, questioning why it should not be ‘the same in foreign languages and grammar teaching’, observing how in language learning ‘communication’ functioned as the ‘means, purpose and application of grammar rules’.

Carla believed there was ‘a value to talk about language’ comparing how the target language and ‘your language […] behaves or reacts’. It was ‘a valuable skill’ that ‘translators’, for example, used ‘all the time’. She recalled ‘chaos happened’ whilst conducting a listening comprehension with year 8 pupils because ‘nobody understood’ what a verb was, until one student said they were ‘the action words’. ‘So that's how they call them!', Carla exclaimed, and she asked students ‘what they did in their English classes’, deducing that ‘they certainly don’t learn grammatical labels’. Only ‘two people knew what a verb was in a class of 22’, and therefore she explained that ‘to eat, to talk’ were ‘verbs’.

Carla reflected on her beliefs about how students learn grammar observing that grammar gave students the ‘confidence’ of knowing ‘how something works’; for example, knowing that ‘the Spanish preterite - the first person - ends in an –e’ will lead to being ‘more likely to identify’ its correct use. On the other hand, the strategies Carla recalled as helping students were ‘activities as real as possible in a classroom situation, where students can talk about that particular topic’.

She reported differentiating grammar teaching for the younger students, for example by using ‘colour or magnets for agreements’ as metalinguistic visual input. She reported never asking students to ‘conjugate the present tense’; or announcing ‘ok, we are going to do grammar now’. She embedded grammar in the ‘communicative
purpose of the lesson’ by conducting it in target language, engaging students in inductive observations of language containing target structures, and recasting their output. She never ‘sensed any opposition or negative feelings’ about grammar, ‘not even with the younger students’. With older students, Carla taught grammar more explicitly, as they needed to ‘know when they are doing something incorrectly’.

In her think-aloud Carla reflected on the need to address the many mistakes that she observed had been made on one grammar point. She planned to discuss it in lesson – in Spanish – by asking them to tell her, or their partners, ‘how much they know’. Carla reported not blaming students for making mistakes, but asking herself ‘what can I do?’ or ‘what did I do wrong?’


4.8.1. The teacher, the context and the policy

Heather was in her late 40s and graduated in Linguistics and International Studies in England. She was currently part-time head of the foreign languages department, teaching French and Spanish. She remembered learning grammar in secondary education as part of studying German: ‘very much learning stuff by rote’, which she did not understand and punctually forgot. Her teaching experience was of 20 years and she believed her pedagogy had changed significantly since having completed a PGCE in 1991 in French with German, which ‘did not contain any aspects about how to teach grammar’. The PGCE influenced only ‘lightly’ her pedagogical practices, making her reflect on what worked and ‘how you could make it interesting’. Eventually, her pedagogy developed by ‘trial and error’, advice from colleagues and professional courses, as her pedagogy remained open to ‘new ideas’, as long as she thought they ‘worked well’. She believed that teacher training colleges assumed teachers knew the grammar ‘by virtue of having a language degree’, but in her opinion many PGCE students had ‘quite a poor grasp of grammar’. She reported that her ‘language speaking skills’ came from her ‘period abroad at university’, and her confident knowledge of the foreign languages grammar was gathered during her long teaching experience. Heather wished research would find out more about ‘exactly how people learn languages, and why some people find it so excruciatingly difficult’, in order to
discover if there is ‘any obvious way to making it simpler’. She believed it would have been too difficult for teachers to conduct research due to their lack of time.

Heather’s school was graded by the latest 2009 OFSTED as ‘good’, having greatly improved. It was ‘a comprehensive school of average size [providing for] a mainly White British community living in several rural villages’ around a nearby South Western University city. It had specialist status for science, mathematics and computing since 2005, and housed the local authority’s hearing support unit. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals was below average; the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities was average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs was above average. ‘It used to be French and German’, but the department dropped the latter to offer Spanish instead.

Heather reported that the teachers in her department thought that grammar was not the ‘be all and end all’, but it had ‘an important place to play’ in foreign languages teaching. Teachers shared ‘good ideas’, but there was no departmental policy for grammar teaching, as she felt it was ‘important that people teach in the way they think is best’. There was no school management involvement in the national curriculum for languages; it was left to the foreign languages department ‘to promote students’ knowledge of the language’.

4.8.2. Question 1: The role of grammar in foreign languages teaching

Heather reported that grammar teaching in foreign languages compensated for the cramped time table and limited target language exposure, which prevented students from learning the target language like they would their ‘mother tongue’. She believed that ‘automatic’ foreign languages learning would have happened after the ‘academic exercise’ of learning grammar rules, ‘just like it would in maths’, or ‘any other ‘learning’. She guessed that some foreign languages teachers saw grammar teaching as ‘old fashion’ and abandoned it to follow communicative approaches, where students were supposed to learn ‘using only speech’, as by completing tasks using ‘communication for a genuine and real purpose’. Heather reported this method to be just one aspect of a more composite strategy.
She believed that grammar teaching gave students strategies ‘to fall back on’ when their ‘automatic learnt ability’ to speak French would not assist them. She reported that although she would not teach grammar for ‘a whole lesson’, she would ‘certainly teach grammar all the time’, even when describing English usage, for example talking ‘to the kids about adverbs…. The fact that nowadays people don’t really use adverbs… they just use the adjective instead, because it’s easier and simpler… and they don’t really know what an adverb is and how to use it’.

Heather considered her pedagogical strategy as ‘terribly teacher-led’. Nevertheless, she occasionally ‘let the students work in pairs’. Sometimes she would ask A Level students to teach certain aspects of grammar ‘because the best way to actually see if you understand something is to try and teach it to somebody else’. GCSE students and lower sets would be mainly taught top down. She believed that ‘memorising’ had a pedagogical meaning, but was exploited ‘extraordinarily badly: I make them learn the common irregular verbs, like avoir, être, faire, aller, but they do forget them again and again’. She would give ‘learning a verb’ as homework, consisting in writing out ‘I have = j’ai’ for ‘all the six people, plus English’. She recommended ‘endless repetition’, practice and strategies that helped their memory, for example:

apart from the verb avoir, the endings after JE are always S, E or X, which rather conveniently spell S.E.X, and that’s so hard to forget […].

She would also repeat and memorise ‘the imperfect endings, so they all go ‘a-i-s; a-i-s; a-i-t; i-o-n-s; a-i-e-n-t’ [English spelling]. Although not useful in ‘a conversation’, it helped students check their written output. Moreover, she used visual grammar teaching aids, such as the poster with ‘castle verbs’ associating cartoons’ actions with the corresponding French verbs: ‘going in, going out… aller, venir… entrer, sortir’.

Her strategy when correcting students ‘both writing and orally’, was not to give the right answer, but rather let them ‘work it out’.

If they told me ‘je jouer’… I would say: ‘what does jouer mean, and how do you spell it? …ok it ends in -ER, and ‘what do you know about words endinding in -ER?’ Ok, they mean ‘to’, so this means ‘I to play’, is that what you wanted to say? No, ok, so what did you want to say? ‘I play’, so what’s it gonna end with?’ And they would self-correct.
She believed that grammar terminology made ‘life simpler’ because ‘adverb, adjective, relative clause were the best words to describe what’ she was talking about; moreover, learning ‘new words’ should not be a ‘frightening big deal’. However, she would also have described verbs as ‘doing words’ to make students understand what verbs were.

Part of her pedagogical strategy was to ‘put much stress on the English’ because she did not think they would ‘understand what they are doing unless they can relate it to their own language’. However, students’ unfamiliarity with some English forms caused ‘general comprehension problems’, for example explaining the accusative case by comparing it to ‘whom’: there was ‘no point in saying it’s the equivalent of whom, because they don’t know what whom means. So whom did see and who is walking down the street’ were equivalent for them in English, whereas very different things in other languages.

Heather thought students generally perceived grammar as boring, and that independently of how teachers taught, not all students would understand it due to their different learning styles: ‘some kinaesthetic, some auditory, some visual […]. Some will like the explanation, latch on to it and understand it straight away; for others, it’s a complete waste of time’. For this reason, she would present to lower ability students only the grammatical forms that ‘in reality’ they were going to use in the GCSE assessment, such as ‘je suis resté and je suis allé’ instead of all the passé composé variants.

4.8.3. Question 2: How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?

Heather started both lessons by reminding students at length and in detail ‘the whole process’ required of them to successfully complete the controlled GCSE assessment:

This is not an exercise in English on how fantastic your writing is.
It’s an exercise in proving what you know in French. It is very artificial, not mind-blowingly exciting. It could be as simple as ‘last lesson… last week… in this lesson the teacher was… we did… I learned nothing… someone fell off a chair… It is an artificial exercise. Do never lose the track of that thought’. […] And if you
used the word *assez* before do not use it again. You already proved that one. You need to tick off something else. It is an artificial exercise improving how much you know, not telling me info about your school.

She gave precise instructions of what contents would have added ‘up to 40’, which included different tenses, connectives, expressing their opinion and justifying it: ‘You have to, or you do not get the grades’. She informed students she would have corrected what they prepared in the two lessons I observed, but that from the following week they would have proceeded to learn by heart the various paragraphs so far prepared, which she could no longer correct.

‘In 10 days or a week we will say: ok we’re going to do the control assessment. By that time, you will have written it, made your 30-word notes, and you will have pretty much memorised it. Then you come in, you sit down, and write your controlled assessment in one go’.

In her think-aloud, Heather also recorded concerns with assessment criteria, counting whether all the recommended criteria were included in the task:

‘good effort but needs opinion and why… needs to join sentences and add in things… short sentences not linked… linking words… not quite flow… must create links to make sense…

Heather’s observed pedagogical practice consisted in deductive metalinguistic explanations, leading to the composition of topic-based sentences that were then explicitly corrected. Her metalinguistic explanations involved elaborate and explicit guidance, using familiar metalanguage by which the target forms were made explicit and grammar rules were supplied (Types b and d; Ellis, 2010, p. 444). Heather made no use of the target language for either communication or instruction. The French she and her students shared consisted in sentences constructed or translated for the purpose of the assessment.

Heather: You got your sentence with three words. What can you put in front of that *C’est très intéressant*?
Student: à mon avis?
Heather: write down more of those opinion phrases. Say ‘in my opinion it's really great’. [...] You're sitting in the exam and you think: how is it going to end? c-r-o-i-s... Je crois que... don't forget the que [...] 

Heather: [...] you take the adjectives, you make it feminine and you add –MENT. What is -ment in English?

Student: -LY

Heather: write rapidly in French for me

Student: RAPIDEMENT

Heather: how do you pronounce the ‘e’ [English spelling]? You got to make it feminine first [...] 

Heather: [about verbs:] what's it gonna end with? You got a choice: t, e or d. What you going for?

Student: -e

Heather: NO! -ER verbs end in -e, -RE verbs don’t, so take out -e and choose -t or –d [...] 

Heather: there are some adjectives that come in front. These are the letters you need to remember them: B, A, G, B and S: beauty, age, good, bad and size. Instead of the adjective coming in front, afterwards, ‘a teacher interesting’, if it is a beautiful teacher, it comes in front: *un beau prof.*

Heather’s think-aloud confirmed translation to be one of the pedagogical tasks used in class. She would monitor students ‘not translating correctly’, or observed: ‘wrong translation for copying the wrong sentence’. She also checked for accurate verb endings, vocabulary spelling and ‘influences from English’. At times, Heather recorded feeling frustrated at students’ mistakes, observing: ‘it is not hard!’ or that the mistakes were ‘careless, basically’. Heather often compared foreign languages and English grammar, often to justify students’ accurate translations or her corrections.

I am a bit dodgy about things like ‘quite great’... It is not like ‘very super’... you do not say very super in English, you do not! And you don’t say quite great in French either.
Heather implicitly compared target language and English on their functions. The latter was the language to express rich, elaborate meaning: ‘This is not an exercise in English... on how fantastic your writing is’; or to check there was meaning: ‘make sure it makes sense in English’. French, instead, was ‘an exercise in proving what you know in French’, with the aim to get good grades and pass the exam. Heather also described it as ‘very artificial’, as she advised students not to talk about themselves but to concentrate on making up sentences with the language examples listed in various categories during the years. :

It does not have to be hugely complicated: next week I am going to go to as school trip to London... we will take the bus... we will go by train... or whatever.

Heather’s strategies for helping students learn grammar seemed to rely on explicit instruction, repetition, memorisation of grammar rules and language, knowledge of notes and content that she previously taught, needed to complete assessment-related tasks. She referred to ‘lists’ of expressions for starting sentences expressing opinions, like ‘je crois que, je pense que’, and so on; and of grammatical explanations, for example the superlative, ‘how to say the best-est’. Learning by heart was also the main skill recommended to complete the assessment in controlled conditions. The work they were doing in class and as homework would have to be memorised to be eventually accurately reproduced in controlled conditions.

4.8.4. Question 3: What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?

In her final interview, when we reflected on the influence of GCSE assessment on grammar teaching, Heather reported believing that criteria to judge students’ work were not applied consistently ‘across the board’. Her perception made her think that there was no purpose in pursuing communicative competence, as this was not appreciated by examination boards. She recalled:

I had A Level students who got As in their orals and no way deserved... they just were not very good... And I got GCSE
students who couldn't have done more... They had every box ticked; they spoke fluently with inflection... they did everything by... and they still did not have an A*. And I think they are being marked by people who don't know what they are doing and it is not... I know for a fact that the markers used to have three years’ teaching experience... a rigorous thing... and now you can be a PGCE student, never have taught and still be a marker... coz they do not have enough people. That's the point.

Heather also reported the following:

What I am trying to do is getting good marks in their control assessment. Be under no illusion: the controlled assessment has got very little to do with you communicating in French and everything to do with ticking boxes. I am completely disillusioned with the exam system; I think the marking is the worst... Awful! So what I am trying to do is to get them to tick as many boxes as possible to get them a highest grade... I mean it's terribly artificial and it is a shame... because it kinda take all the pleasure out... of language learning... coz you wanna communicate and have fun doing it... but... you gonna get through an exam...

She was also determined to make the most of her ‘being head of department’, taking a bold stance at interpreting exam regulations. Despite her frustration, Heather later stated that she was ‘thrilled to bits’ every time her students managed to ‘make a link between two things that they know and create a third thing’ to express their own thoughts’.

Heather’s reported intended learning outcome was grammatical competence, purposely avoiding pursuing any other competence, as the tight time and assessment constraints would frustrate the attempt.

Yesterday, one of my students said ‘Ms, I get the rule she got the rule. But then I am not able to make a phrase’. She was really struggling to put it into any context that she might use it. […] I think
for a lot of students this is the problem... it is not the actual French, so much. It is thinking about what to say that will show off their French, because they do not talk like that naturally. And at A Level that is a huge problem. They don't say 'as far as I am concerned', and all the nice phrases that the French use... they don't say them.

On reflection, the focus on grammar was her strategy to give them 'a series of building blocks that they can hang things on'. Heather’s grammar teaching rationale was to ‘always teach grammar’ in all her lessons to enable students to reach that stage of understanding whereby words were not just ‘a lot of French words’, but parts of a structure that they gradually understood and manipulated independently. She believed this required starting teaching them that ‘de and le equals des’ from year 7, ‘so they don’t make that mistake anymore’. Exam requirements, however, made her and her colleagues question whether ‘teaching grammar was a complete waste of time’, since all they needed to provide were a few key sentences to be able to say ‘je suis allée, j’ai fait. That's how you say I went, I did... And they just learn it... and they just parafashion it’ to pass the exam. She debated with herself which pedagogy was better; whether there was any use in teaching how to use the language, as so far she did it purely for the pleasure to see her students ‘work it out and form it’ independently, despite some struggled.

Heather’s recalled rationale to include grammar responded also to the needs of ‘some students who like it’. She modified the complexity of her explanations according to the ability of a particular set, but it was imperative to always include it to compensate that ‘they are not in a situation of learning their mother tongue and hearing it every day’. Heather believed that her role was to be a ‘facilitator’, as students would ‘automatically’ produce language if guided gradually by consciousness-raising questions. However, as some students would ‘never get there’, she provided those with phrases that they could use and ‘adapt without really knowing that they made a superlative’. Her strategy therefore was to teach grammar ‘so that the ones who want to, and can, have got that information’. The others would be given examples of how to say ‘the most interesting’. If they wanted to change interesting with boring, they only needed to change a word.
Heather reported that using the target language was a ‘massive time waster’, as ‘you would spend hours trying to explain something in the target language that you could have done in 10 seconds in English’, with very few students able to ‘pick up’ even what ‘asseyez-vous’ meant. She believed in the importance to ‘always start in English because otherwise they don’t know what I am talking about’. Heather was a ‘huge believer in translating. You can fit it in exercises to your heart’s content... [...] I translate everything... I get them to speech translate... I get one to translate and the other put it back into French... If you know what the words mean, you’re 90% of the way there’. Heather also believed that students needed to find their ‘own representation of grammar... their own drawing...’, or be allowed to ‘put it in a song’ that helps their memorization.

Heather recalled that her pedagogy differed from the way she learned grammar because she did not ‘assume understanding’, but went ‘right back to basics, so it is not as ‘hazy’. She reflected that her grammar teaching planning was not ‘hugely structured’; it was ‘structured but certainly not planned’. She started from an ‘idea’, but might ‘digress completely’, especially to deal with tenses and other grammar that students punctually forgot. When recording her think-aloud, Heather recalled being ‘hypercritical’ about her students’ repetitive mistakes, observing ‘how could you be so stupid again!’ as they could not ‘remember for the life of them that beaucoup is followed by de’, especially because in English it is the same: ‘lots of’. She reflected that if she ‘understood where that came from’, she would have taught it better, perhaps by breaking down ‘what each bit means’. Heather reflected how her experience allowed her to ‘walk into any class and teach them’, also because ‘the easy thing about languages’, was that all that is needed is ‘in your head... It’s not like you have to set up an experiment in science... you can just teach it’.

Reflecting on how students learn grammar, Heather reported that less able students would become much disengaged only at the mentioning of ‘words like verb, adjectives, agreements, tenses [...] coz they can’t get their head round that in any language. It's like me trying to learn calculus. It's hard. They are new [words] to lots of them’. She believed it was less so now, as students started learning grammar terminology in primary, whilst ‘two or three years ago they did not have a clue’. In her opinion, it was:
no more difficult than learning the parts of the flower or whatever happens in biology, but there are some kids who are on the right hand of a bell shaped curve... they are just not very bright... and they can't grasp things... and ask them to grasp abstract concepts is too hard.

Heather reported that only students 'intelligent enough to understand abstract concepts' could cope with grammar. She felt she had to be realistic and face that 'in a normal mainstream school, who really, really struggle with basic things, let alone French grammar', there were children who were not able to keep the necessary 'level of concentration'. Students would shut down in front of the difficulties presented by grammatical concepts, like everybody would do; even the 'intelligent people on radio 4', were often hopelessly lost with simple problems due to the anxiety to face difficulties. She believed that experiencing learning grammar in their own language would help students understand the grammar of another language. Moreover, she believed that teaching grammar as a school subject would have allowed exploring 'lots of different languages, which would be educational and interesting'. She thought that the downside would be not 'getting to a high level in any' one of them. It was better to integrate grammar to the language learning, due to its not being up to every students' grasp. It was not a 'magic solution to everything'.

4.9. Conclusion

The description and analysis of each case study conducted in this chapter revealed idiosyncratic aspects of grammar teaching. My study’s aim is not to generalise the findings yielded by each case study, but rather treat them as constituting ‘facets’ of what would otherwise remain an anonymous, larger phenomenon of anglophone, secondary foreign language education. My study aims instead to tease out individual cases’ idiosyncrasies in order to add to the completeness of the broader phenomena that they are meant to embody. Previous research has indicated this contextual, descriptive type of research as conducive of culturally attuned curricular innovation and teacher training programmes. The next chapter synthetises findings across the five-theme paradigm identified in the Foreword.
Chapter 5. Cross-case theme synthesis

Foreword

In this Chapter I synthesised findings across the five-theme paradigm reported below. If the research questions framed individual case analysis in Chapter 4, the perspective in Chapter 5 is slightly changed, as the five-theme paradigm serves as the framing lenses refracting any findings that might have remained in the shadow so far. In this way, each of the five themes is now filtered through the three research questions, evidencing reported beliefs on grammar teaching, observed practices of grammar teaching, and reflections on what factors influenced the development of participant teachers’ pedagogical systems. This chapter presents the cross-case synthesis of participants’ views, practices and recalled reflection on each of themes created from the analysis and coding of the initial interviews, framing all methods employed and already introduced in Chapter Four:

1. Context
2. Declarative beliefs
3. Grammar in teacher education
4. Teachers’ beliefs about students’ strategies for learning grammar
5. Teachers’ beliefs about the role of English in grammar teaching

5.1. Contextual influence on grammar teaching

I chose different educational contexts because I was not testing an intervention on grammar teaching, but trying to observe teachers’ beliefs about the potential value of explicit understanding of language structure – grammar- and how these beliefs relate to our current curricular choices, valid across the state sector. My research focused exclusively on the state sector, where the GCSE is concomitantly available, but where educational contexts are often fundamentally socio-economically dissimilar and almost self-regulating in language learning curricular matters. The choice to invite participation from disparate educational contexts reflected the national curriculum for languages undifferentiating administration of languages for all policies, GCSE assessment and Ofsted inspections. Teacher provision is also diverse, as well as the
adoption of schools’ idiosyncratic foreign languages schemes of work and interpretations of the value to pursue GCSE requirements. I aimed to find out teachers’ current position on grammar teaching after twenty years from the adoption of GCSEs, at a moment of curriculum makeover.

5.1.1. Reported beliefs

Teachers seemed to have different conceptualisations of their instructional contexts and of the purpose of the GCSE assessment, which seemed to influence their grammar pedagogical choices. In particular, this affected their use of target language and English. While Enise, Heather and June reported that the context of the target language use was ‘far away’, Ruud, Carla and Jo reported that their context was the classroom, and that therefore it was up to them to create an engaging environment, exploiting all the learning possibilities it yielded. In their educational context, these teachers gave consideration to language proficiency, but also to pursuing students’ happiness when communicating in the target language. Jo’s concept of context aligned with Ruud’s and Carla’s, suspending the participant variables of nationality, education, but also of school ranking. Carol also believed in the classroom as context, where metalanguage was part of it, unlike the target language reality, where the target language was spoken more than her five lessons a week. It seemed that these teachers’ beliefs privileged challenging students to independent language learning and metalinguistic understanding, instead of providing ready-made assessment templates overruling students’ metalinguistic understanding. These differing interpretations of foreign languages teaching seem to coexist in the current policy context, as the assessment criteria seem to accommodate both pedagogical pursuits.

All three foreign national teachers received a grammar-based education in their countries of origin, and all completed their teacher training in England. All reported feeling backed up by management in their grammar pedagogical strategies, with the difference that in Enise’s context there was no whole school policy on language education. Consequently, her approach differed significantly from Jo, her head of department. Jo, June and Heather believed that teachers’ language and grammar pedagogy should be left to their preference, whilst Carole, Ruud, Elliot and Carla declared adherence to departmental methodological infrastructures. All three foreign
teachers were in multicultural and plurilingual contexts; however, their practice greatly differed in their use of the target language. Enise was observed teaching exclusively through English, and seemed greatly concerned with complying with exam requirements. Her practice was not a contextual imposition but her personal choice, as her head of department – Jo – was observed teaching with a strong target language mode. Jo conducted metalinguistic activities in target language, and was observed teaching in task-based mode in the same conditions as Enise’s. Enise instead mainly provided ready-made examples to be learned by heart, whereby grammar understanding was of no consequence, as students’ chances to succeed depended on their good memory. June’s pedagogical strategies were very similar to Enise’s. Both June and Enise reported teaching grammar aiming to create metalinguistic understanding that would enable students to use the language ‘in real context’. Carol and Elliot also had a strong GCSE-driven pedagogical mode, but they were observed pursuing grammar understanding in their lessons, pushing students to share their metalinguistic understanding and reusing it to produce language tasks independently. Nevertheless, observations captured that their GCSE assessment preparation was strongly oriented to root out mistakes from students’ work, resulting in the provision of templates which were virtually equally correct, independently of the students’ original output.

Teachers had different opinions about foreign languages curricular status, often linked with their beliefs that it was difficult for students to grasp grammatical concepts. Jo wished foreign languages to be elective for the difficulty to lead students with very low motivation up to GCSE by the same standards. June, instead, reported to strongly support a ‘languages for all rationale, almost in spite of the reported low levels of motivation, falling numbers and believing that some students would never ‘get it’. Only Ruud and Carla reported maintaining their commitment to both metalinguistic and communicative pedagogy across abilities. However, it needs to be noted that their context is selective of pupils’ multilingual backgrounds. All other teachers reported giving lower ability students sentences that they needed to memorise in order for them to have a GCSE pass.

Ruud and Carla reported having to abide to a scheme of work and a syllabus that cascaded from a whole school language policy of CLIL and target language, deploying
Communicative Language Teaching in its composite structural and communicative conceptualisation, with which they ideologically agreed. They did not associate communicative with bypassing grammatical understanding. Both Jo and Carol committed to changing the scheme of work to make it more analytic. Jo believed that the GCSE requirements were now demanding more grammatical understanding of pupils and giving more control to teachers over assessment. She reported how beforehand the department had taught ‘towards an assessment’ with a ‘communicative approach’ described as consisting of teaching rote-learned phrases without any grammatical understanding (Klapper, 2003). Carol believed the change was a push towards creativity, transferable ‘learning to learn’ skills, and means of measuring progression and avoiding repetition. Carol reported downsizing the department due to past unpopularity, but was convinced that the smaller version, unified by the perceived importance of grammar pedagogy, was a thriving and more motivated environment. Both Jo and Elliot observed that some teachers were happy to teach only a few sentences and ask their students to rote-learn them to pass exams. Ruud was also aware he had ‘to get good grades’, but rather by making his teaching motivational by exciting students ‘about the language’. Teachers seemed free to choose whether to keep to rote-learned templates pedagogy, or to one committed to transfer language awareness inclusive of grammatical understanding.

5.1.2. Observed practice

Enise, Carol and Heather were observed coaching students on exam requirements and rote learning strategies for controlled condition assessment. June and Elliot mentioned exam requirements only briefly in lesson, but recorded concerns with the same when correcting students’ work, similarly to the previous three teachers. Moreover, Elliot was observed correcting students’ assessment pieces in lesson, with exam requirements at hand, and recommending students to learn the pieces by heart for the speaking assessment. Jo, Ruud and Carla were observed mentioning and negotiating information on assessment requirements in the target language, embedding them in the lesson task and classroom communication. Additionally, Ruud stressed he would not have commented or corrected mistakes, but only given generic recommendations to watch out for agreements or tenses. Enise and Heather, instead, discouraged students from ‘making their own text from scratch’, explicitly telling
students that the assessment was not a time to be creative, as the examiners only wanted to observe their inclusion of the key linguistic features repeatedly mentioned in lesson, i.e. at least three tenses, connectives, complex sentences, opinions and justifications. Their lessons were rehearsals of various templates made under teacher supervision, corrected by the teacher, available to students with or without their grammatical understanding and rote-learned for the controlled conditions.

5.1.3. Recalled reflections

On reflection, Enise and Heather reported the strong contextual influences that exam requirements played in their grammar and language pedagogical strategies. They both set aside their language pedagogical beliefs about the value of pursuing grammar understanding. Both Enise and Heather reported being aware that the activities pursued frustrated students’ creativity, and would see no pedagogical value in it. Both believed they were enhancing students’ chances of succeeding in their assessment, as they believed that students were not capable of independently mastering the grammar necessary to form the same type of sentences. For this reason, Enise reflected that rote learning was the only strategy that compensated the lack of time necessary to teach all students the required metalinguistic understanding. Memorising the ready-made sentences/structures allowed moving on quickly and covering the entire program, obviating lack of time, students’ limited abilities and motivation, and lack of exposure to grammar teaching in English. Carol’s strategy equally planned to cover all assessment requirements. However, her concern was to sustain students’ motivation by signposting their success with an interim FCSE assessment in Year 9. Moreover, she included creative, teacher-assessed projects as a departmental strategy, combining exam requirements and scope for independent expression in the target language. Elliot’s pedagogy pursued grammatical understanding, but at the expenses of classroom communication in the target language. June was very concerned with students’ communication and the pursuit of communicative activities; however, her language pedagogy tended to conceal metalinguistic complexity by means of playful activities, which prevalently contained examples and matching translations. June reported aiming to make students infer grammatical rules from examples, but my observations did not capture instances of her inductive metalinguistic activity.
5.2. Teachers’ reported beliefs and observed practice of grammar teaching

5.2.1. Reported beliefs

Teachers generally conceptualised grammar as a metaphoric ‘skeleton’, a cohesive ‘tool’ of an ultimately communicative intent. Enise, Jo and Carla also used the metaphor of grammar as ‘rule’, or rules, that students ‘remember, hopefully, and reapply’ (Carla). Participants expressed beliefs that grammar can help students understand and ‘make sense’ (Enise); as means to gain confidence and eliminate errors by making errors and not care about them (Carol). Elliot expressed a concept of grammar as means to eradicate errors, elaborating that it was students’ ‘understanding’ of grammatical processes that enabled students to eradicate errors and have independence of expression. Elliot also believed this understanding needed to be taught, as it did not happen incidentally, hence his systematic comparisons of target language and first language structures, e.g.: ‘it is the door red, not the red door’. Ruud reported similarly that ‘grammatical understanding’ was a tool to eradicate error, but that ‘grammar itself’ was not, meaning that teaching grammar in isolation did not prompt students’ independent monitoring of their output. He believed that teachers had to teach ‘how to use the tool’. Participants believed that explicit metalinguistic knowledge and metalanguage brought long term benefits; Carol adding that disguising metalanguage leads to confusion.

Another role of learning a foreign languages grammar was to shed light on native languages. Elliot, Ruud and Carla believed that grammatical understanding was relevant to all subjects and essential to independent use of language. Elliot believed grammar needed to be taught from an early age, lest catching up on grammar understanding for the duration of the language learning years. Carla and Ruud believed teachers needed to create positive expectations of grammar teaching, as communication had structures and rules. Heather and Enise believed that teaching grammar compensated the cramped timetable and lack of target language exposure, but were observed providing templates, not metalinguistic activities. Ellis (2010) reports that research also seem to suggest that grammar speeds up students’ language learning in formal educational contexts of language learning, where it was the starting point towards acquisition.
Most teachers’ understanding of communicative language teaching was as ‘fuzzy’ and diverse as Klapper (2003) reviewed. Elliot reported it was ‘jargon’, and most referred to it as exclusive use of communication or incidental focus on form. Teachers reported aiming to teach grammar to enable effective communication, not accuracy, but observation revealed discrepancies. Jo, conversely, believed in teaching deductively, but was observed to do quite the opposite. Only Carla and Ruud reported a concept of communicative approach as inclusive of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence.

All teachers associated grammatical understanding with creativity and independent use of the language. For example:

Carol:  
So, the whole creativity thing, when we made these changes we introduced more grammar; [we] became more creative. [...] I think it sort of helped us. I would definitively say that we’re being much more creative. And for me, being creative does mean doing things to do with grammar.

Elliot:  
I think without the understanding [of grammar]... they did not have any independence...

Carol also believed grammar to be the foundation of transferable learning skills, ‘learning to learn’ approach in the national curriculum for languages, empowering students to be creative. Jo valued grammatical knowledge both as a pedagogical tool and as a learning strategy/aid.

Teachers seemed to converge on conceptualising explicit grammatical analysis as encouraging both noticing and understanding (Hudson, 2012c). Hudson presented the cognitive activities of noticing and understanding as cognitive rationale for including foreign Languages in the National Curriculum, and for its bridging with first language education. Ellis (2010) proved the value of metalinguistic activity for triggering ‘awareness at the level of noticing’ which is necessary for learning, and ‘awareness at the level of understanding’ as ‘fostering deeper and more rapid learning’, therefore fostering the ‘development of not just second language explicit knowledge but also implicit knowledge’ (Ellis, 2010, p. 452). Moreover, Carla’s and Ruud’s rationale for
foreign languages was for students to be good communicators and enjoyment of the learning experience. Carla also aimed to produce language close to native speakers' standards, adding that both English and foreign languages should teach about language as an 'object of study', inclusive of how to study and how to talk about it; how different 'languages' had specific metalanguages, like the language of maths, or of literature, that also needed to be taught.

5.2.2. Observed practice

On observation, however, the rationale that appeared to take over was to cover assessment requirements allowing students to take away something at the end of five years of language learning. In the non-selective school contexts this was at the cost of grammatical understanding, with Jo's exception. Grammatical understanding took time that teachers claimed not to have on their timetable. Lack of time prevented also the fostering communication in the target language in class.

While all teachers conceptualised metalinguistic activity as important, on observation metalinguistic activity was observed as happening with very different degrees of consistency. Observing teachers in different contexts revealed that teachers are currently using different grammar teaching strategies and defining grammar according to differing concepts. In Jo's and Enise's case, the difference was striking because they enacted divergent pedagogies concurrently, in the same context, to teach the same syllabus to year 10 classes; Jo of Spanish, Enise of French; Jo as a foreign target language speaker, Enise as mother target language speaker. Of all teachers, only Carla and Ruud gave theoretical justification to their pedagogy, while others attributed it to their experience. Enise, June and Heather, for example, used translation extensively, and language structures were not explored, as often task templates were given inclusive of all GCSE-targeted grammatical forms, translated and successively learnt by heart prior to the exam in controlled conditions. 'Languages for all' policy, in these cases, seemed a matter of providing ready-made templates for all students to take the GCSE exam independently of their ability to understand and reproduce target language. Carol said she integrated both communicative and explicit instruction but was observed doing only the latter; there was evidence of project work but it was
mainly written and aimed at assessment, and no real communication was observed happening in class.

Jo, Ruud and Carla taught according to task-based, full immersion mode (Fotos & Ellis, 1991). Grammar was presented in the target language incidentally, but analysed explicitly, integrated with the provision of opportunities for communication, which freely moved from information on the language structures to everyday exchanges about grammar as well as day-to-day conversations. Students were prompted but not forced to participate in the discussion in the target language, as teachers were happy with their participation in either target language or English. Grammar was measured by ‘means of an instrument that allows for controlled, planed language use’ (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, p. 607). ‘Imitation tasks, sentence-joining and grammaticality judgement tasks’ (ibid) were all kind of activities pursued by all three teachers. These teachers did not give ready-made templates that students had to piece together, but examples, or sentence starters from which students then elaborated rules and proceeded to produce their own compositions. Fotos and Ellis (1991) observed that ‘it is in this kind of language use that learners are able to draw on their explicit knowledge’; a position supported further by Ellis’ (2010) review. Fotos and Ellis (1991) suggested that the role of explicit knowledge is limited due to the typical amount of it that the typical learner can learn, and has mainly as monitoring role in communicative language use. This is ‘a positive role, however, because it accelerates the process of acquiring implicit knowledge and may even be necessary for the acquisition of certain kinds of grammatical rules that evidence suggests cannot be acquired solely by means of input derived from communicative language use’ (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, p. 608).

Carol, Elliot and Heather had a traditional approach of formal instruction about target structures. Delivered in English, students had to know and monitor with the taught structures, aimed at consciousness-raising and providing opportunities to practise the target structures. Their traditional approach made very limited use of the target language, which was mainly analysed. Fotos and Ellis (1991) describe limiting formal instruction to explicit knowledge as ‘more useful’ (p. 608), but that it works if the explicit knowledge developed is subsequently linked with opportunities for natural communication (Spada, 1987). Enise and June’s main mode was translation and work on templates, a practice of exposure to language which Fotos and Ellis (1991)
observed was not sufficient to overcome the psycholinguistic limitations that students might be experiencing if their developmental stages are not ready to process the target structures and abstract grammatical rules.

Most teachers reported composite strategies whereby explicit grammar was taught in the hope to enable students to communicate accurately. Only Heather reported not intending to teach communication anymore, disillusioned by contradictory assessment requirements. She believed that the little timetabled time would have been wasted pursuing something students had no sure means to attain, as it was inconsistently tested and scored by examination boards. For the same reasons, she avoided target language use in the classroom, and transferred all knowledge in English. Elliot also reported not pursuing target language use in the classroom because it did not came natural to him, and solely focused on the application of grammar rules. In Elliot's and Carol's cases, metalinguistic activities were varied and contained both inductive and deductive explorations of linguistic tasks. Students reapplied their rules independently in written tasks, but neither teachers nor students were observed attempting to communicate in the target language either on metalinguistic tasks or on daily classroom talk. Carol believed that she taught both through examples of patterns and explicit rules. She summed up her method as ‘this is the rule, here are some examples, do some practice’. When observed, her pedagogical strategies were consistent with those she reported. In the same school, Elliot reported teaching word categories but not communication, as it did not come naturally to him as much as structure analysis and comparisons with English. On the other hand, despite the lack of observed communicative application of grammatical rules, Carol and Elliot fostered students’ grammatical understanding through metalinguistic activities that students were asked to reapply independently in written tasks. My observations captured consisting pedagogical practices. There were no instances of communication in Enise’s, Carol’s, Elliot's June’s and Heather’s lessons, but rehearsed language either copied or read out and later corrected. They were all observed rehearsing rules that had been memorised. Despite their reported pedagogical strategies, in Enises’, Heather’s and June’s cases students did not reapply their metalinguistic knowledge, as they memorised translated, ready-made examples containing all the linguistic structures listed in the assessment requirements. Grammatical understanding was not essential,
as the repetition of rules and metalinguistic processes to add and subtract endings was memorised but not needed once all moved on to copy and repeat modelled texts.

Enise and June reported and inductive and communicative teaching mode; they later also reported presenting a rule and asking students to apply it like in ‘maths’. In the observed lessons, they presented examples and asked to copy ready-made templates after translating them. When observed, it became clear that Enise often termed ‘structures’ both ready-made phrases and grammatical rules, which she confirmed on recalled reflection. My observations captured her asking students to repeat imperfect tense endings; however, she was not observed teaching them ‘how to apply them’, but recalling a memorised rule for a tense that in actual practice students did not need to know, as it was readily included in the ready-made templates. June was observed handing out ready-made phrases that needed translating or piecing together, at times asking to recognise which tense she presented, but never asking students to apply the grammatical rules necessary to produce a message independently. Fotos and Ellis (1991) described it as a weak strategy in an instructional context, as presenting models containing the target structures and asking students to reapply them requires an ability of abstraction often beyond students’ psycholinguistic developmental stages. Their review studies confirmed no clear evidence that practising the production of ‘sentences that model the target structures results in its acquisition as implicit knowledge’ (p. 607). Instead, formal instruction directed at relatively simple grammatical rules would successfully develop implicit knowledge of grammatical features that students would be able to draw upon first as monitor, and later as acquired knowledge.

Jo believed she was teaching grammar explicitly, just as she was taught, but in fact she was teaching a strong version of task-based focus on form; incidentally through target language. When she reported her beliefs, she related how she taught to add endings to –er and –ir verbs. She did report being in the process of trying to match content with grammar, adding explicit instruction to match what she perceived as new GCSE assessment requirements to have more understanding of the concept of grammar, but she seemed to have no awareness of the significance of using the target language. She also reported using translation greatly, but she was observed sporadically translating single words when helping individual students.
There appeared to be a seamless continuity between Ruud’s and Carla’s reported beliefs and observed practices. Ruud termed his language teaching approach as minimalist, describing how it involved both communicating in the target language, implicitly and explicitly focusing on structures. He started by proposing a basic structure, which would be elaborated and co-constructed by him and the students by means of synonyms and other universally understood symbols. There were no lists of rules handed out, as rules were negotiated by using gestures and all prossemic tools available until students worked out and explained with their cognitive means, guided by Ruud’s metalinguistic explanations and explicit metalanguage. The target language was used for metalinguistic as well as for communicative purposes. Ruud reported that these rules then formed a ‘toolbox’, ‘additional blocks’ for their language learning. In the past he believed in grammar in itself, but study and experience concluded he needed to grant access to language. Carla reported and was observed teaching inductively, but talking about grammar in the target language, asking students to identify patterns and recount their explicit knowledge of the grammatical rules. She taught strategies to communicate effectively, and teaching grammar was part of it.

5.2.3. Recalled reflections

In her recalled reflection, Enise confirmed that by structures she meant ready-made phrases and sentences, but she did not feel the need to change her statements on her communicative rationale and her pedagogical strategies. Jo confirmed her priority to teach grammar, but appeared still unaware of the implications of her extensive use of target language. At the end of her reflection on her pedagogical rationale, she reported it was mainly inductive, preferring they ‘absorbed a little, instead of repeating the same thing’. Moreover, she concluded that she would have never taught grammar in Spanish to weaker students, as it would have been a waste of time. In this way, she did not seem to consider the metalinguistic activity she conducted in the target language during both lessons as grammar teaching. Carol confirmed her pedagogical rationale to give students a sense of ownership, creativity and independent expression, but was not observed creating any opportunity of spontaneous communication and unplanned use of the target language. She confirmed using target language, but she seemed unaware of the fact that she had immediately translated most target language
language used. Elliot recalled his initial stated aim to conduct classroom-based competitive grammar understanding activities, confirming that he did not try to create communicative opportunities but occasions for students to prove their explicit grammatical understanding. Carla and Ruud confirmed their objectives were to achieve linguistic, metalinguistic and cognitive aims, ensuring students attained accurate expression and were able to talk about their linguistic choices. Ruud added that pursuing entertainment would be a ‘lazy way of teaching’ lacking the necessary pedagogical commitment. He felt it was his call to engage students at a ‘high cognitive level’ appropriate to their developmental stage. Carla confirmed that the context she was considering was the classroom, where students were invited to talk about issues that were relevant to their reality. Carla also confirmed that the role of teaching grammar was to enable students to monitor their output and speeding up their learning, coherently with Fotos and Ellis (1991). June recalled pursuing inductive grammar teaching of rules in context spurring students to be ‘more adventurous’ in their expression and discouraging copying Google translations. She justified their poor performance with the fact that they had not revised the ‘future tense’ for a while, and that it was previously studied in another ‘context’. Heather was also consistent in her recalled beliefs, stating that she was trying to get ‘good marks in their controlled assessment’. She recalled that her rationale for teaching grammar was to give them ‘a series of building blocks that they can hang things on’, and the pleasure to see her students ‘work it out and form it’ independently. She also confirmed that using the target language was a ‘massive time waster’ as you would ‘spend hours trying to explain something in the target language that you could have done in 10 seconds in English.

5.3. Foreign languages and first language interdisciplinary aspects

5.3.1. Reported beliefs

All participants remarked regret that grammar is not explicitly taught in subject English, lamenting that their inability to make progress in their lessons, or use the target language more often, was due to the fact that they had to introduce and explain grammatical terminology unknown to students. Ruud, June and Heather remarked that there was a slight improvement recently, since grammar started to be taught in primary
schools, but generally teachers recorded frustration for the lack of grammar awareness in students.

5.3.2. Observed practice

Most teachers expressed their belief in teaching foreign languages grammar by comparison to English, and the teaching of grammar in most cases required extensive use of the English language. Only Ruud, Carla and Jo used the target language, despite belonging different contexts and despite having the same limited timetable to get results as all other teachers. Ruud believed that teaching grammar was part of both English and target language education, but that each had to pursue its own grammar discourse, lest complicating the teaching with additional layers of metalanguage not always compatible. Carla thought that labelling terms was helpful, but she privileged the functional aspect and teaching structures’ communicative functions, making links with ‘pronominalisation’ and expressions requiring such grammatical structure. She believed that comparative teaching was particularly indicated to teach intermediate and advanced students as it lead to a more sophisticated knowledge of the target language. Enise was the only one to believe grammar had to be taught in its own right, whilst Carla believed that both English and foreign languages had to include reflections on language as a ‘subject of study’, leading students to notice how languages and discourse had their own grammars. Heather stated students would not understand metalinguistic activity unless it was taught in English.

These findings are in agreement with other studies comparing English and foreign languages teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching in the UK, where lack of explicit teaching of grammatical terminology and sentence level grammar was perceived by foreign languages teachers as fundamental, and by English teachers mostly as irrelevant (Burley & Pumphrey, 2002; Harris, 2006; Mitchell, Hooper, et al., 1994). They also revealed that these teachers were all receptive to intercultural language curriculum design, as conceptualised in Anderson (2008), Burley and Pumphrey (2002), Grenfel (2000) and Planel (2008). However, teachers were wary that such initiatives could be left to isolated and uncoordinated initiatives which used time teachers felt they had not. Teachers believed it had to be a national policy initiative,
centrally coordinated. June’s hesitation for a cross-curricular policy was the difficulty to face students’ lack of motivation and concentration. June had a difficult task engaging students with behavioural and motivational issues, and she was very worried that a cross curricular link would have added to the difficulty to keep students engaged.

5.3.3. Recalled reflections

Lastly, Jo, Elliot and Heather raised concerns that students’ English was not ‘proper’ and that this was interfering with their cross-metalinguistic explanations. Their perceived limitations were students’ lack of explicit knowledge of certain English grammatical features, such as ignorance of the accusative ‘whom’ and the dialectal ‘I done’, ‘I gone’ instead of ‘I have done’ and ‘I have gone’.

5.4. Grammar in teacher education

5.4.1. Reported beliefs

During the first interview, when reporting the impact of their own grammar education, two English first-language speaking teachers associated their grammar-based foreign language learning with their later acquired ability and confidence to communicate, but also to the reinforcement of their cognitive skills:

June: I still believe that what I learned was important because it allowed me to go to France at the age of 14 and still manage to understand what was going on even though I knew little vocabulary… I think it is a part of the grammar and being able to listen to it… and find… you can cope with a lot of vocabulary… because you can rely on … I suppose… cognates and things like that.

Carol: When I was 15 or 16 […] I remember in the summer holidays I sat down and I wrote out all of the French verbs […]. I wasn’t taught. I did it out of my free will. […] I had been in France before… but it was like accessing a brand new world completely, which linked to this new confidence
that I had because I could now do this thing… I could speak languages… this is the first experience of real success. And the confidence that it gave me allowed me to do other things, which beforehand I had a barrier… like numbers… and science… I was not particularly good at them, but my attitude had changed because I did not feel… you know… it was less than an unknown territory… Suddenly I could learn!! Set phrases and things… willingly… then I started to feel motivated to go and learn anything…

These beliefs find a link with Hudson’s (2006) rationale for foreign languages learning and explicit grammar teaching as supporting the development of scientific learning method. They also align with Swan’s (2011, p. 560) claim of language structure as reflecting, at ‘abstracted and metaphorical level, our conceptual and perceptual engagement with the physical world’.

Two English second-language speaking teachers, however, expressed dislike for their grammar-based instruction in first and foreign languages learning, and delight at remembering their encounter with communicative language learning, which they consciously related to Communicative Competence theory (Canale, 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980):

Carmen: I really enjoyed that and I thought: ‘Oh, this is great!’ Because, you know, she [a teacher assisting the main teacher] was creating the context, and we had to use the language, and I realised: ‘actually, I can say things… and I can do things’; and I think: ‘I need to remind myself of this’; that ultimately I am learning this because I want to communicate.

Ruud: I thought it was rubbish. It was all didactics… it was done in the afternoon… it was grammar-translation… I absolutely hated it! When I went into teaching training here, what I really enjoyed was the fact that it was interactive, it was communicative language teaching, with which I would still overall agree with.

As previously mentioned, Carla and Ruud taught in a school promoting a communicative approach to language teaching through a virtual theoretical position
for target language use, according to which the ‘classroom is like the target country’, and therefore they aimed to totally exclude the first language (Macaro, 2001, p. 535).

Teachers often said that their teaching experience was their pedagogical framework, and Jo reported that her PGCE tutor told her that the way she learned grammar would forge her template pedagogy. Foreign national teachers reported great confidence in their grammatical content knowledge, acquired in their country. Enise reported her grammar-based education enabled her to teach grammar to students who were not familiar with it, compensating for their lack of grammar learning in subject English. She reported doing ‘what worked’. Ruud and Carla’s theoretical underpinning was Communicative Language Teaching and CLIL, which they were observed applying consistently to the theory they referred to, such as Krashen and Terrell (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), Canale (Canale, 1983), and Coyle, Hood and Marsh (Coyle et al., 2010). All teachers reported that exploring another language makes one aware of one’s own language as it brings it from automatic to conscious use; however, English first-language speaking teachers reported approaching grammar only when studying a foreign language. Only Jo and June reported feeling insecure about their target language grammar knowledge. June reported her vivid memory of realising that she received a grammar-based foreign languages education at grammar school, but had to start teaching in the communicative ‘era’, having to abandon her beliefs for teaching what she thought to be a limiting method of grammar avoidance.

I asked teachers to report how they believed their teacher training influenced their practice, and whether they thought that research could help their practice. Ruud was the sole teacher who found his PGCE inspirational. It was about CLIL, which he pursued at research level. As a PGCE tutor, he remembered it was depressing to see how trainee teachers knew very little grammar and about grammar. He therefore doubted they would be able to explain it and use it as a pedagogical tool. All other teachers related the same dissatisfaction with the training’s lack of theoretical underpinning to grammar teaching as well as other language teaching aspects. Two teachers, who followed PGCE trainee teachers in their schools, reported very discouraging levels of grammatical knowledge in trainee teachers in general, and wonder at how such poor knowledge would translate in effective language pedagogy. Enise’s reported explanation for not being inspired by any grammar teaching
theoretical frameworks was that in England grammar is not taught. This made it impossible for her to apply a method similar to the teaching she received, pushing her to find a pedagogy that ‘worked’ in the English educational context. Moreover, the PGCE did not provide her with any theoretical pedagogical framework, but plunged her in the teaching reality and asked her to reflect on her own personal grammar pedagogical rationale, asking her to put it in practice without any theoretical validations. Additionally, Enise believed research was of no use to her, as she believed she found her effective pedagogy. Jo, across the corridor and head of department, believed in improving herself, and disapproved of teachers who taught to pass exams by giving students ready-made phrases to memorise, but she let teachers to practise according to their best knowledge. Carol remembered communicative grammar teaching being mentioned in her PGCE, but reported that she decided to let her own learning experience rule her grammar-based pedagogy. Elliot found the PGCE grammar patronising and almost less informative than the one he studied at secondary school. Jo, Carol and Elliot wished research to assist teachers’ knowledge of grammar pedagogy and how to best coordinate cross-curricular language education. Jo’s experience formed a belief that ascertaining teachers’ grammar knowledge should not be left to formative stages, but should be pursued during language learning.

5.4.2. Observed practice

On observation, Enise’s and Heather’s conscious decisions to do ‘what worked’ consisted in providing students with templates to pass an exam. Their choice was one shared with other participants, more or less consciously or openly, and seemingly allowed by the very assessment infrastructure. Moreover, this choice went beyond the conditioning of teachers’ nationality and education criteria, as it was pursued in all contexts in various degrees. Whilst Jo, Ruud and Carla accepted the challenge to transfer grammatical understanding, other teachers decided that the assessment result was more important than the language learning challenge.

5.4.3. Recalled reflections

Carla wished for research to help teachers establish how to gradually move from first language to target language-mediated grammar teaching in foreign languages
teaching context. She lamented that unlike TEFL the English foreign languages context was not researched and did not apply research. Moreover, the existing publications had no relevance to her classroom teaching. She believed that grammar was essential pedagogical content knowledge for language teachers as it allowed to plan both implicit and explicit language teaching strategies. Carla believed that being a native speaker was not enough, due to teachers’ need to consistently prepare people to go further and mediate knowledge through appropriate pedagogical strategies and tools. Without prejudice to metalinguistic activity for all abilities, together with metalanguage it was fundamental to meet the needs of students from different levels and backgrounds, as students would not accept ready-made templates without explanations.

5.5. How students learn grammar

5.5.1. Reported beliefs

All teachers believed that students had no expectations of grammar as they do not study it in first language and for that reason they perceived it as a ‘bunch of words’, a ‘separate concept from the language’ (Jo). Carla and Jo reported that some international students educated abroad had expectations of being taught grammar, and greater ability to understand metalinguistic activities. Jo was in a much challenged context, but revealed great responsibility not to restrict students by teaching set phrases. She felt she had to push them, give them the ‘opportunity to love their foreign languages’ and endeavour help them ‘to make the connections’ between form and communicative intent, and enable them to monitor their performance. In her slightly selective context, Carol said she treated students like they were linguists, but even she reported giving less able students phrases to learn by heart. Enise was observed teaching set phrases across her classroom abilities, while Carol reported teaching the ‘core’ grammar points and verbs to the less able, and observed conducting extensive grammatical analysis with her Year 10 class. She reported teaching less able students with less detail, as they needed more rote learning of templates to cope with exam requirements. Jo also believed students found grammar very hard, like ‘calculus’, but felt she needed to insist not to waste five years of their education. She also reported that explicit grammar teaching was for the most able students, while she mentioned
giving bottom sets the same set phrases as Enise and Carol. June and Heather seemed concerned to engage – ‘not entertaining’ – students as they thought that grammar was boring. June believed in ‘languages for all’, but also that it required a ‘fairly ordered mind’ to learn grammar and be able to put it in practice, and that ‘those with illiteracy issues are never really gonna get it’. Carol thought it was confusing. At the same time she wanted them to ‘think’ and gain independent skills as for school policy. Some teachers, despite their context, believed in challenging students; others played safe by handing out ready-made templates.

Elliot believed students learned grammar by asking questions and analysing structures with him. He reported teaching both implicitly and explicitly. Ruud believed students wanted to know ‘how things work’, and he taught all abilities in the same way. Carla also taught grammar to all abilities, but refrained from entering into details with beginner students, as they were ready and eager to discover how to say things and find out about cultural target language aspects. Carla reported that there was no room for ‘imitation’ in her lesson, because it entails no ability to transfer grammatical knowledge from one linguistic context to the next, and it would not be accepted by her demanding students, used to her teaching ‘how to do’.

5.5.2. Recalled reflections

Recalling the events of the observed lessons, June believed that knowledge of grammar helped students make faster progress in being able to communicate (Fotos & Ellis, 1991). Inconsistencies, however, started to emerge when comparing teachers’ beliefs about students’ learning strategies, and teachers’ own pedagogical strategies to address their students’ needs. Whilst two participants were able to recall specific inductive teaching practices, the other teachers seem to fluctuate between examples of inductive grammar teaching based on presenting rules within text and context, and deductive grammar teaching of explicit explanations of grammar rules, such as the passé composé in French (Ellis, 2010). This could be due to teachers’ input differentiation according to students’ ability. However, it could also be due to a lack of awareness of, or inability to express their pedagogical approaches.
5.6. **Conclusion**

This chapter has further triangulated the five-theme paradigm along which my findings have been systematically framed. In Chapter Six, the discussion moves away from the detail of the findings to present a theoretical framework of the way in which an analysis based on an individual (interpretivist perspective) approach intersects with an analysis based on collective and institutional processes such as school policy and the National Curricular requirements (socio-cultural perspective) to influence the development of beliefs.
Chapter 6. Discussion

Foreword

The chapter is organised in two parts. Firstly, I discuss how my interpretivist perspective collected data and described individual realities aimed to see them play a part in the collective meaning-making intrinsic in a sociocultural educational reform based on dialectical unity. I then illustrate the emerging theoretical framework explaining the development of individual participant teachers' beliefs in the backdrop of the school policy and the NC requirements in place at the time of my study. The conceptual theorised framework resulted from the selected coding of the five-theme paradigm themes, when core concepts were matched to relevant literature and macro contextual factors in order to describe the central phenomenon of this study – teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching. This part also includes a diagram that summarises how teachers' beliefs about grammar related to their education, their contexts and their practices. The second part of the chapter frames my results along the three research questions and sub questions, which guided the collection of data and the choice of methodology, and which provides further refractions of my results.

The study aimed to research foreign languages teachers' beliefs about teaching grammar in the specific context of English secondary school foreign languages education, where grammar has been a contested area in both first language and foreign languages curricula. The analysis condensed the findings on the phenomenon of the development of participant teacher beliefs about grammar teaching in a five-theme paradigm, revealing consistencies and discrepancies amongst participant teachers' beliefs about the role of grammar teaching, the impact of teacher education and contexts, teachers' beliefs about how students learn grammar and their beliefs about grammar teaching in subject English teaching. The findings signal the importance of considering teachers' beliefs about grammar when devising foreign languages policy, teacher training, and when planning language teaching methodology and testing. My results will be critically examined in the light of the previous knowledge reviewed in Chapter 2.
6.1. **From individual perspectives to collective and institutional processes**

Sociocultural theory aims to position foreign language education as a phenomenon where meaning making emerges from ‘organic and dialectical unity forged between communities and individuals’ (Sieloff Magnan, 2008, p. 349). From the same theoretical perspective, my interpretive research generalised the findings concerning participants’ beliefs and practices of grammar teaching from an analysis of the individual perspectives gathered in each case study (Barcelos, 2003; A. S. Lee & Baskerville, 2003; Leo van Lier, 2003, p. viii). The aim was to uncover the explanations that these particular contexts could yield to other settings in the foreign language education communities of research and practice (Díaz Andrade, 2009; Sieloff Magnan, 2008). In this way, my adopted interpretive, exploratory paradigm intended to elicit significant themes emerging from each case study data (Thomas, 2006) so that teachers’ voices could play a part in the collective meaning making before mentioned. Consequently, I sought participants whose experiences would illuminate different facets of grammar teaching in foreign language education in England (Charmaz, 2003a).

The authentic picture I aimed to reconstruct of foreign languages teachers’ beliefs, thoughts and strategies for dealing with grammar intended to foreground teachers’ realities, so that they can play a part and can be accounted for in the forthcoming planning of educational implementation and reform, and so that more will be known on whom and what impact such reform is likely to have.

6.2. **Theoretical framework for understanding foreign language teachers’ beliefs about grammar.**

The central phenomenon studied is the development of teacher beliefs about grammar teaching in secondary schools in England. My theoretical perspective saw teacher beliefs as the core variable, determining the outcomes: the types of strategies adopted by individual teachers to deal with grammar. The core variable seemed in turn influenced by other factors, identified in this research as the five-theme paradigm emerging in the selective coding, following the first two steps of open and axial coding.
This paradigm was later modified, as themes a. and b. seemed to characterise Theme 2 (Table 16):

Table 16. Theme paradigm.

1. Grammar in participant teachers’ education
2. Participant teachers’ contexts
   a. Participant teachers’ beliefs about students’ strategies for learning grammar
   b. Participant teachers’ beliefs about the role of English in grammar teaching
3. Participant teachers’ reported beliefs

These emerged as the intervening conditions influencing the phenomenon and its consequences. All teacher beliefs and educational contexts were equally accountable to the same conditions posed by the National Curriculum and the assessment for Modern Foreign Languages. This macro context engulfed all the cases studied, and appeared characterised by a tension between a National Curriculum increasingly demanding the explicit drawing of attention and comparisons between L1 and other languages, and an assessment still too predictable and based on the students’ performance on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (see Question 3 in 6.3.3. below). These institutional processes should be the recipient within which the collective meaning making should converge. However, at present the macrostructure lacks the theoretical and methodological infrastructure to frame a collective meaning making. The freedom allowed to foreign language teachers in a disapplied curriculum at present does not therefore provide a rationale of the individual meaning making which is being constructed by individual foreign languages teachers in England. These observations refer to tensions previously highlighted between the curriculum, the assessment and the grammar teaching strategies adopted by teachers (Block, 2002; Macaro, 2000, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001). Moreover, it can also be referred to Borg and his observation that teachers beliefs and ‘hence their practices’ tended not to be influenced by curricular debates (Borg, 2006, p. 119). However, they can be greatly influenced by assessment and other macro contextual conditions (Golombek, 1998; Kagan, 1992; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992).
The five intervening conditions seemed to influence the formation of participant teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching at different stages. The following discussion aims to illustrate the emerging theoretical framework explaining the development of individual participant teachers’ beliefs in the shared macro contexts of England-based teacher training, school policy and the NC requirements in place at the time of my study. The diagram in Table 17 summarises how teachers’ beliefs about grammar related to their education, their contexts and their practices.

Table 17. Theoretical framework illustrating the formation of participant teachers’ beliefs.

Consistent with research, participant teachers seem to enter the profession with already well-established beliefs, in the face of which theories of second language acquisition and pre-service training seemed to bear little influence, if any (Borg, 2006, 2011). All participant teachers completed their pre-service training in England; however, the impact of the teacher training contents on participant teachers’ grammar teaching strategies proved relevant only in one case, and reportedly because it adopted a specific approach to language education; a sociocultural one, incidentally, albeit a radically experiential one, unlike LA’s experiential and analytic rationale (ALA,
2012). Significant is also that this training contrasted with the participant teacher’s grammar and language learning experience, and reportedly was able to influence the teacher’s core beliefs because of its theoretical and methodological coherence (Block, 2002; Burley & Pomphrey, 2002; Evans & Fisher, 2009; Kagan, 1992; Meiring & Norman, 2001; Woods & Çakır, 2011; T. Wright, 2010). In other cases, pre-service training was reportedly too oriented to familiarise with schooling processes, and lacking theoretical strength to change participant teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching that had formed before teacher training. No other participant seemed to indicate that their pre-service training gave them a theoretical or methodological framework of reference for treating grammar in secondary school education. In fact, this was reported to be an opportunity to try out their established grammar, or more generic language teaching pedagogical beliefs, and see if they worked in the school where they were placed. Instead of giving a theoretical and methodological framework related to a collective, institutional process, teachers seem to have been given an opportunity of reflection on their already established beliefs, without any incisive new information that could modify or challenge their established epistemological beliefs.

Within their school micro contexts, participant teachers seemed all free to establish their own grammar teaching strategies. Some contexts adopted explicit and collectively-agreed curricular guidance for grammar teaching, towards which teacher strategies converged. These contexts reflected complex holistic educational language teaching goals, explicitly reporting to aim to maintain students’ motivation also through adopting an agreed grammar teaching strategy. Some contexts left teachers to devise their own strategies, and kept the only agreed common goal of successful assessment outcomes. Language educational goals in these contexts were vaguely expressed, and were not related to a whole school language learning strategy, as teachers reported being left to devise their own strategy. Participant teachers with a role as Head of Department also reported leaving other teachers to devise their own pedagogical strategies, according to their preferences, which were not framed or referred to particular language pedagogies. This finding is consistent with Macaro’s (1997), Cohen and Macaro’s (2007), Silver and Lwin’s (Silver & Lwin, 2013), Evans and Fisher’s (2009) and the reflection within cross-curricular trends (Burley & Pomphrey, 2002, 2003; Doyé, 2005; Harris, 2008; Hawkins, 1984; Mitchell, Brumfit, et al., 1994b; Turner, 2001) on the necessity to frame language teaching with a
consistent theoretical and methodological infrastructure, coordinating teacher training, national curricular and assessment guidelines.

Participant teachers’ micro context was an influencing factor also for two other conditions: a) their beliefs about students’ strategies for learning grammar, and b) their beliefs about the role of English in grammar teaching. In turn, their micro contexts influenced their interpretation of assessment macro contextual factors. The following discussion is consistent with Meiring and Norman’s (2001) and Mitchell’s reflection on how assessment impacted on foreign language teachers’ grammar teaching strategies, but also with Nespor’s (1987) and Kagan’s (1992) account of how macro and micro contextual demands and discrepancies bear on teachers’ epistemological beliefs, often causing further inconsistencies between teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ adopted pedagogies. Moreover, my small-scale research findings add resonance to research observing of how teachers with sounder theoretical and methodological foundations manage to make sense of these discrepancies and retain their autonomy (Brumfit, 1991, 2001; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Macaro, 1997, 2003).

Beliefs about how students learn grammar, and about the usefulness for students to learn grammar, were implied in their pedagogical strategies. Student’s educational context also determined participant’s pedagogical strategies, especially the school’s predominant multicultural or monocultural student population. Participant teachers reported discrepant beliefs about how students learn grammar; moreover, whilst some teachers remained consistent with their reported beliefs in their pedagogical strategies, others were observed to apply pedagogical strategies for dealing with grammar that contrasted with their reported beliefs about grammar teaching. For example, some participant teachers believed that students learned grammar in communicative contexts. Consistently, they used grammar for communicative purposes, defining these purposes as those justified in a school context, embedding it in negotiation of grammatical understanding. Moreover, the immersion context reinforced the accuracy pursued in lesson, exposing students to accurate models of native-like target language use. Other teachers believed that understanding grammar features enabled students to reach creative and independent expression. They referred to grammar being the pivotal centre of their language learning approach, and consistently used either comparative methodologies or explicit grammar teaching,
mediating grammatical understanding analytically, albeit predominantly conducting the lesson in English.
The discrepancies were observed where some teachers reported that it was important for students to learn grammar to become independent communicators, but in fact pursued a functional-notional approach, strongly relying on students’ memorisation of chunks of target language that made sense for the completion of an assessment-based task.

Participant teachers’ beliefs about how students learned grammar translated in either experiential or analytic language teaching. Teachers rooting their pedagogies in consistent and departmental, or whole school language learning strategies were able to offer context-relevant learning experience, resulting in various degrees of rich foreign-language environment, but all challenge-rich environment of explicit teaching, where students were invited to share and create grammatical understanding by means of activities that were consistent with the intended learning outcomes. Conversely, teachers rooting their strategies in result-based goals tended to skew grammatical understanding challenges to ensure students’ good results.

Student’s educational context played an important role also in determining the role of English in participants’ adoption of either analytic- or experience-based language learning strategies. These seemed to be strongly influenced by the predominantly multicultural or monocultural students’ population, as I discuss further in 6.3.1.

6.2.1. Participant teachers’ reported beliefs about teaching grammar

This primary theme is discussed in 6.3.1., as it answered the first research question. It refers to how teachers initially reported and subsequently reflected on their beliefs about teaching grammar. Two distinctive trends emerged from participants’ beliefs, who initially all reported that grammar was a fundamental part of their foreign language teaching: one pursuing grammatical understanding, and one reporting the pursuit of grammatical understanding, but effectively teaching to pass exams. As mentioned, all teachers reported that grammar played a pivotal role in their pedagogy and in their students’ foreign languages learning, but only two were able to support their statements with evidence-based models of grammar teaching, embedding them in neo-Vygotskyan sociocultural theory (Coyle et al., 2010) and referred to
methodological models of communicative foreign language teaching. It was remarkable how the ‘organic and dialectical’ (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008; Sieloff Magnan, 2008, p. 349) language educational rationale was sustained throughout the school curriculum, realised by virtue of a whole-school approach to intercultural educational goals where language education was paramount and embracing to all curricular areas. In this school, sociocultural theory embedded the delivery of the whole curriculum, and language awareness goals of experiential and analytic language teaching (Bolitho et al., 2003) were pursued, but where the analytic goal was pursued in full immersion, and therefore the target language was both linguistic and metalinguistic input. Moreover, these goals were essential pre-service requirements for language teacher recruitment (Andrews, 2003; Borg, 1994; Hawkins, 1999).

Figure 19: A model of instruction for second language acquisition. Source: Fotos and Ellis (1991, p. 608).

However, in most cases in England, secondary school modern foreign languages are instructional contexts. Already in 1991, Fotos and Ellis’s (1991) model of instructed second language acquisition suggested two implications, accepted evidence at least in the case of English as foreign languages (Figure 19). Firstly, it suggested that ‘the role of formal instruction should be directed at explicit rather than implicit knowledge’, because it is not possible to predict when students are ready to develop implicit knowledge. Therefore by developing explicit knowledge of simple grammatical features that do not require complex operations, learners are helped to acquire implicit second language knowledge. Secondly, the model suggested that the ‘kind of grammar teaching’ required should be ‘consciousness-raising rather than practice’, ensuring that learners ‘know about a target structure and can monitor with it’. Once
students are familiar with the presented structure, they can successively be provided with opportunities to practise structures firstly in controlled conditions and subsequently in communicative practices (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, pp. 605-609).

It seems therefore that the pursuit of creative manipulation of the language by explicitly or implicitly eliciting ‘mastery of the language code’ (Canale, 1983, p. 7) is an elective one. Moreover, it seems that the collective and institutional processes of school policy and National Curriculum allows an array of interpretations, and that the resulting choice of approach is not based on an organic and dialectical educational infrastructure, despite the beckoning, UK-based, sociocultural Language Awareness programme (ALA, 2012).

The theoretical framework has highlighted the interaction between participants’ previous language education, school contexts and institutional processes. Participant teachers’ previous language learning exerted a more significant impact on their views than the results of formal research into grammar teaching, and as research on teacher knowledge has argued, ‘teachers also need to know how to transform this knowledge into effective pedagogy’ (Borg, 2006, p. 120). My research has also observed that where there is an infrastructure giving participant teachers’ pedagogical strategies a focus, and where there is a critical subject and pedagogical content knowledge creating the premises for teachers’ deployment of declarative and procedural knowledge, foreign language teaching is left to individual initiative, but filtered by an agreed rationale and informed interpretations (Andrews, 2006; Cohen & Macaro, 2007; Macaro, 1997; Pumphrey & Moger, 1999; Silver & Lwin, 2013). And therefore it seems it is to be wished that an infrastructure is put in place in the forthcoming revision of the foreign languages curriculum, conceived as an educational space wherein all these meanings are finally gathered and made sense of.

6.3. Answering my research questions and sub questions

My three research questions and related sub questions guided the collection of data and the choice of methodology. The previous part was the premise grounding this section, aiming to frame the story of how participant foreign languages teachers’
beliefs about grammar teaching formed, seen from my research questions’ perspective.

6.3.1. Question 1. What are teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching?

Continuing the discussion developed in 6.2.1., my study observed a tension between reported beliefs of integrating grammar in a composite strategy aimed to attain communicative competence, and beliefs that in an instructional context grammatical knowledge was all that could be achieved, because communicative competence would be achieved at a later stage. Moreover, the argument was put across that grammar teaching allowed a faster progress, constrained also by the limited timetable time preventing student exposure to the target language until they automatised its use, as they would in the acquisition of their first language.

Another tension arising from participant teachers’ declared beliefs of explicit grammar teaching related to their use and interpretation of the word ‘structure’. Some teachers consistently referred to it as a regularity in the language that leads to either explicit or implicit elaboration of a rule to be re-used. Other teachers, instead, used the term to refer to a sentence or phrase previously composed and that could successfully be altered by changing an item of vocabulary. Although this allows for manipulation of the target language, it may not constitute an ability to ‘create’ sentences in different contexts thanks to an acquired awareness of how the target language works. Furthermore, it may not coincide with the ‘grammatical understanding’ that some teachers indicated as the real ‘tool to eradicate error’, and that research indicates as key to grammatical understanding, development of complex linguistic skills and conducive to a holistic language education (Anderson, 2008; Burley, 2003; Oxford & Lee, 2007; Planel, 2008). It may, however, indicate the low levels of reading and research that Borg (2009) detected in English language teachers, which seem to be shared by their foreign language colleagues.

If considered within a framework of communicative language pedagogy (Canale, 1983), foreign languages teachers were mindful of including both grammatical competence and discourse competence. However, not all the teachers explicitly
referred to these competences; particularly to discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic competences (Canale, 1983). The emergence of the grammatical competence rationale seems to agree with previous findings (Brumfit et al., 1996; Pumphrey & Moger, 1999). Furthermore, it seems to be prevalently inspired by practice, not by any evidence-based reference to communicative competence encountered in personal readings or teacher training. In general, however, teachers reported strong disappointment with communicative trends encountered in their education and teacher training.

Only two participants were able to assess theoretically target language use and grammatical understanding; the value of conducting explicit grammar teaching in either first language or target language. They reported that their pedagogical choice to teach grammar through the target language was coherent with their communicative language teaching and with the school’s ethos. It should also be observed how in a total immersion context, students’ proficiency in first language had marginal relevance, as students received the same input. Moreover, the fact that all students, irrespective of their multicultural background, used English as first language among themselves and with the teacher, enabled these participants to understand and respond to students’ interactions and feedback from their teaching. They were able to make a judgement of their students’ grammatical understanding.

The use of target language occurs perhaps more easily in multicultural contexts, as monocultural ones are too dependent on the first language; especially if the first language is English and tends to be used globally (Planel, 2008). Translation pedagogy is perhaps a shortcut in monocultural contexts; however, the translation of teachers’ examples of texts containing the target grammatical forms was approximate and solely aimed to provide students with an aide-mémoir. Grammatical understanding, instead, seemed successfully pursued in both monocultural and multicultural contexts through practice of target grammatical forms by means of progressively guided and complex communicative contexts, with various degrees of target language mediation. ‘A grammaticality judgment involves the learner deciding whether a sentence is well-formed or deviant. It is possible to state whether such a judgment is correct or incorrect by comparing the learner’s response to that of a native speaker’ (Ellis, 1991a, p. 162). Although comparative pedagogy seems favoured
amongst British foreign languages experts (Hudson, 2004, 2006; Planel, 2008), both assessment and policy guidelines do not reflect any given methodological stance yet. As a consequence, teachers’ and students’ focus is on achieving a performance on a task that could be a ‘controlled, planned language use’ (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, p. 607) as much as a rehearsal of previously memorised texts.

In a foreign languages instructional context, studies have recommended an ‘optimal use’ (Macaro, 1997, 2009) of the target language: one that acknowledges the necessity to negotiate the most difficult target language structural aspects through the L1, defined as a ‘processing mechanism’ (Meiring & Norman, 2002, p. 29). The three teachers who used target language extensively were sensitive to the pitfalls of communication, and in two of the three cases, L1 mediation of difficult grammatical concepts halting understanding and communication was selectively given; at times, the translation of a single word in English was enough, revealing an established pedagogy. In immersion context, teachers referred to how different gradients of explicit metalinguistic teaching through the target language allowed her to strategically teach either beginner students or conduct advanced metalinguistic activities with sixth formers, where she used English at times to mediate complex target language grammatical features.

On analysis, teachers had discrepant concepts of grammatical understanding and the metalinguistic activities that were most conducive to it. However, participant teachers of both selective and comprehensive educational context demonstrated pursuing grammatical understanding in a target-language rich environment, aiming to enable students to monitor their performance, instead of reciting verbal endings or other linguistic properties. In monocultural context, other teachers did not provide a rich target-language environment, but they provided a challenge-rich environment of explicit teaching, where students were invited to share and create grammatical understanding by means of activities that were consistent with the intended learning outcomes, encouraging a creative and independent use of a foreign languages.

The discussion on grammatical understanding in the educational rationale of foreign languages links with the one conducted in 2.1.3. in observing how teachers seemed to pursue divergent educational rationales. Some had a marked communicative
intended outcome, which seemed coherently pursued, accepting that there was also a testing occurring as part of school life. For others, the testing was all important, and pursued in spite of teachers’ reported beliefs on the purpose of their foreign languages pedagogy. From classroom observations, it seems that the nature of the testing allowed teachers to pursue the speaking and written components’ goals in distinct ways. Some teachers provide significant amounts of progressively collected chunks of tasks, which are later memorised prior to controlled conditions. Other teachers, instead, pushed students to rely on their metalinguistic understanding to be able to produce their own texts; albeit still recommending some memorisation of their texts, once corrected. Assessment specifications contain recommendations of language awareness. However, by virtue of their extensive prompts, they allow teachers a ‘way out’ of grammatical understanding, which they reported to be significantly different amongst students. But what is the educational value of foreign language teaching without grammatical understanding? What value does a ‘Languages for All’ (DfES, 2002) strategy in England have if it relies on short-cutting the cognitive challenge of grammatical understanding by memorising chunks of foreign language (Klapper, 2003; Macaro, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001; Mitchell, 2000)? Memorising phrases in the target language has proven as short-term a skill as the memorisation of isolated grammatical rules in old traditional grammar methods (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005). The White Paper in the United States is also questioning its own ‘Languages for All’ strategy, which has led to general discontent, despite the expectations of government, industry, parents and pupils (Brecht, 2012). British foreign languages experts have consistently defended and evidenced the value of grammar teaching on linguistic and educational grounds since the first introduction of the National Curriculum for foreign languages (Macaro, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001), also by comparing local and European strategies (Block, 2002; Mitchell, 2010). Research has therefore already questioned what pedagogical meaning a success in foreign languages has, if it relies on good memory instead of grammatical understanding. Some research also related it to the subject’s steady decline and its perceived trivialisation (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Grenfell, 2000; Hudson, 2007; Macaro, 2008; Meiring & Norman, 2001; Mitchell, 2000; Williams, 2001; M. Wright, 1999).

As discussed in 2.1.1., foreign languages in England is an instructional context. Within this context, foreign languages contends with both social and linguistic problems of
providing a rich linguistic environment and a motivational educational course that can realistically be proposed to English first- and second-language speaking secondary school students. Foreign languages also needs the theoretical backup necessary to unify a teaching approach that at the moment is left to individual initiative. Applied linguistic research has favoured explicit teaching in instructional contexts, aiming to foster a language awareness of explicit metalinguistic knowledge and its corresponding metalanguage (Svalberg, 2007). The aim is to ultimately foster acquisition, but with the primary aim to provide students with a valid cognitive experience that immediately stimulates their linguistic growth and their sense of progress (Ellis, 2010; Hudson, 2010).

Tomlin described as ‘useful pedagogical grammar’ one that adequately describes the grammar of the target language, instead of listing taxonomic and self-contained metalanguage (Tomlin, 1994, p. 141). Tomlin’s concepts are embedded on Communicative Language Teaching theory, whereby a descriptive L2 [second language] grammar ‘arises from successful discourse use of the new language’, and a pedagogical grammar ‘must address how grammatical constructions are deployed in discourse, which is precisely what functional grammars do’ (ibid). Furthermore, ‘a pedagogical grammar depends on critical assumptions about the nature of language and its relationship to language learning’. Under the same Communicative Language Teaching assumptions, pedagogical grammars conceive language learning as a ‘social and cognitive enterprise’ encouraging learners to make ‘hypotheses about structure and function of target language’, presented as occurring in natural discourse until it ‘automates the learner’s closest approximation of native speaker norms’ (ibid, p. 142). A necessary and sufficient condition of this process of ‘creative construction of an interlanguage grammar is that the input is comprehensible and of sufficient quantity, and without significant affective filters in the environment, conducive to risk taking and exploration’ (Krashen, 1982; Selinker, 1972; Tomlin, 1994, p. 142). Hudson described it as the implicit teaching ‘logical extreme’ (Hudson, 2004), which he deems as totally detached from linguistics as the ‘traditional grammar’ extreme. Three of the individual realities I described seem to present a counter argument to Hudson’s, as their task-based pedagogy realised the concurrent deployment of both explicit and implicit teaching (Bruton, 2005; Klapper, 2003). These realities had no contextual affinities, but their coherence and firm belief in providing students with rich cognitive
language learning experience, building it by systematically backing up presented forms, metalinguistic explanations and metalanguage in the target language.

So far foreign languages teachers have felt the incumbency of having to compensate the lack of metalinguistic activities within the National Curriculum (Meiring & Norman, 2001; Mitchell, Brumfit, et al., 1994b; Svalberg, 2007), demanding extensive use of English to mediate unfamiliar and unpopular grammatical concepts. A pedagogical rationale for target language use relies on a grammatical metalanguage common ground in the language curriculum, which has been gradually developing since 2005 (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005). A pedagogical rationale for target language use is essential to allow for the explicit and implicit integral foreign languages approach; a concept addressed by Macaro (2000), Meiring and Norman (2002), Klapper (2003) and Bruton (2005). This rationale however is challenged by timetabling and assessment conditions. The lack of time would make unlikely its coherent application, and the assessment policy allows for fuzzy and personal interpretations of what works best in foreign languages.

From the observation of participants’ contexts, these conditions cannot be left to individual teachers’ initiatives but must be embedded and promoted by the language departments, the school policy and the national policy. Otherwise they fall prey to local social trends and unfounded preferences. As Carla observed, research findings extremely successful in other contexts have no application if they do not reflect or fit culture-specific needs. It seems that the collective, institutional processes such as school policy and the NC requirements are shunning dialectical foreign language learning meaning making by allowing individual approaches create their own syncretic realities.

A pedagogical grammar for teaching foreign languages in England would take into consideration the role and scope of learning foreign languages at secondary school in a society that uses English as either mother or first language for communication. English full time secondary education is inclusive, growingly intercultural and multicultural (Corbett, 2003). If ESL/EFL postulate a context-specific Communicative Language Teaching (G. Ellis, 1996), certainly the same should apply for foreign languages in England, where student population has acquired more and more the
multicultural traits typical of ESL/EFL classrooms, and where more and more the standard – as opposed to local - variety of English is a global language.

After being liberated from prescriptive grammar legacies and fears, subject English has been liberated also from the mantra of pseudo ‘contextualised’ grammars, which aimed to ‘slot’ prescriptive grammar in various English lessons, instead of delivering it in distinct units (Myhill, 2005, pp. 81-82). Moreover, the new National Curriculum for Subject English is very prescriptive about what grammar must be taught, but it is a descriptive grammar which it advocates (Myhill, 2014). The post-debate grammar teaching in subject English aims to create awareness of the linguistic choices implied in the meaning-making activities pursued in class, with awareness that they are influenced by social, cultural and historical contexts. In this way, grammar teaching contributes to the sociocultural aim to teach students how to make meaning, reflecting on the ‘power relations between different groups’ (ibid. p. 84). Sensitive to weaker linguists and learners of English as an additional language, Myhill observes that the ‘continuum’ from tacit to explicit knowledge is not necessarily true even in ‘full immersion’ first language contexts, where ‘instruction about linguistic features may generate explicit knowledge where there is no corresponding tacit knowledge’ (Myhill, 2005, p. 88). The same applies to foreign languages contexts and learners, as the premise is that there is no ‘corresponding tacit knowledge’ for any students, and where explicit knowledge has an even more pressing role to be made ‘more cognitively accessible for reflection and decision-making’ (ibid, p. 89).

Reflecting on grammar as a topic of social and policy debate, none of the foreign languages teachers reported embracing grammar as an emblem of social values or moral standards which seemed to characterise the grammar debate within subject English (Myhill, 2011a, p. 6). Nevertheless, three English first-language speaking participants raised the issue that students’ English was not good enough to stand cross-linguistic structural comparisons. Teachers reported that students’ knowledge of English structures was not accurate enough to enable consistent comparisons with Spanish grammatical structures; this in both multi and monolingual contexts.

Policy and syllabus requirements are still shaping teacher perceptions (Meiring & Norman, 2001). Although all teachers reported beliefs that grammar is important, they
equally felt that they were compromising their beliefs in pursuing more creative work by integrating grammar to other language competencies. Teachers across school contexts expressed this compromise as ‘the nature of the game’, or the necessity to show good GCSE results. Some teachers related these constraints to the naturally occurring disappointments and challenges of life, accepting the challenge of grammar understanding for all their students, albeit helping their weaker students with readymade examples. Others, instead, felt justified in compromising their foreign languages pedagogical rationale, reducing it to a pure exercise to get marks.

Participant teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching varied according to their experience and language background. The discussion conducted here links with the one conducted in question two and three, as interview and observation methods allowed to detect dominant ideas emerging from the materials and the approaches to treat grammar, and factors influencing the development and the translation of teachers’ reported beliefs in pedagogical strategies. The cross-case synthesis seems to indicate that the pressure to meet exam results transcended variables of experience and nationality. Teachers with fewer years of experience in secondary school seemed to have a more coherent set of beliefs and informed pedagogical approach. Moreover, they seemed to have a stronger commitment to pursue metalinguistic activities and metalinguistic understanding, and a more competent subject content knowledge that transcended their native speaker states. Where teachers possessed or actively reflected on their pedagogical and linguistic content knowledge, it was possible to see how some teachers were able to justify not only their pedagogy but also their choices to teach in their micro context.

All English-speaking foreign languages teachers were critical of the fact that grammar had been missing from their first language education, and that they encountered it only through foreign languages education. Moreover, both English first-language and second language speaking teachers reported that their grammar studies helped them gain awareness and understanding of their first language; an experience motivated them to include it in their pedagogy.
6.3.2. Question 2. How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?

This question explored the theoretical framework reflected in the teachers’ instructional modes used for dealing with grammar in the foreign languages classroom. The discussion here relates closely to the one conducted in 6.2.1. by illustrating further the interaction of participant teachers’ prior learning experiences, pre-service training, teaching contexts and macro institutional context in forming their current pedagogical systems. Participant teachers’ pedagogical systems revealed consistencies and discrepancies, as they were observed pursuing divergent grammar pedagogies, associated with differing educational rationales. Some teachers reported awareness of combining consciousness-raising inductive activities with explicit metalinguistic explanations in the target language; of combining opportunities to communicate about the language and used meta-talk with or without metalanguage. Other participants did not report being inspired by a particular pedagogical theoretical framework, but reported elaborate reflection on the meaning of grammar teaching in their language teaching rationale; a reflection that projected an aim to consistently adopt a grammar teaching approach in a language teaching strategy adopted and reflected upon by the whole department. These teachers’ pedagogical strategies aimed at grammatical understanding through metalinguistic activities which combined both consciousness-raising, inductive metalinguistic activities and explicit grammatical instruction. Moreover, these participants expressed complex beliefs in the learning-to-learn potential of metalinguistic activity, alternating descriptive meta-talk to specific metalanguage. These teachers’ metalinguistic activity was very elaborate and explicit; their metalanguage was simple and systematic, and they invited students to use it in their linguistic analysis. Conversely, the participant teachers who strongly based their teaching on assessment criteria, tended to put aside their reported epistemological beliefs about the importance of teaching students to understand grammar to be able to apply it in a ‘context’. The reflections conducted in their lessons consisted mainly in translations of phrases and vocabulary, and there were no instances of reflection on grammatical understanding of how the target linguistic system worked. Although there were instances of recapitulation of grammatical rules necessary to form certain tenses or agreements, students were not asked to apply these rules in comprehension-based activities (Ellis 1991), but asked to piece examples together and learn them by heart.
Most teachers reported aiming to integrate grammar in a composite strategy aimed to attain communicative competence. However, lesson observations revealed that many teachers had the same ‘fuzzy’ understanding of communicative language teaching and communicative competence already detected by Klapper (2003) and Spada (2007). Communicative language teaching conceptualises grammar as one of four competencies, recommending equal pursuit of all of them (Canale, 1983; Meiring & Norman, 2001). These divergent pursuits cohabit within the same foreign languages’ National Curriculum, which may contain recommendations of knowledge about language and language awareness. As teachers’ beliefs referred to communicative language pedagogy and assessment, the reflection will try to match their observed practices to communicative language teaching principles and to foreign languages national curricular theoretical frameworks, inclusive of GCSE recommendations and references to ‘knowledge about language’ (DfE, 2013).

The reflection here aims to focus on the instructional modes reflected in participant teachers’ dealing with grammar in the foreign language classrooms. Teachers were observed using divergent grammar teaching strategies to attain the largely reported aim of grammatical understanding. Strategies were consistent for four teachers in two contexts out of five. In one context, teachers were observed to adopt methodological approaches so diametrically opposed to make me think it was part of a department-approach experiment. Table 18 illustrates teachers’ reported grammar teaching modes and the strategies they reported to use to attain their goals. In the last column, the table presents the strategies that teachers were observed adopting in lesson.

Table 18. Reported and observed grammar teaching modes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Reported grammar teaching mode</th>
<th>Reported strategy</th>
<th>Observed teaching mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enise</td>
<td>Inductive: infer the rule from color-coded examples communicative, in real context</td>
<td>Comparisons with English grammar Color coding/input enhancement</td>
<td>Presentation of examples Translation of above Recommended not to attempt new</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
presenting the rules, students copy and memorise them, and then re-apply them teaching sentence structure describe and use language more effectively recapped imperfect tense verb endings asked students to reshuffle examples to write their own pieces She provided alternative verbs, already conjugated, giving students ‘structures’ language; stick to templates Metalanguage Students’ copied and joined sentences together Structures resulted to be ready-made sentences.

| Jo   | Explicit: presenting rules  
Translating from English in one tense to another | Presentation of grammar rules  
Translation  
Basic metalanguage | Extensive TL use  
Recasts  
Input flood  
Incidental FonF  
Task-based  
Communicative language teaching  
Metalinguistic explanations  
independent written composition |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Carol | Explicit grammar teaching  
Metalanguage  
Integrating communication  
TL | Explicit grammar teaching  
Metalanguage  
Independent written composition  
Classroom TL; translated instructions |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elliot</th>
<th>Teaching word categories</th>
<th>Comparisons with English structures Testing students’ metalanguage</th>
<th>Proactive deductive form-focused instruction From basic structures to more grammatically complex ones Sentence analysis Translation Metalanguage No TL Independent written composition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruud</td>
<td>TL Incidental Inductive; rules from examples TL metalanguage</td>
<td>Minimalist approach: from basic to more complex structures Scaffolding language from previous work</td>
<td>TL; Focus on meaning Implicit, incidental focus on form Recasts Input flood Explicit FonFs in TL TL metalanguage Task-based CLT Minimalist approach Independent written composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Teaching the mechanics Lots of activities to eliminate boredom Group work</td>
<td>Draw the rules out from examples Rely on previous knowledge</td>
<td>Moderate TL use Recognising vocabulary, phrases and sentences Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inductive – to make them see patterns</td>
<td>Students’ copied and joined sentences together Oral and written work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carla</strong></td>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Recasts Inductive noticing of structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>TL; Focus on meaning Implicit, incidental focus on form Recasts Input flood Explicit FonFs in TL TL metalanguaeg Task-based CLT independent written composition Independent speaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inductive and deductive focus on forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heather</strong></td>
<td>Traditional grammar teaching</td>
<td>Color coding/input enhancement Translation Giving students ‘building blocks’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No TL</td>
<td>Translation from English to French Recommended not to attempt new language; stick to templates Metalanguage Students’ copied and joined sentences together Building blocks resulted to be ready-made sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparisons with English grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although generally reported by all teachers, grammatical understanding was pursued by five teachers who explicitly associated grammatical understanding with students’ ability to monitor their performance, distinguishing it from the ability to memorise verbal endings or other linguistic properties. On the other hand, three participant teachers reported that grammatical understanding was their intended learning outcome, but were observed teaching set phrases for students to memorise in view of the assessment. These participants reported that grammar teaching allowed a faster progress, as the lack of timetabled time did not permit exposing students to the target language until they automatized its use as in first language acquisition. Fotos and Ellis observe the same, but they stressed the necessity to accompany comprehension-based interpretation tasks and metalinguistic activities, as do also other researchers (DeKeyser, 2003; Ellis, 2010; Fotos & Ellis, 1991; Oxford & Lee, 2007).

Table 18 aim to illustrate the ideas about foreign languages grammar teaching and learning that were reflected in the materials and in the participant teachers’ classroom practices. The emerging idea is that grammatical understanding seems an achievable rationale in both monocultural and multicultural contexts; both in Communicative Language Teaching and in Focus on Forms with limited target language use. It mainly consisted of practising target grammatical forms by means of progressively guided and complex communicative contexts, with various degrees of target language mediation. It should be stressed, however, that this was observed to happen in slightly selective contexts, despite both being state schools, and only in one mainstream, comprehensive context. In the other mainstream comprehensive contexts, participants knew what to teach (grammatical content knowledge) but did not know how (transferable skills; pedagogical content knowledge) to put it in practice (Macaro, 1997), either for lack of familiarity with the wider educational trends of the context, or for having trained and started teaching in a method completely different from the one received. The national curriculum for languages suggests how, but whilst mentioning communicative broad aims and knowledge about language, it does not refer to a theoretical framework of reference on which to either form or train teachers. Foreign languages pedagogy is thus still left to intuition, instead of being a research-based profession enabling the reflection that Macaro (1997) described as inducing teachers to make informed pedagogical choices suitable for their learners and their teaching contexts. Moreover, it happens in a macro context that has no theoretical and
methodological forum where to collect and make collective sense of the different grammar teaching strategies and contexts. Lastly, what emerge are teachers’ disparate formative paths and interpretations of the contextual needs of foreign language learning in England. Moreover, what appears is the need to research why some teachers reported that they would not have time to conduct research, even if they wanted to.

6.3.3. Question 3. What factors influenced the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?

I aimed to observe whether there were any changes between teachers’ reported beliefs and their recalled reflection on their beliefs about teaching grammar. Using initial and final interviews, comparisons were made according to the themes that emerged from the data analysis (Chapter 4): contextual factors; beliefs about grammar teaching; cross-curricular factors affecting grammar teaching; grammar in teacher education; and teachers’ beliefs about how students learn grammar.

How did participant teachers conceptualise their pedagogy? To understand the development of participant teachers’ cognition, it was important to understand what epistemological beliefs were at the base of their pedagogical choices. Five participant teachers seemed to maintain consistency in their elaborate reflections regarding their grammar teaching epistemological beliefs, albeit with varying degrees of theoretical and methodological awareness. Although this was evident in the two schools where pupils were selected either by linguistic background or by gender, Jo’s initiative stands out as the result of a professional that was not backed up by a whole school policy, but who was given freedom to introduce the change she believed in: the need to increase explicit instruction to respond to her perception of the relevance of grammar in the national curriculum for languages. By admission her initiative was recent, as she had been experimenting her new methodology of explicit instruction for the first time that year. She did not seem explicitly aware of her adopted task-based approach and the implications of her target-mediated metatalk. However, like Ruud, Carla, Carol and Elliot, Jo held ‘more sophisticated epistemological beliefs’ which supported her will to be an ‘active meaning maker connecting self to the knowledge construction processes, whilst the other three teachers felt the necessity of a ‘negotiation among
their epistemological beliefs, teaching contexts, and instructional goals’ (Kang & Wallace, 2005, p. 140).

The reflection here aims to focus on how the findings in my research case studies reverberate evidence supporting previous research on the necessity to adopt a national theoretical and methodological framework for the teaching of modern languages. My discussion believes that in the current ‘elusive boundaries’ of the current national guidelines, pre-service teacher training in England also remains ‘a relatively under-theorised concept in the field of second language education in comparison with other cognate constructs such as second language teacher education (Johnson 2009; Johnson and Golombek 2011) and second language teacher cognition (Borg 2006; Woods 1996)’ (Evans & Esch, 2013, p. 137); and as such, teachers are either left to own initiative, or left without a platform to conduct a dialectical, theoretically structured critical meaning making. Regarding teacher training, all but one participant indicated that it did not have an impact on their pre-existing epistemological beliefs and beliefs about grammar teaching. What they reported as more influential were assessment guidelines, as they felt they needed to compromise (more or less radically) their epistemological beliefs to the generally perceived narrow assessment standards. Their school context was also influential, especially where it held a specific epistemological view of the role of language teaching, instead of leaving them to devise it on their own.

High degree of pedagogical content knowledge reportedly enabled some teachers and their educational contexts to select each other because of the shared views on the educational role of language teaching. However, this was not reflected in the majority of my research case studies.

In discussing to what educational and training events teacher attributed the development of their pedagogical practices and the changes in their beliefs, the length of participant teachers’ experience revealed to be a decisive factor. Longer serving teachers seemed to be too relying on their personal experiences. Furthermore, their training was reportedly backdated and nevertheless irrelevant at the time it was received. This meant that both English first- and second-language speaking teachers reported that their previous grammatical and linguistic content knowledge in contrast
with the macro contextual pedagogical demands, but most importantly, without an agreed theoretical and pedagogical framework helping them translate their knowledge in effective, context-relevant teaching strategies.

The three teachers with more experience were observed applying a grammar pedagogy which diverged from their reported epistemological beliefs. Upon trying to tease out the factors distinguishing their pedagogical stances, I noticed that this group included both English first- and second-language speaking teachers. The longer-serving teachers had similar educational careers to other teachers, apart from the two doctors in linguistics. They all enjoyed independence of pedagogical choices, which suggested that their beliefs were conditioned by their personal interpretations of the pursuits of foreign language learning education, which they had applied over a considerable length of time. These beliefs were therefore rooted in personal experiences and responses which the teacher training had not altered, as it was admittedly valued as irrelevant by all teachers but Ruud. Whilst all teachers reported that their training was centred solely on reflecting on their own practices, Ruud’s was embedded in CLIL pedagogy, which motivated him to pursue doctoral research in this pedagogy, together with creating and sustaining a continuum of theoretically backed-up practice.

Two cases in particular reverberate evidence for and exemplify the need identified by other research of a ‘discursive space’ (Pomphrey & Burley, 2009, p. 422) in English foreign language studies (Planel, 2008; Svalberg, 2007) and in teacher cognition (Basturkmen, 2007; Borg, 1996; Evans & Esch, 2013). It is interesting to consider Enise’s and June’s cases, as they both experienced starting their teaching careers in a system of which they had no experience about; both completed their pre-service training in England, but the former was born and educated in France, and the former in England and Scotland. Enise and June reported aiming to teach grammar ‘communicatively’, which they paraphrased similarly as teaching both the rules and teaching inductively, asking students to infer rules or patterns from examples, and to successively apply these in context. Both Enise and June received a grammar-based language education: Enise in both her first and second languages; June in her second language. Both recounted having to teach with a pedagogy of which they had no learning experience. Enise reported counting on her teaching experience to supply her
pedagogical theory, as her experience as a learner could not be applied in a system where students had no experience of grammar learning. June reported learning with a grammar-based method, and starting to teach in the ‘communicative era’. Moreover, both teachers reported that their PGCE was not underpinned by any theoretical and methodological frameworks. Moreover, Enise recalled that her teacher training did not give her a ‘solution’, but an assessment whereby she had to reflect and experiment her own personal ideas about ‘teaching grammar communicatively’.

In the discussion of the reasons behind the choices of pedagogical practices and approaches, the interplay of both micro and macro contextual factors were considered. In the discrete micro contexts (mainstream comprehensive, selective and foundation secondary schools alike), a macro policy of ‘languages for all’ requires finding solutions to give all children opportunities to experience and succeed in foreign languages. These solutions must concomitantly solve varying educational needs that range from behavioural to cognitive. Moreover, teachers have a very limited amount of time and are under ever increasing pressure to deliver and be judged on the numbers of the end-product positive results. Discrepancies between teachers’ epistemological beliefs and pedagogical practices have highlighted participant teachers’ difficulties to combine subject and pedagogical content knowledge, micro and macro contextual factors.

The national curriculum for languages’ ‘underspecified model of progression’ and ‘uncertainty of achievable standards’ that Mitchell (2003) observed in 2003 has gradually evolved to contain more explicit instruction recommendation. However, it is now disapplied (DfE, 2013), and explicitly recommending teachers to provide context-specific versions of languages for all policy. This research has revealed that consistency is increasingly difficult in educational contexts where language learning rationales are up to individual teachers, instead of being a whole school approach. Moreover, goals and standards need addressing also for the accepted disparities between state educational set ups, leading to tacitly accepted differing ‘levels of available time and resources’ to meet GCSE attainment targets (Mitchell, 2003). Goals and values need more than ever to be agreed in order to avoid creating situations where teachers are either forced or left to arbitrarily cut corners.
The other emerging idea is that the national curriculum for languages, through the GCSE assessment task is not measuring students’ ability to use of language by drawing on their explicit knowledge (Fotos & Ellis, 1991). Macaro observed how the National Curriculum for foreign languages recommended ‘exclusively’ how and not what (Macaro, 1997, p. 10). As also a present consequence, all linguistic theorisations of grammatical understanding and foreign languages learning rationales are left to personal interpretations. What the assessment seems to measure is a performance on a task that can be achieved as ‘controlled, planned language use’ (Fotos & Ellis, 1991, p. 607), as much as a pre-confectioned, rehearsed and memorised bunch of sentences. This echoes the ‘flexibility’ that Macaro (ibid.) identified in the Communicative Language Teaching, whereby it is up to teachers’ discretion to be critical and reflective on the necessary ‘willingness and time to draw on a number of sources in order to make decisions about a classroom strategy or technique rather than on a single source or a subjective reaction to a classroom event’. What is not to the teachers’ discretion, however, is the degree of departmental coordination; the whole school language learning approach and degree of pupil selection; the timetable deficiency against an ultimately over ambitious attainment targets; and the continuous and increasing pressure to deliver results, on which teachers – not students - are ultimately judged.

From 2014, foreign languages will become statutory in primary school and in the first three years of secondary education (KS2 and KS3) (DfE, 2013). Whilst the National Curriculum increases its emphasis of the role that grammar has in fulfilling foreign languages objectives, the assessment keeps lagging behind. Last August, the National Curriculum was updated to include ambitious key concepts, processes and contents. The 2014 assessment guidelines stress that students’ must provide an individual response’ in all stages of the preparation. However, the teachers will be responsible for preparing their students in developing their answers to each ‘bullet point’, including the ‘unpredictable question/bullet point’ (AQA, 2013a). The topic of each ‘task’ of a GCSE is decided by the examination board, which provides all the bulleted point prompts to fulfil the task ‘My life as a celebrity’:

- You are a celebrity and have been asked to write a short magazine article about yourself.
• You could include:
• personal information;
• your daily routine at home;
• what you enjoy doing and why;
• who is the most important influence in your life and why;
• your best achievement in life so far;
• your ambitions for the future.
• Remember, in order to score the highest marks you must answer the task fully, developing your response where it is appropriate to do so (AQA, 2013b).

Teachers will have control of 60% of the assessment marks, between written and speaking assessments. The programme is vast and ambitious, and the grammatical competence necessary to fulfil such a task is considerable. Some of my participants decided to pursue grammatical understanding to enable their students to apply the ‘linguistic knowledge and skills’ necessary ‘to understand and communicate effectively’ the points above. Others have translated the bullet points; provided enough ready-made sentences to fulfil each point, ensuring to present all of them and recommending students to make sure they do not copy from each other – the necessary precaution ‘to avoid plagiarism’ (AQA, 2013a, pp. 11, 14). Finally, they have recommended students to learn by heart their versions, providing not to correct the final draft that students have prepared prior to the speaking or writing assessment controlled conditions.

In conclusion, it should be observed that despite the more recent date, these assessment requirement are remarkably similar to the ‘coursework’, criticised for leading students to depend too much on teachers’ ‘bite-size learning and spoon-feeding’ (Watt, 2012). Until 2017, the national curriculum for languages recommends pursuing Linguistic competence in ‘applying linguistic knowledge and skills to understand and communicate effectively’. Moreover, it recommends to pursue ‘understanding how a language works and how to manipulate it’ under the heading ‘Knowledge about language’ (DfE, 2013, p. 3 of 12). Here are some of the ‘key concepts and key processes’:
• The study of languages should include:
• the spoken and written forms of the target language
• the interrelationship between sounds and writing in the target language
• the grammar of the target language and how to apply it
• a range of vocabulary and structures
• learning about different countries and cultures
• comparing pupils’ own experiences and perspectives with those of people in countries and communities where the target language is spoken. (DfE, 2013, pp. 6-12).

Finally, the national curriculum for languages recommends the provision of the following opportunities for pupils to enhance their engagement with the concepts and processes listed above:

• hear, speak, read and write in the target language regularly and frequently within the classroom and beyond
• communicate in the target language individually, in pairs, in groups and with speakers of the target language, including native speakers where possible, for a variety of purposes
• use an increasing range of more complex language
• make links with English at word, sentence and text level
• use a range of resources, including ICT, for accessing and communicating information in the target language
• listen to, read or view a range of materials, including authentic materials in the target language, both to support learning and for personal interest and enjoyment
• use the target language in connection with topics and issues that are engaging and may be related to other areas of the curriculum.

Such high goals are unlikely to be attained without explicit, form focused instruction. Under the pressure to deliver results, some teachers’ method were the only option they believed available to them, despite their epistemological beliefs to teach languages by developing metalinguistic and communicative competencies.
The national curriculum for languages provides the framework within which the GCSE objectives are pursued. The GCSE stresses the need for students to avoid plagiarism and for teachers to supervise that it does not happen. It may be a teachers' choice to pursue students' understanding and independent expression up to that point, but it should be a choice informed by theoretical and methodological education from earlier than the start of their career. For personal experience, I know that there are huge pressures to demonstrate students' attainment, as some participants also confirmed, independently of their high achieving or literacy-challenged contexts. Nevertheless, there are fundamental differences between these contexts: the first is the context's choice of comprehensive, whole school approach to language learning. We saw how coherence was kept in the two schools where there was a departmental approach to either Communicative Language Teaching or of ‘Schemes of Learning’, with specific rationales emphasising students’ active role.

Various academics have indicated that policy makers and teachers of subject English have not accepted evidence from linguistic studies, as teachers come through academic pathways based on the study of literature rather than language (Carter, 1993; Hudson, 2004; Myhill & Jones, 2011). In foreign languages, Block (2002) observed how foreign teachers joined the academic position in supporting the place for grammar in language education, despite the discourses ‘emanating from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) via the National Curriculum’ (Block, 2002, p. 19). He also highlighted how ‘conflicting and competing ways of conceptualising the practice of foreign language teaching’ between teachers and policy makers deprived the subject of any consistency and coordinative approach. This study reveals another reality of ‘foreign national teachers’ (ibid.), who are linguistically competent, but pedagogically left to guess an approach in a context that has nothing in common with their educational contexts, often adopting the ‘vague mixture’ of direct method and traditional grammar reported by Block (2002, p. 20). Thus, the entertaining ‘use of visuals, games’ and other ‘interactional activities’ (ibid, p. 20) seem to discourage reflection on target language use and pursue only exam results. In other individual approaches, the target language was almost eradicated by the pursuit of ‘traditional grammar’ with no roots on modern linguistic research (Ellis, 2010; Hudson, 2004). In this cases, reflection and creative reemployment of target grammar were strongly
encouraged, but success was measured in GCSE attainment and students’ monolingual comfort (the students’ as much as the teacher’s) remained unchallenged.

6.4. Conclusion

My interpretivist study based on an individual approach, having identified the discrete nature of grammar teaching, aimed to create situated accounts for practitioners, researchers and policy makers, raising the awareness that not all individuals may be accounted for in the collective meaning-making and impending curricular changes. Having considered the relationship between the factors that concur in the formation of participant teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching, this study concludes that a linguistic theoretical approach would inform how to best serve an inclusive foreign language policy by supplying teachers with a theoretical and methodological platform that guides their formation and in-service reflections, and that is capable to assess how both English second- and first-language speaking teachers’ linguistic and pedagogical content knowledge can be successfully integrated at micro and macro context levels. So far it seems that policy has left teachers free to decide their foreign languages pedagogy, but at the same time obliged to pursue a specific examination syllabus. Moreover, teachers have been rather limited by their workload in their elective, critical participation and exploration of the role of research in foreign language teaching. A Language Awareness rationale, inclusive of both experiential and explicit metalinguistic aims, would empower teachers with the critical competence needed to participate to both micro and macro contextual meaning making.

In the final chapter, I will discuss the limitations of my study, and the implications for further research, for policy and for practice.
Chapter 7. Conclusion

Foreword. Findings and contribution

This ESRC funded study was set out to explore teachers' perspectives (Woods, 1996), asking them, as research participants, to report their beliefs about the value of grammar teaching in foreign languages in England. The above aims were pursued by means of three research questions:

1. **What are teachers' beliefs about the role of grammar in foreign languages teaching?**
2. **How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers?**
3. **What factors influenced the development of teachers' pedagogical systems?**

My small-scale, interpretive study aimed to strongly contextualise foreign language teaching in England, aware of the difficulties to generalise from descriptive research, but also aware of the credibility that a well-documented description of the situated nature of local processes has in developing understanding of language teaching. My study planned to reinforce the contextual relevance of participants' views and pedagogical interpretations of national policy guidelines and theoretical frameworks. From its interpretive epistemological stance, my study's findings concerning discrete participant's beliefs and practices in discrete contexts were therefore generalised and validated by the very situated nature of the collected data.

7.1. **Empirical findings**

My study makes a contribution to the field of teacher cognition within the disciplines of educational research and applied linguistics. In the field of linguistics, my research has observed how teachers interpret and respond to their educational contexts when it comes to deciding their metalinguistic pedagogical strategies and the importance of pursuing metalinguistic activities aimed at grammatical understanding. Moreover, it has found important trends of teachers' interest or perceived irrelevance of their involvement in school-based research. Additionally, it has highlighted key instances of target language-mediated instruction in task-based, form and meaning-focused activities. In the field of teacher cognition, my research has highlighted how teachers hold different beliefs on the nature of grammar and grammar teaching. Moreover, it
showed how the cases were divided in two groups; one reporting corresponding beliefs and grammar pedagogical practices; another reporting grammar pedagogical beliefs that were discrepant with their classroom practices. This study has also highlighted how teacher cognition may be effective in revealing consistencies and discrepancies between teachers’ beliefs and their practices. Furthermore, it sheds light on fundamental factors triggering the above consistencies and discrepancies in the dynamics of secondary school foreign languages education: Language learning policy, teacher training and provision, and students’ assessment.

This research has found that where the school policy supports teachers’ initiative, there is greater coherence between teachers’ beliefs about grammar teaching, their intended language learning outcomes and their pedagogical practices. It has also observed that teachers are at times not able to conceptualise their methodology, which was very often based on experience and justified by its leading to the desired GCSE results. All teachers reported believing that the value of grammar understanding was to give students independence of expression. Even in the immersion context observed, declaredly adopting a communicative language teaching approach, grammar was taught explicitly and it was seen as integral of both learning the language and learning about the language. Grammar was a topic and task of the communication that happened in that formal educational context. A very important observation of this study was that a similar task-based approach was observed to be successfully used also in a non-selective state school, sharing the characteristics of a multicultural student population.

On the other hand, this research has highlighted also that teachers’ strong beliefs about the role of grammar teaching and understanding in foreign languages learning are side-lined when perceived to be irrelevant to students’ achievement. Regarding English second-language speaking teachers practising in the UK, Block (2002) observed that they had a stance akin to British university foreign language specialists. He reported how their discourse conflicted with the one ‘emanated from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), via the National Curriculum’ (p. 19). Whilst observing two cases that corroborated Block’s study, this research also observed one case where an English second-language speaking teacher put aside her beliefs about grammar to comply with assessment demands. At the same time, it
observed one case where an English first-language speaking teacher brought together ‘activities, artifacts and concepts into an integrated organic system’ of task-based CLT despite the ‘social constraints’ that undermined this approach in English language education, as well as in other anglophone contexts (Sieloff Magnan, 2008, pp. 358-359). Moreover, both teacher beliefs and subject knowledge seemed not to have been channelled by a meaningful teacher training responding to context-relevant rationales and methodologies. Teacher training was reported to have been irrelevant to all teachers’ formative paths but one. Teachers recalled how it did not seem to assess their linguistic content and pedagogical knowledge, as much as give them an opportunity to put in practice and reflect on their personal grammatical and pedagogical content knowledge, according to their personal criteria. These were neither marked, nor fed back against theoretical and pedagogical positions taken at national curricular level.

Reflecting on divergences, at first none of the participants reported doubting that grammar teaching had an important role in foreign languages teaching; however, the pedagogical practices of half of the participants diverged from their reported beliefs. Moreover, teachers put different emphasis in the pursuit of grammatical understanding, using differing methodologies. Teachers were not equally aware of the pedagogical implications of their methods; besides, they were not equally aware of using either implicit or explicit methods. Additionally, they revealed to hold differing, interchangeable concepts of grammar, at times referring to it as either structures or set phrases.

Reflecting on congruities, some teachers seemed to converge on conceptualising explicit grammatical analysis as encouraging both noticing and understanding (Hudson, 2012c). However, in two cases this analysis was virtually all conducted in the target language, adding a further cognitive and communicative purpose to their teaching. In the previous chapter I reported how none of the teachers saw grammar as a corrective measure to eradicate error. This was reported by both English first-language and second-language speaking teachers, all of whom had experienced grammar teaching either in their foreign language or in their first and other languages education. Interestingly, two English first-language participants in fact concluded that their communicative abilities were due to their grammar foundation. And while
seemingly two English second-language speaking participants at first complained about their grammar-based education, eventually they recognised its value in the development of their linguistic and pedagogical content knowledge, integrating it in their communicative pedagogy.

My study found that generally teachers believed they were too busy to undertake research. In 2003, Pachler observed how the programmes inviting teachers to participate to classroom research were not challenging ‘policy prescriptions’, but channelled in ‘national policy agendas’ that strengthened the ‘implementation of centrally devised curricula and guidelines’ (Pachler, 2003, p. 6). He also observed that the same programmes and the teaching profession were not interesting to ‘high-calibre’ linguists. Only two teachers among my case studies, in the same school, had a research background and were actively involved in applied linguistics research, enthusiastically supported in this by their school. It should be observed that this school is selective for giving preference to students of multilingual background. It is distinctive also in that it adopts a CLIL methodology for the teaching of history and geography, and total immersion for foreign languages programmes. Other teachers mainly reported being interested but lacking time, whilst two believed they did not need any involvement with research because their experience was supplying them with successful GCSE results. Interestingly, one of them wished research to find out how students learn foreign languages and why it is so difficult.

Target language use was an instance where teachers mostly relied on personal experience and preference, instead of research evidence. The target language was extensively used by three teachers, but avoided in five out of eight cases. Two out of these five teachers avoided it purposely in class; one teacher said it was not his style, and the other avoided it because it took a fraction of time to explain in English what she would have employed hours to explain through the target language. Incidentally, this teacher was the same who wished for linguistics to research how languages are learnt. In instructional contexts, practice of target language forms is discouraged prior to metalinguistic activity (Ellis, 2010; Fotos & Ellis, 1991), as it relies on memorisation of unfamiliar lexical terms and their syntactic role (Macaro, 2000). However, following explicit metalinguistic instruction, empirical evidence ‘supports the benefits of pupil use of the target language (Meiring & Norman, 2002, p. 29), as it triggers the ‘strategic
communicative competence’ and is ‘conducive to successful learning’ (Macaro, 2000, p. 183). Nevertheless, systematic target language use in participant teachers’ pedagogical practices seemed a matter of personal opinion and isolated experiential conclusions.

As the elimination of grammar from the communicative equation, the elimination of the target language from foreign languages teaching is also another unsubstantiated extreme. Some participants wished for research to explore how to increase the use of target language in metalinguistic activities. The use of target language seemed easier in the multicultural contexts, where students were not as dependent as monocultural ones on the shared first language, and more used to negotiating meaning being conducted in various languages around them (Ammar et al., 2010). Moreover, multicultural students in schools where literacy was a concern may or may not be fully fluent in the official first language, and unlikely to find translation either easy or useful. Translation pedagogy inclusive of linguistic analysis seemed a preferred shortcut in monocultural contexts – selective and non-often matched with traditional grammar methods. However, the translation of ready-made texts was solely aimed to provide students with an aide-memoire, and rote-learning was not a strategy, but a skill that some teachers relied on to ensure exam performance.

Hudson (2004) described how translation in instructional settings has no linguistic ‘roots’, and deemed it as having scope for ‘very little debate or understanding’ (p. 106). However, some teachers used to create a debate and an understanding-rich environment based on comparative grammar pedagogy, attributing to it a high pedagogical value, done at a level suitable to students’ cognitive stage, and using their understanding of both target language and English to guide students’ learning. Linguistic research in Second Language Acquisition and in foreign languages contexts (Ellis, 2010) has documented explicit language instruction to be the most recommended approach. It has also been gradually embedded in the subject English curriculum, conceptualising descriptive grammar teaching as epistemologically and methodologically opposite to traditional grammar teaching. Explicit language instruction has also defined the ‘context’ in which it takes place as a cognitive one, where establishing links between a communicative intention and the linguistic array of solutions to achieve it diachronically, dialectically and diatypically (Carter, 1993;
Hudson, 2004). According to research, in a foreign language instructional setting, the value of explicit grammar teaching functions as a ‘starting point’ leading to implicit knowledge, with ‘explicit knowledge seen just as a starting point’ (Ellis, 2010, p. 440). Ellis reviewed studies evidencing that explicit metalinguistic activity leads to faster progress in foreign languages learning, where at first it functions as monitor, and later becomes part of acquired, implicit language knowledge that learners can use in spontaneous communication. At the same time, studies evidenced how repeating or acting out models of target language requires too much abstraction to lead to successful grasping of language structures and independent use of the target language, which is therefore only temporarily available and does not lead to acquisition or accuracy (Ellis, 2010; Fotos & Ellis, 1991).

7.2. Limitations of my study

The study has offered an evaluative perspective on teacher beliefs and practices of grammar teaching in foreign languages in England, at a time when national language learning policy is under scrutiny for future reform. It was conducted in discrete state secondary schools, and as a direct consequence of this methodology, the study encountered a number of limitations, which need to be considered.

The first limitation to be considered is the small sample size. In an effort to achieve some diversity in terms of teaching experience and first language spoken so that these characteristics were reflected in the data, my small-scale interpretive study comprised eight foreign languages teachers currently teaching in comprehensive and selective state schools. Charmaz (2003) suggests that small-scale interpretive studies with modest claims might achieve saturation quicker when focusing on a specific group. However, further longitudinal studies with larger samples would beneficially extend the grounded nature of my study’s findings on teacher beliefs and practices about grammar teaching. Larger samples would especially serve further studies proposing an intervention, such as a coordinated treatment of grammar within a coordinated theoretical and methodological framework for language teaching based on Language Awareness approach.

A second limitation was caused by time restrictions. Although studies that use more than one method seem to require fewer participants, future larger studies would benefit
from the use of multiple, very in-depth interviews, conducted with the same participant (Charmaz, 2003b; Cresswell, 2009). Ideally, I would have been able to observe more lessons by the same teacher, preferably observing the incidence of grammar treatments in more than one unit of teaching. Moreover, it would have been beneficial to reinforce the recall element of my final interview by submitting the analysis of fist interviews, think alouds and lesson observations. This attempt was often frustrated by the limitations imposed by teachers’ limited availability, and the necessity to often immediately follow observations with a final interview. Access constituted a further limitation, as my study depended on having to rely on teachers’ preferences when granting me access to paratextual documents, such as: pictures, syllabi, students’ homework and other school policy documents.

Thirdly, limitations sometimes were revealed after having completed my interpretation of the findings, when I discovered that the way in which I gathered data in a specific method inhibited my ability to conduct a thorough analysis of the results. For example, I regretted not including more specific questions about grammar treatment in my initial and final interviews. In retrospect, this could have helped me address issues that emerged later in the study; particularly with regards to the adoption of a coordinated theoretical and methodological approach to language education. The need in future research would acknowledge this deficiency and supply further revision and refinement of each research method employed to gather data.

Several aspects of my study are informed by previous research. At the same time, they are also informed by all the pedagogical and interpersonal perplexities collected during my teaching career and my experience as a researcher. The first aspect regards bringing my own perspective to the research and having to be mindful of this when I collect as well as when I interpret the data. This concerns the effectiveness of researching and collecting teacher beliefs as an insider, and using my past experience as a foreign language teacher to remember that although teachers may be eager to voice beliefs and perplexities, at times this can be an intimidating process. For example, teachers might be afraid of voicing their beliefs, for fear to face the consequences of possible discrepancies with current or local foreign languages expectations. For this reason, I greatly emphasised and endeavoured to protect participants’ anonymity and confidentiality whilst disclosing my interpretations to their
scrutiny, and whilst sharing my findings with other stakeholders. Participant teachers’ pristine voices were my priority; hence I was extremely encouraged by their bold statements, as I associated them with their trust in our collaboration. My analysis has focused primarily on teasing out teacher beliefs. In doing so, I could not include my own insider’s bias on previous research and on participants’ views and realities. This would have been an impossible pursuit without participants’ and supervisory triangulation, which for me remains the strongest trait of qualitative research. The second aspect regards asking teachers to report and reflect on their linguistic and pedagogical theories and knowledge. In the absence of an agreed national strategy to ensure that all teachers are formed following approved theoretical and methodological guidelines, it was difficult to decide the wording to adopt when interviewing teachers, but also when interpreting and coding their statements. Teachers disclosed very dissimilar degrees of access and interest in linguistic research, which made me mindful of how different the teaching practice reality is from that of academic research. Often modern language teaching practice is limited by lack of time and access to research literature, widening the gap in the ability to process, synthesise and communicate with the research community, or sharing a theoretical and methodological metalanguage. I was reminded of this gap also when I attended conferences and seminars, where in the current intercultural and multicultural focus, oftentimes there were no teachers of modern foreign languages sharing their practices in anglophone contexts, thus complementing their colleagues’ experiences of teaching English as second or foreign language.

Finally, although huge lessons were learnt on how to organise and conduct interpretive research, in hindsight, I wish I had been more systematic in addressing methodological perplexities, amply illustrated in Chapter three. However, although the findings of my study are restricted to my participants and their teaching context, I feel they have significantly built on and coherently linked to previous research exploring the dynamics of research, policy and practices of foreign languages teaching. The process of conducting this research has intensely influenced me both as a teacher aspiring to be linguistically and pedagogically competent, and as a researcher aspiring to communicate and exchange knowledge with the research and practice communities. Conducting research has had a profound impact in my own life, making me resiliently commit to further research my and other researchers’ and practitioners’ pedagogical
perspectives and interactions with collective and institutional processes such as school policy and national curricular requirements.

7.3. Implications for future research

Following the trends which emerged in teachers’ observed pedagogical strategies (6.1.), more research should be addressed to understand teachers’ interpretation of ‘Languages for All’ and foreign language policy. This appeared urging to ensure that all students equally met assessment requirements despite their difficulties in reaching satisfactory grammatical understanding. Research should further investigate how these rationales have coexisted in foreign languages practice. Moreover, research should engage in resolving the issue of target-language or first-language mediated metalinguistic activities. This would contribute also to provide evidence-based foreign languages methodologies that cater for the challenges of both English multicultural and/or monocultural secondary school contexts. From this study it emerged that grammatical understanding seems an achievable rationale in both monocultural and multicultural contexts; both in Communicative Language Teaching and in Focus on Forms with limited target language use.

Teachers are under constant pressure to deliver good results in response to governmental demands and controls, but also for the instinctive drive to provide positive learning experiences and gratification to their students. It cannot be ignored that teachers’ responses are at times forced, as Heather reluctantly reported. Her idealistic communicative pedagogy was thwarted by her perception that examination board’s criteria were inconsistent and unfair; which made her resolve to teach to pass exams. Carol and Jo conceptualised grammar as the foundation of a foreign languages’ National Curriculum, believing it avoided repeating the same assessment ‘topics’ without making links with recurrent linguistic features. Ruud and Carla embraced grammar as a rationale of independent bilingual learners, instead of imitators of mother language speakers who just repeat memorised chunks of target language out of context and without the cognitive challenge posed by grammatical understanding. These rationales were promoted by Hawkins (1984), echoed in the Language Awareness movement (ALA, 2012), and by Turnbull and Dailey-O’Cain (2009) in a study on the optimal use of the first language in foreign language teaching.
These teachers’ reported aspirations should guide future research into a coordinated language policy and methodological framework in this anglophone context, (Hult, 2013; Macaro, 1997).

Taking advantage of the acceptance that descriptive linguistics is enjoying in current educational trends (Hudson, 2004, 2012c), but also of a disapplied curriculum that recommends local initiatives, research should promote the exploration of integrative, context-specific foreign languages rationale, languages approach, methodological framework and assessment strategies encompassing all the previous parts. It would be timely to create local interventions where the observed best theoretical and methodological frameworks are re-created and studied in pursuit of an optimal foreign languages experience in this anglophone context.

It should also be considered how teacher education and teacher training should sensitisise and prepare teachers with adequate linguistic and pedagogical content knowledge. These are essential qualities for the delivery of a context-specific foreign language programme of Language Awareness stance (Planel, 2008; Pumphrey & Burley, 2009; Pumphrey & Moger, 1999; Svalberg, 2007). The pending policy reform to the national curriculum for languages should ensure that the next revision considers the discrepancies of its current provision, giving impulse to coherent and research-based linguistic reform. A linguistic theoretical approach should also provide the programmes to form foreign languages teachers enabling them to transfer their knowledge. Participants as well as theorists agree that linguistic content and pedagogical knowledge should not be left until teacher training, but cultivated throughout teachers’ language education to enable their critical pedagogical choices (Silver & Lwin, 2013). Regarding communicative approaches, for example, Macaro (1997) observed that their inherent flexibility to adapt to learners’ needs requires teachers’ integrity and competence ‘as a reflective practitioner, to deal with its inherent tensions’ (p. 43). Importantly, he defined a ‘reflective’ teacher as one willing ‘to draw from a number of sources in order to make decisions about a classroom strategy or technique rather than on a single source or a subjective reaction to a classroom event’ (p. 43). However, this type of reflection needs time, resources and reward for researching and reading theoretical research. Research should find out whether it is up to teachers to ignore the research conclusions of ‘a number of sources’, or whether
it is simply inaccessible to them for lack of time and lack of resources. As mostly teachers relied on their experience, research should investigate the reason behind teachers’ choice not to avail themselves of linguistic research evidence when deciding their pedagogical strategies. Although research has recommended ‘focus on forms’ methodology within foreign languages instructional contexts (Ellis, 2010; Fotos & Ellis, 1991), the teaching force is still left to devise their experience-based methodologies based on GCSE success rates, but not necessarily on the incisiveness that these have in creating metalinguistic awareness and grammatical understanding. Teachers are also ignoring evidence on the optimal use of target and first languages in metalinguistic activities. This is a crucial field that should be further explored also in view of putting the foundations for a more holistic language curriculum.

This research has shed light on the preponderance of external factors such as assessment criteria and teaching contexts on the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems. For this reason, further teacher cognition research is needed in determining the factors impinging on the strength of teachers’ intrinsic beliefs regarding the value of grammar teaching and the value of language education. In my study, external factors transcended teachers’ sophisticated theoretical knowledge and teaching contexts, as in Jo’s case. Moreover, as most participants believed that their training held little consequence on the development of their pedagogical systems, educational research should explore how to embed pedagogical knowledge earlier in the formation of language teachers; for example by developing pedagogical specialisations within foreign languages university courses. Additionally, this research strongly suggests that there is much needed coordination between linguistic research and policy making. A coordinated approach could lead to a theoretical and methodological framework for language teaching whereby any further research or practical interventions would be matched. Moreover, opportunities should be given to willing practitioners to give a professional contribution to the empirical and theoretical work of linguistic and educational researchers. This would also increase accountability in foreign languages policy, research and practice.

It is important that the characteristics of this particular anglophone educational context are defined, as research and policy must be selective of the evidence that serves it.
As one participant (Carla) observed, ESL and TEFL research could be directly applied to the English secondary educational context, as it is one of foreign language instruction; in places markedly multicultural, and in other markedly monocultural. Metalinguistic activity, grammatical understanding and optimal target language use, not rote-learning, should be implemented following both linguistic evidence and current subject English curriculum development. Moreover, research should guide the National Curriculum to promote a language-as-resource and a language-as-a-right orientation, endorsing developmental bilingualism throughout students’ education (Silver & Lwin, 2013, p. 169). Recognising once and for all the role that foreign languages has in the language curriculum would open the path to exploring which aspects of grammatical understanding should be pursued in first language and foreign languages, with a view to increasingly specialise in target language-specific metalanguages. This would allow the specialisation and the increased target language use to be practised with the students who chose to take foreign languages assessments. Moreover, it would encourage an optimal target language and basic metalanguages use with KS3 languages-for-all cohorts. Another participant (Carol) showed how interim year 9 assessment was a motivator for her students; accordingly, research should explore how to make languages for all relevant to every student’s career, not only those who decide to continue.

Finally, research on teacher beliefs should be looking for incentives to use this methodology as means of maintaining teachers’ links with the research and teacher training communities. Moreover, it could be used to reflect on and to share practices. The think-aloud revealed foreign languages teachers’ positive experiences of active reflection on their current practices and their held views. Special attention should be paid to inform teachers on methodologies that allow them to record and explore the types of experiences that have an impact on the beliefs of English first- and second-language speaking teachers respectively. In turn, it should be explored how their respective perspectives influence this specific anglophone context.

7.4. Implications for policy

My study has implications that could inform policy for further reviews of the National Curriculum for foreign languages. Particularly informative are the conclusions on the
coherence found between teacher beliefs and their practices in the schools where whole department and/or school approaches were adopted to language studies. This could also inform a different conceptualisation of foreign languages-specific pedagogical university courses contiguous to pre-service programmes. Moreover, it could investigate how both professional and theoretical development could be closely formed in education, and maintained once in the profession.

Teachers are on the front line of language policy, and studying their beliefs and their pedagogical practices offers a panoramic view of how policy is translated in action. However, finding discrepancies in teachers’ decisions on how to implement foreign languages policy could be the symptom of inconsistencies outside teachers’ control. Such divergence may not be as simple as teachers contradicting themselves, but rest in a problematic that is much more deeply embedded in the dynamic interaction of policy, teacher training, practice and testing implementations. It should be considered how teacher education and teacher training succeed in preparing teachers with linguistic and pedagogical content knowledge necessary for an effective language education in this particular anglophone context. Attention to practising and pre-service teachers’ beliefs should be a feature of educational research, as it can inform educational practice in ways that dominant research agendas cannot. Moreover, it should be considered and critically consulted by policy as a mirror of its own discrepancies and consistencies (Pajares, 1992).

In the United States of America (USA), the foreign language rationale is also being reviewed. Their reflection questions whether ‘foreign language education’ can remain centred ‘on its perceived benefits: a more robust economy, stronger national security, improved cognitive ability, and advantages in college admissions and the job market, just to name a few’ (Brecht, 2012, pp. 1-2). The USA’s Languages for All whitepaper questions whether the education in the US should ‘provide all children access to the interpersonal, developmental, and economic benefits of a second language’, and whether ‘schools, colleges, and universities [are] capable and willing to make language education universally available’. It is concerned with failing to give children universal access to a foreign language education. The concern is with making technology widely available to schools, but also to ensure that ‘research-based best practices in language education are identified and promulgated throughout’ the system
(ibid). My study has presented evidence from eight teachers in five state educational contexts and their respective beliefs and pedagogical practices. It is hoped that they inspire policy to find in them some of the examples needed to pursue a research-based review of the curriculum for foreign languages.

### 7.5. Implications for practice

This study observed how the secondary educational contexts differed not only for the various socio-economic facets of society, but also because their structures were more or less selective; or oriented to specialise in certain subjects. Regardless of the various types of state secondary schools, qualification in foreign languages education across them has a consistent reference in the GCSE contents. These prescribe success in the testing of the four skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. The other common reference, the national curricular guidelines, recommends the teaching of knowledge about language, pursuing both target language and comparative metalinguistic explanations, inclusive also of basic metalanguage. These are all fundamental skills, but they do not seem deployed equally across the eight case studies. Foreign languages assessment seems pursued either by rote-learning or through target language grammatical understanding. The observations conducted in this study should lead educationalists to ask within which rationale a secondary school qualification in foreign languages is achieved with or without necessarily having achieved any grammatical understanding. Moreover, they should consider also the impact of differences inherent in state educational contexts. These are beyond teachers’ control, but impacting nevertheless on teachers’ pedagogical choices. Teachers are seen as responsible for the application of National Curricular policy (Hult, 2013), without considering that they are not yet operating within an agreed theoretical and methodological framework. Foreign languages national curricular guidelines emphasise knowledge about language (DfE, 2013), while the GCSE still focuses on the four skills that Meiring and Norman (2001) signposted. Meanwhile, teacher training has been reported as inconsequential for giving either theoretical or methodological orientation; to either locally educated teachers, or teachers experiencing language learning in other countries. It is quite possible to see how the discrepancies in teacher beliefs revealed their intuitive interpretation of the discrepancies between foreign languages’ National Curriculum policy and assessment. Policy therefore should also
be held accountable for creating personalised pedagogical interpretations of their guidelines.

As some participants have indicated, foreign languages in England is an instructional context. Within this context, foreign languages contends with both societal and linguistic problems of providing a rich and motivational educational course that can be realistically proposed to English first- and second-language speaking secondary school students.

Foreign languages teachers reported that cross-curricular language initiatives would have meant even more work, unless guided by policy, as accuracy in foreign languages and in English was difficult to monitor. In a recent experience of covering teaching English as Additional Language, I found myself reflecting on the pressing importance and centrality of cross-curricular teacher metalinguistic and linguistic pedagogical content knowledge. In that class, it was evident how English was used by all of us (English second-language speakers) as a lingua franca to compare communicative strategies used in our respective native languages and in English. Teachers’ disparate socio-cultural educational contexts cannot be overlooked. Moreover, we cannot ignore that even the teachers in selective schools have reported opting to teach set phrases to less able students to memorise. Linguistic accuracy has always been perceived as a predominant goal in instruction. However, it is the most difficult aspect to attain, and the first to be simplified for less able students. Foreign languages research so far has not considered offering target language cultural studies as an alternative. Classical studies is a similar precedent in the curriculum, illustrating how it could meet both able and less able students’ needs, thanks to the opportunity to mediate in the L1 a more attainable linguistic menu together with more accessible cultural aspects of other cultures.

Teachers need to be given a broader linguistic and pedagogical theoretical framework prior to and helping framing their practical reflections. Teacher education should include researching the impact of an anglophone foreign language instruction, where social and economic factors have made learning a foreign language redundant for economic reasons, and where it has been heavily criticised for not having found more educational and formative rationale for language learning (Hudson, 2006; Williams,
It seems that, having failed expectations so far, the current National Curriculum for foreign languages needs to adopt recommendations developed specifically for this anglophone context. In this way, the chosen approach and corresponding methodology can be tried and followed up by embedding them in teacher training. Otherwise, foreign languages will keep being an eternal trial on previous error.

Learning a foreign language in an anglophone context is not the same as learning English anywhere else. The chosen approach needs to align with a language learning rationale that benefit both L1 and foreign languages learning experiences. English in England is both first and ‘additional’ language in multicultural communities. Foreign languages should focus on learning to learn foreign languages in full awareness of the shortage of L1-like exposure, and that metalinguistic activities and understanding have a cognitive quality that can also function as the link from primary to secondary schooling. National curricular policy should encourage research to define a culturally appropriate approach and an assessment that reflects the social and educational traits of the society where the learning takes place. Teachers should be trained to push students to use the target language strategically, aiming to increase its use with students’ growing competence derived from metalinguistic activity. Furthermore, research should explore how a form-focused communicative approach could be implemented as the spine also of the continuity from primary to secondary school through grammatical activities relevant to both L1 and foreign languages, linking subject English and foreign languages, pursuing cross-curricular and comparative pedagogies (Planel, 2008).

Having a culturally-appropriate foreign languages approach, informed by applied linguistic research and implemented by policy, should also mean starting to form teachers more competently, from their university education, where a foreign languages teaching career should be explored by choosing a pedagogical vocation and by exploring culturally appropriate applications. A university course in foreign languages should give the option to specialise in a teaching career, providing theoretical and methodological foundations. These are teachers’ portable skills, as they allow practitioners to be quickly assimilated in context-relevant training, irrespectively of their educational or linguistic background. In this way, teachers would make informed, and not arbitrary, decisions. The next step must be teacher education as means to
empower foreign languages teachers with the theoretical means to monitor their and others’ performance. Teaching foreign languages must be an ambitious career that cannot leave linguistic and pedagogic specialisation down to individual taste. ‘Educators need to be critical readers of policy in order to know what orientations to language are taken in policies that affect their students’ (Silver & Lwin, 2013, p. 170).

7.5. Conclusion

My study has collected data on teacher beliefs about grammar teaching in different state educational contexts and approaches therein to foreign languages education in England, further documenting research on language education in anglophone contexts. In this context, the specific focus of my study on beliefs about grammar teaching has resonated with sociocultural language learning discourses in the UK (ALA, 2012) and in other anglophone contexts (Sieloff Magnan, 2008; Australia and North America), encouraging national language policy to adopt a theoretical and methodological framework of reference. In England, public opinion also seems to intensify the need to abandon unrealistic or result-driven goals to embrace multiculturalism and multilingualism as more realistic goals for teachers and students (Sherrington, 2013). However, for the time being foreign languages in secondary school education is disappplied and left to individual initiatives ranging from excellent to limiting and formulaic pedagogical approaches. Sociocultural studies on how the promise of teaching for communicative competence was left unfulfilled (Sieloff Magnan, 2008) highlighted how this might present the risk of developing language teaching pedagogies within dynamics that may or may not anchor those particular learning communities to self-serving, monolingual and monocultural, result-driven aims and objectives. This at a time when foreign languages should instead fulfil its potential to form students in England to function within an intercultural competence recognised across all disciplines.

Although recognising that language education develops within dynamics strictly related to the social foundation in which learners and teachers share, this study agrees with those discourses that urgently call for a synergic effort of government policy, linguistic theory and public opinion to break the ‘self-fulfilling’ (Sherrington, 2013) perception of foreign languages as difficult and appropriate only to higher achievers,
especially when grammar teaching is concerned. Grammar teaching is recognised as the ideal short-range objective by both sociocultural communicative language teaching (Hymes, 1972) and by second language learning research on language instruction (Ellis, 2010) as the first step towards intercultural competence (Sieloff Magnan, 2008).

To function as fully accountable professionals, foreign language teachers need more time and more training to match the needs of this particular anglophone cultural context. The risk, otherwise, is to expose models of a foreign language stuck in one’s identity or local trends, instead of opened to intercultural competence, which is increasingly significant also at local level, due to the great variety of cultural heritages, English dialects and idiolects ‘routinely navigated’ by students in England as much as in other anglophone contexts (Sieloff Magnan, 2008, p. 366). Although having paved the way for an interculturally competent language learning, government policy should now ensure that the ‘lack of philosophical commitment required to address the issues’ (Sherrington, 2013) becomes obsolete and unjustified in the face of a unified theoretical, methodological and assessment framework, deprived of intrinsic tensions.
APPENDICES

CHAPTER 2.

Appendix 2.1. Methodology. Searching and reviewing literature

Advice on the structure and purpose of this fundamental chapter of my doctoral dissertation in education was supplied in the MSc, DCR (Designing and Communicating research) lectures by Dr Shirley Larkin (2010), providing seminal literature on the steps in conducting a literature review (Cresswell, 2009; Flick, von Kardoff, & Steinke, 2000). I chose a single chapter format to give a relevant (Maxwell, 2005) account of the influential research contextualising and focusing my study in the four theoretical areas composing this review (Boote & Beile, 2005). A critical analysis of previous and current research informed me of the position of my study (Cooper, 1998; Webster & Watson, 2002) in relation to the debates in language studies, teacher cognition, foreign language policy and educational issues. Expert and insightful guidance was provided by Prof Myhill and Dr Watson, supervising the analysis and synthesis of the researched literature, and by Dr Watson’s talks on her study of teacher beliefs in the context of secondary school subject English.

As a Graduate School of Education PhD candidate, the amply supplied Graduate School of Education Library at St Luke’s Campus, University of Exeter, has been the main electronic and physical reference source. A wealth of suggestions and motivation was supplied by subscribing to The British Association of Applied Linguistics, The Association for Language Learning, and the Centre for Language, Linguistics and Area Studies. They were also valuable feedback on most relevant research strand in linguistics, academic teaching and research posts. Search engines such as Google and Google Scholar were often used to search the following keywords and phrases:

- Explicit grammar teaching
- Focus on Form/Forms/Meaning
- Grammar; the role of grammar in secondary school foreign languages; the grammar debate
- Task-based instruction
- Implicit/explicit learning of languages
- The role of grammatical understanding
- Teacher beliefs in Second Language Acquisition / foreign languages;
- Teacher cognition
- Metalinguistic; metalanguage; meta talk
- Multilingualism, interdisciplinary, multiculturalism
- Educational initiatives (i.e. Intercomprehension, Language Awareness, Knowledge About Language, CiLT)
- Language learning approaches, methodologies and methods
- Policy dates
- Single authors
- Research approaches and methodologies (i.e. ethnographic; discursive; think-aloud, etc.)
- Applicative software manuals (i.e. NVivo, EndNote)

The search of relevant literature supporting and making the case for my study (Maxwell, 2006) initiated from publications which best evoked and described the debated grammar issue in foreign languages, relating closely to my experience as a foreign languages teacher in England and Wales. These are the works of Hawkins, Brumfit, Mitchell, Meiring and Norman. From these publications, research of related and sub-related issues proceeded by consulting online publication records of authors citing these articles. These references were also at the base of my research on foreign languages teaching approaches and methodologies. The work and the tutorial support of Professor Debra A. Myhill provided fundamental reflection on the grammar debate that engulfed language teaching in England and the UK. Krashen and his five-input hypothesis was the starting point of the review on language learning and acquisition, subsequently debated by various authors, but at the same time stimulating research into Second Language Acquisition and foreign languages contexts on the implications of the difference between learning and acquisition. The work of Simon Borg was seminal in identifying theoretical and empirical records on the area of teacher beliefs and teacher cognition. Significant was Dr Annabel M. Watson’s input on important research on teacher beliefs and teacher cognition.

A record of the search was kept and integrated in EndNote (Thomson Reuters, 2014) and NVivo (QSR International, 2014) Software, whereby it was possible to search and
store reviews, abstracts and research notes, usefully linking the saved references via key words, cyclically building up as the knowledge of the fields developed. It was difficult to search original Policy documentation, as it is no longer available. This seems to be a result of the various re-naming of the currently UK Department for Education and related curricular, subject-specific governmental agencies. The analysis and synthesis of documentation relied partly on personal knowledge and experience, and partly on the accounts given in the reviewed literature. For the context and interpretation of policy documentation I particularly relied on Professor Myhill’s work and personal advice. Hudson, Macaro, Meiring and Norman, Mitchell and Carter were also fundamental in detailing the historical role that grammar had in the national curriculum for languages.

Greater experience may have led to less prescriptive models that whilst far from the systematic rigour of positivist conception, could have been more coherent with the consolidated interpretive research tradition (Hammersley, 2001). Greater familiarity with the complex political and theoretical aspects of all treated topics could lead to more cogent, syllogistic treatment of the case I tried to make for my study, in order for it to be relevant to both English secondary school context and to international teacher cognition and applied linguistics research agendas. This review does not aspire to function as thorough foundation (Boote & Beile, 2005), but hopes instead to constitute the starting point of research to explore for and interactively with foreign languages teachers (Cresswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005).
CHAPTER 3.

Appendix 3.1. Data collection

Appendix 3.1.a. Data collection schedule

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<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Data-collection method</th>
<th>Ongoing data collection</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A priori interview</td>
<td>Policy capturing</td>
<td>30-45 minutes</td>
<td>This interview needs taking place before any other data collection, as it hopes to gather teachers’ espoused beliefs, prior to interference from reflection on researcher-led activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Refers to the collection of documents relating to FL teacher and departmental activities) This activity hopes to gather material for an accurate description of each teacher’s discrete case context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Classroom observation</td>
<td>2 lessons</td>
<td>30-45 minutes</td>
<td>Each teacher will be asked to record him/herself thinking aloud whilst correcting six pieces of written work, ideally following the lessons observed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think-aloud</td>
<td>Correction of six pieces of written work from the observed class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher’s diary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Memoes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These data gathering tool hopes to assist the researcher in recording case-specific anecdotes and research implications.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Post-hoc interview</td>
<td>30-45 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


315
Appendix 3.1.b. Data collection hand out.

Dear participant teacher,

Suggested time slots: Week 14-18 Nov; Week 28 Nov – 2 Dec.

Kindly indicate your availability and email this form back to me at sl352@ex.ac.uk.

Delete/tick week/days as appropriate. Please keep to the indicated order of research activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>14 Nov</th>
<th>15 Nov</th>
<th>16 Nov</th>
<th>17 Nov</th>
<th>18 Nov</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INITIAL teacher interview (first activity)</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think-aloud (kindly complete this at your convenience before the final interview)</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson observation (after the initial and before the final interview)</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINAL teacher interview (last activity)</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
<td>Venue:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection activities’ schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial teacher interview</td>
<td>45 mins max.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think-aloud</td>
<td>At your convenience during the week (see below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson observations</td>
<td>2 periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final teacher interview</td>
<td>45 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>4/5 hours max., distributed at your convenience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Think-aloud’ protocol in brief

The aim is to record yourself whilst you verbalise your thought processes as you complete the task of correcting six pieces of written work in the target language you teach. Spelling out your thoughts may feel awkward, so you are given full control of this activity to avoid any alteration of your thought processes. You can do this activity at any time, if you have a voice recorder. Alternatively, I will give you one at your request. Try to voice any thought that comes to mind as you correct the written work – retrospective, introspective, forward-looking thoughts, long-term memories and short-term ones, linked episodes, and so on. Feel free to ask any clarifications. Kindly complete this activity before the last interview.
# Appendix 3.1.c. Research activities checklist.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Initial interview</th>
<th>Lesson observation 1</th>
<th>Lesson observation 2</th>
<th>Think-aloud</th>
<th>Final interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enise</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruud</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.1.d. Consent form.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CONSENT FORM

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation.

I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me.

any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications.

If applicable, the information, which I give, may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form.

all information I give will be treated as confidential.

the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

[Signature of participant]

[Date]

(Printed name of participant)

One copy of this form will be kept by the participant; a second copy will be kept by the researcher(s).

Contact phone number of researcher: 07951 27 99 91

If you have any concerns about the project that you would like to discuss, please contact:

Professor Debra Myhill, St Luke’s Campus, University of Exeter, EX1 2LU.

OR

Dr Amy Burgess, St Luke’s Campus, University of Exeter, EX1 2LU.

Data Protection Act: The University of Exeter is a data collector and is registered with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner as required to do under the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you provide will be used for research purposes and will be processed in accordance with the University’s registration and current data protection legislation. Data will be confidential to the researcher(s) and will not be disclosed to any unauthorised third parties without further agreement by the participant. Reports based on the data will be in anonymised form.
### Appendix 3.2. Initial Interviews.

#### Appendix 3.2.a. Teacher contextual information

**CASE STUDY TEACHER CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

*Sensitive documentation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study No.:</th>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Teacher pseudonym:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher’s personal background
Nationality
Age
Teacher’s education
Languages studied at secondary school
Languages studied at university and subject of first degree
Teacher training course (Bed/PGCE/GTP/SCITT)(TDA, 2010)
Place of training
Further academic qualifications
Teacher’s experience
Years in teaching FL in secondary
Current post and responsibility
Any other teaching/professional experience (within education)
Any previous occupations or roles (if relevant)
Other relevant information (teacher’s initiative)
Teacher’s contextual information
Type of school where currently teaching
Languages on offer
Description of the school and the department
Any other relevant information
Appendix 3.2.b. Theoretical concepts guiding initial interview questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical concepts</th>
<th>Sub-concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of grammar in FL</td>
<td>conceptualisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emerging teacher beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical practice</td>
<td>emerging teacher beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subject knowledge; pedagogical practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher education (language background; teaching experience)</td>
<td>emerging teacher beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subject knowledge; approach; research interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher context</td>
<td>contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.2.c. Initial interview protocol.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical concepts</th>
<th>Initial Interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of grammar in FL conceptualisation</strong></td>
<td>1. What is ‘grammar teaching’ for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>emerging teacher beliefs</strong></td>
<td>2. What value does grammar teaching have for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>3. What is communicative language teaching for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices emerging teacher beliefs subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>4. What do you think the role of grammar is in FL? Why teach G? / Possible interdisciplinarity English/FL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>5. How do you feel about grammar/KAL having a place in the curriculum in its own right? Knowing one’s language / metalanguage to describe_ investigate_ analyse L1 and FL / Enriching the cognitive content of FL?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>6. Are there some aspects of grammar teaching which you think help students in their FL achievement? Are there any that hinder it? G terminology / necessary/useful/harmful / tools to facilitate language analysis and investigation / rota learning / conceptual difficulties / different grammatical features L1/FL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>7. What do you believe your departmental policy to be regarding the teaching of grammar in FL? Colleague’s views / National policy on grammar FL teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>8. Do you believe there is consensus on the role of grammar among teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>9. Which strategies to you use to teach grammar / KAL? In all / certain classes/sets. With all/certain abilities only / Descriptive G / prescriptive G / explicit/implicit G. Strategies to teach / consolidate grammar / strategies to pass GCSE (2 pres., 2 past; 2 future tenses, etc.). Is there a theoretical/linguistic/pedagogical rationale informing your choices? Do you resort to personal ideas and experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>10. What aspects of grammar / KAL do you teach the most?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>11. How is G taught and used in your classroom? What pedagogical strategies do you deploy for addressing G?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogical practices subject knowledge; pedagogical practices contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</strong></td>
<td>12. How do you think students learn the grammar of a FL? It’s triggered by comparison L1/FL / By being corrected of mistakes during/after performance / By being taught grammatical terminology.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Do the students you teach have any problems learning grammar?

14. Do you believe grammar to be a diagnostic tool to eradicate error, or a tool to describe and use language more effectively? Descriptive / prescriptive G? / Effectiveness of explicit grammar teaching?

15. How confident do you feel in your knowledge of FL Grammar? And in your English Grammar? Confident in guiding students through analysis and use of FL structures?

16. Does the school where you work promote any particular style of FL / grammar teaching? TL use in FL? Restrictions on materials, contents, lesson plans; agreed contents; agreed instructional practices?

17. Do you think students have particular expectations about being taught grammar in FL? Parents / colleagues / management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher education (language background; teaching experience)</th>
<th>18. Do you believe that the way you were taught grammar influenced the way you teach/approach grammar now? Affecting factors occurring when a student / in training / as a professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>emerging teacher beliefs</td>
<td>19. Do you think that your approach to teaching grammar / methods have changed since you qualified?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject knowledge; approach; research interests</td>
<td>20. What has influenced this change on the development of your pedagogical practices? Causes: maturity; experience; contextual factors; training; student responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contextual factors: school policy; educational policy; national/local factors</td>
<td>21. Tell me about your formal teacher training experiences. To what educational and training events to you attribute the development of your pedagogical practices? Which approach/es? / teaching philosophy? / Pro/against grammar in any way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22. Where/how do you see grammar/KAL included in a FL teacher formation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. How would you see research helping FL teachers? Mutual collaboration? What would you add to the FL research agenda? Policy / FL decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24. Would you like to add any observations or suggestions?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.3. Lesson observations.

Appendix 3.3.a. First piloted observation schedule.

**Sensitive documentation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case study No.:</th>
<th>Observation No.:</th>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Teacher:</th>
<th>Teacher pseudonym:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot with <a href="http://www.teachers.tv">www.teachers.tv</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 2): How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers and learners?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL / CASE STUDY:</th>
<th>YEAR:</th>
<th>LANGUAGE:</th>
<th>SET:</th>
<th>YEARS OF PRESENT LANGUAGE STUDY:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Mixed; from G to A*</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other remarks (contextual/teacher/pupil/logistic factors):
4 years of study; grades range from G to A*.
The lesson was designed around the students’ need to work on tenses; focus on 3 tenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>PEDAGOGIC CONTEXT</th>
<th>TEACHER PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES/CHOICES: Instruction; interaction: describing what and how the teacher is teaching</th>
<th>STUDENT RESPONSES/activities: What and how the students are doing</th>
<th>COMMENTS on:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G = grammar teaching episode MTL = metalanguage</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Qualitative comments on what happens: student/teacher remarks…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Implicit IFonM = implicit focus on meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Use of materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Implicit IFonF = implicit focus on form</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Classroom dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Explicit FornFeI = focus on forms explicit inductive</td>
<td></td>
<td>- GTI = Grammar-teaching intervention to clarify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Explicit FornFeED = focus on forms explicit deductive</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Emphasis on ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I = instruction, general (curriculum?) Q = questioning/asking E = explaining TL = talking / lecturing</td>
<td></td>
<td>- SK = Evidence of subject knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A = assessing C = criticism/negative F = feedback/positive P = praising</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Grammatical terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U = understanding M = misunderstanding A = attentive D = distracted DD = distracted and disruptive E = engaged EN = enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td>- MTL = metalinguistic talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U = understanding M = misunderstanding A = attentive D = distracted DD = distracted and disruptive E = engaged EN = enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Negotiation of meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free as much as possible.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Allegory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- L1/G… = use of English to mediate grammatical or other concepts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Codes =
- PT = peer tutoring
- PW = Pair work
- GW = group work
- WC = whole class
- IND = individually
- C = collaboratively
- GA = Guided activity (introduced by the teachers.
- TL = lead by the teacher
- PA = peer assessment
- TA = teacher assessment
- T-B = task-based
- L = listening activities
- O = oral work
- R = reading activities
- W = writing activities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 -</td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>A lot of instructions in L1 on every aspect of the lesson.</td>
<td>Students seem very attentive; the teacher is using a conventional presentation teaching technique. Extensive use of TL at the start... but all is translated almost immediately. Tasks are presented first in TL and immediately translated in full, with more details in L1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MTL?</td>
<td>Passato; presente; futuro</td>
<td>L1/G - Uses translation to ensure that tenses are understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.46 -</td>
<td>T-B, individual feedback</td>
<td>F - Direct, random questions on appropriate form FONFs - What pattern can you see? FONFs - Completare le frasi con un verbo. T questions the students in terms of function or desire to communicate in a particular tense, but within a structural exercise. Very quiet. Very focussed? Those who have spoken, so far, have demonstrated to be.</td>
<td>Paticamente devono contestualizzare un esercizio di traduzione? Alla lavagna ci sono tutti i verbi coniugati; gli studs devono scegliere la giusta forma coniugata coniugazione. Gli studenti are very focussed. All the transaction is in L1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.51 -</td>
<td>GW</td>
<td>She explains the activity in Italian and then: ‘I’ll explain quickly in English’ Comprehension of various sentences in a passage is checked through translation. Students have a chance to listen to instructions in TL (albeit translated); they are not required much production in the TL, apart from giving one word answers. The lesson is very much teacher led. All activities are presented to the students, who complete tasks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>GW</td>
<td>The procedures, the exercises, and the terminology are explained in L1. The teacher goes around helping individual groups; L1 to ask ‘how’u gettin’ on’ (L1 to check comprehension); either literal or global translation of the message/text they have to understand. Have you decided on the language? So if he does geography... it seems that... it could be anything... Students are interacting in English. The teacher so far has made extensive use of the L1 to translate the TL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Miss, what does tessuti mean? Students are performing the task, more or less keenly. Are they actively involved? I’d say yes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>GW</td>
<td>T explains in English what they should be up to by now. 30 secondi per finire...ok... giratevi can anybody please turn their face to the front? T now and then interjects a TL word. They seem to be working very hard. No apparent stress or discontent From what can be heard, all discussions are in L1. The teacher uses the TL more extensively to check comprehension. Students are interacting in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RW</td>
<td>What pattern can you see? If a student does not understand, t asks the class Students required to pronounce words in Italian.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The exercise is checked</td>
<td>30 secondi per finire...ok... giratevi can anybody please turn their face to the front? They seem to be working very hard. No apparent stress or discontent From what can be heard, all discussions are in L1. The teacher uses the TL more extensively to check comprehension. Students are interacting in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to help out. She also asks students to give a reason for their choices in Italian.</td>
<td>They are now asked to give a reason.</td>
<td>Whilst asking to make an effort to express their reason in Italiano, she accepts their using English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The whole explanation was in English for this activity. They need to divide up the given forms of conditional in columns? She distributes some sheets 'if you are not sure what the words mean, I put the translation there. Differentiation? TL used only in token sentences. Auguri - congratulations Penso che è divertente Two mistakes, but the teacher’s TL is extremely competent, with both slight southern influence (che vuol dire?) and northerner at times (vowels)! I can’t do that!</td>
<td>There does not seem to be any evidence of communicative instances, apart from the request to give a reason. The lesson focuses on application of student KAL in order to either discern/recognise and categorise, or slightly manipulate g forms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Gives a written task</td>
<td>Uses translation to make sure students have understood the task. [indicate that she is simplifying the syntax. For what reason? Often teachers do it to make students recognise as many forms as possible. But... it is wrong in communication? I think so... what do teachers think?] Students very competently translate</td>
<td>She is deliberately avoiding the subjunctive – why? She sounds to good not to know it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>To get a C grade you know you need 2 presents, 2 past, 2 futures, some opinions, and some linking words. She makes sure that all ingredients are in. T says she has prepared answers and wants students to improve her given answerers. What can you add to improve what is here? -extra information sheets with lists of possible phrases that students will need to paste on the template composition that she has put together. She insists on the above criteria to get a C or higher mark.</td>
<td>Student analyse the text looking for grammatical features that satisfy the C grade. Practical? Reassuring? I remember meetings when I was drilled with this passing on of information. What do teachers think? Expert/newly qual? Native/foreign? Cut and paste of phrases – is it communicative? What do Ts think?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Originality is another criterion... the recap was on GCSE pass criteria</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher de-briefing

- I think the students engaged…
- They responded to the k of grammar taught so far
- She is concerned with differentiation
- Next time – she will give more ideas to deal with comparison. Maybe an additional tense.

**MEMOS:**

Main difficulties:
- to remember where I decided to enter observations.
- To remember the coding!
- To distinguish between MTL/G instruction…
- To use English all the time! This time harder as it is my language I hear from the teacher. Structure jamming makes it slow to work out notes. Recording, however, should help with the missed particulars.
**Appendix 3.3.b. Final lesson observation schedule.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL / CASE STUDY:</th>
<th>LANGUAGE:</th>
<th>SET:</th>
<th>Observation No:</th>
<th>?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**THE LANGUAGE LEARNING HOPED TO ACHIEVE**

<p>| |</p>
<table>
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</table>

**GRAMMAR USED (Necessary? Not necessary?)**

<p>| |</p>
<table>
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</tbody>
</table>

**GRAMMAR OPPORTUNITIES MISSED (occasions where it would have been helpful)**

<p>| |</p>
<table>
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</table>

**I’m interested in the bit where you…** Can you explain to me why you chose that activity?

<p>| |</p>
<table>
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</table>

**I’m interested in the response you gave to …. Can you explain to me why you made that response?**

<p>| |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
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</table>

**I’m interested in the response that Student … gave. What is your thinking about this?**

<p>| |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix 3.3.c. Example of a lesson observation transcript.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Picture of the work</th>
<th>Researcher’s memos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1: Miss, how do you say ‘I was?’</td>
<td></td>
<td>The lesson implies lots of translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: J’étais (points at board)</td>
<td></td>
<td>one student jokingly thanks me in French ‘merci beaucoup’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: how do you say i wanna do a diet?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Enise is going round helping students individually and writing examples on the board. She started from an example in the power point and she is letting students elaborate on that example by helping them providing the vocabulary and the verbs they do not know. It is a mixture of translation and... creative writing..?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: I wanna DO je VEUX faire, instead of VAIS faire…</td>
<td></td>
<td>like Ruud’s, this too looks like a minimalist approach: from a basic structure, she is providing students with vocabulary. She is also correcting pupil's spelling and pronunciation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3: how do you say ‘when I was younger?’</td>
<td></td>
<td>she keeps going round helping them say what they want to say according to the basic example ‘quand j’étais petite je+imperfect, mais maintenant je +present tense’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: it is in your book [reference to previous learning]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: guys, when you do that obviously you can use what we have done before.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: what you wanna say?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: miss how you say ‘I don't have?’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: je veux perdre du poids..? je n’ai pas..?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>je veux perdre du poids..?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: ok, say it again, give me the context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: quand j’étais petite j’avais deux chats, mais maintenant I don’t have them anymore... mais</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
maintenant je ne les ai plus... the best way in French is to say je n'ai plus d'animaux. [she suggests a short-cut phrase that can be used in other contexts].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S: I NEED TO GO?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E: je dois:...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: i must?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: je dois faire un régime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: miss how do you say that? [lots of questions like that]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E: guys, you see je mangeais? if you use that one you need to add an extra -e there ok? if you don't add the extra -e, you pronounce it je manGais. If you remember the first part of the lesson when i wanted to give you the conjugation... it is irregular as well. You don't just take away -ER and add the endings. This one has a... an extra -e... |

Metalinguistic explanation.
Metalanguage.
Building and referring to previous learning. Casually, therefore not planned ad hoc for my observation.
Appendix 3.4. Think-aloud protocol.

The aim is to record yourself whilst you verbalise your thoughts as you complete the task of correcting or giving feedback on six pieces of written work from the Language classes that you teach. It can be any written work.

You are given full control of this activity to avoid any further distraction or emotional filters interfering with your thought processes.

You can do this activity at any time. If you have a voice recorder, save and give me the recorded file later. Alternatively, I will give you a voice recorder when I visit.

Try to voice any thoughts that come to mind as you correct the written work –the learning happening, the mistakes, the language aspects, the satisfactions, exasperations, doubts, certainties, memories and reflections on how you taught.

There is no ‘protocol’ other than keeping as faithful as possible to your thoughts. Kindly complete this activity before the last interview, as it can be completed independently before my visit to the school.

Thank you!

Sara
Appendix 3.4.b. Participants’ reflections on the think-aloud.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Reflections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>I found it quite useful. I never verbalised these thoughts... when you are marking, you feel it... or you have some emotional response to it, but verbalising it was interesting. When I listened back to it I could hear all those feelings in my voice: exasperation... You realise just how much... what they do... know how important it is... I suppose. How frustrating it is when you think ‘they're still no getting this; I got to do this in a different way’. I really enjoyed it; I found it very useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enise</td>
<td>It is not something that I usually do, but found it quite useful even for me [as in myself]. Saying it aloud made me reflect on my teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>It was very interesting, because I could reflect on things that before I would do mechanically. I also identified problems with the levels for not having enough items... I think that I have been marking more slowly than I would have done. It took me 40 minutes. It was interesting because it made me concentrate on the marking much more of my way of operating. Often there is so much going on around me, that it is hard to concentrate in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliot</td>
<td>I was more... instead of reflecting on how good or bad I taught it, I was reflecting more about the way they put their learning into practice. Maybe this is a bit arrogant [laughs]. I just wanted to make sure that they knew it. I did not reflect hard enough on how well I taught it. But... I would say I was more proud than worried about mistakes. I was proud of how things went well. There were more successes then failures. The feedback I gave was sort of ... I should probably have given feedback on the sheet about how they had done...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruud</td>
<td>Just the fact that I had to talk while I was doing it... maybe it is a male stereotype... I was trying to do two things... and not doing any of it. I was not doing both things well... so what I did is do it the other way round... continue with my marking and then reflect on it afterwards. I wanted to be slightly deeper than just telling you that I underlined a mistake, because you would see it anyway [he never sent the photocopies of what he marked, unfortunately].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Carla: It made me think of the different levels of the students. Sometimes you are surprised by students who maybe you think they won't get it, and they actually do get it, maybe because they are very hard working students. They actually sit down and prepare very well... and then you have the very able students who maybe spend just two minutes writing the paragraph. Sometimes they are the ones who make more mistakes because they do not spend enough time proofreading or correcting the text. So it makes me aware of the method I use, but also of the level and type of students that they are. What strengths the students have. I have a student who is rather weak, but hard working and in written tasks she does quite well. Some students who I would expect to get everything right will make mistakes because they rush the work. Preparing it half an hour before coming into the lesson.

Basically, the assessment made me re-assess the way I taught that particular topic and made me think how the kids are learning and reacting to my teaching. How much they absorb, assimilate particular concepts.

Heather: I think it makes you realise that they have not understood certain things. And then you question what could you do to make it better. But I can't think of any specifics. ...How I could teach it better so they would understand it and not make mistakes.
# Appendix 3.5. Final Interview

## Research question 4
What factors influence the development of teachers’ pedagogical systems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reminder: Research questions and theoretical concepts.</th>
<th>Final interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role of grammar in FL</td>
<td>On the lesson observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are teachers’ espoused and enacted beliefs about the role of grammar in FL teaching?</td>
<td>1. Tell me about the language learning you hoped to achieve in this lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do teacher beliefs vary according to their teaching experience?</td>
<td>2. Exploring the grammar opportunities missed in the observed lesson:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do teacher beliefs vary according to their language background?</td>
<td>- I’m interested in the bit where you… Can you explain to me why you chose that activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I’m interested in the response you gave to… Can you explain to me why you made that response?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I am interested in the response that Student x gave. What is your thinking about this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical practices</td>
<td>3. Reflecting back on the lesson, are there any occasions where you used grammar where you feel it was not necessary, or where you feel it would have been helpful to introduce a grammar point?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What pedagogical practices for addressing grammar do teachers deploy in the classroom? (How is grammar taught and used in the classroom by teachers and learners?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What instructional modes (Oxford and Lee, 2007) are reflected in the teachers’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How do teachers deal with grammar in the FL classroom?</td>
<td>To what educational and training events do teacher attribute the development of their pedagogical practices and the changes in their beliefs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What recurrent reflections are revealed by the congruencies and inconsistencies between teachers’ espoused beliefs and observed/enacted pedagogical practices?</td>
<td>Even though not the same, the FL classroom is different from how I was taught FL myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What ideas about FL grammar teaching/learning are reflected in the materials and in the classroom practices?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When you were planning this lesson, did you think about whether to include any grammar or not?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tell me about how you decide whether to include explicit teaching of grammar or not when you are planning generally.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Would you say that the way you use grammar in the FL classroom is the same as or different from the way you were taught FL yourself?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Think-Aloud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tell me about your thoughts on doing the talking aloud activity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Looking back, was any of your assessment linked to student problems or successes with grammar?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Did verbalising your thoughts make you notice or remember anything in particular about the teaching methods/materials used in the lesson; the way that the students approached the tasks; any assumptions you might have made when teaching that particular aspect of grammar?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Did you make any comments which related to grammar problems or successes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Do you think the piece of writing highlights for you any grammar points which the students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need to develop? if so, how would you address this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Did verbalising your thoughts in this way change the way you responded to the writing or have you responded just as you normally would?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about Grammar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What do you see as the role of grammar in FL teaching?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 3.5.b. Ruud's answer to question two.**

I asked them to write about Hertfordshire, in a way slightly more complex... The language learning that I wanted them to achieve was ... you could argue it was both linguistic and metalinguistic... It was linguistic in the sense that I wanted them to understand the vocabulary, make sure that the syntax and the grammar is ok... Cognitive in a way that they understand... or think about the information that they give. I wanted to lead them beyond the stereotypical GCSE level where people talk about their cities and their houses in very banal ways... I wanted to give them the opportunity to build in some proper information... which makes it cognitively slightly more challenging, but also slightly more interesting. I wanted them to put on a sociologist's or historian's hat. Not necessarily at such high level, but at the level appropriate to them. This at a cognitive level.

**Appendix 3.5.c. Ruud's reflection on how students deal with grammar.**

The other level I am always trying to achieve, as I said in the first interview, is looking at the metalinguistic and metacognitive level where you get the students to think how to use language. How they write and talk in the foreign language. What strategies can I give them to really start using this language? Some research makes a distinction between speaking and talking. I guess what I am trying to develop in class is not just speaking, but also classroom talk. Hence when the students make
silly comments - which are fairly typical of that year 10 group you observed - rather
than seeing it as a problem, it is an opportunity for talk. No matter how limited that
is, in a sense, what they are using is German and a sort of interlanguage. It is not
what you would consider absolutely correct German, but it is the German that is
appropriate and correct for the situation that there is in the classroom. If you look at
that from a sociocultural perspective, I could see the classroom as a particular
setting. Just like a supermarket in Germany, or a butcher' in Germany... it would be
a particular setting. I don’t even pretend that... well, sometimes I pretend for role
play that we are in a German restaurant, coffee , or bar, but we are in a classroom,
it is our overarching setting and in many ways it would be absurd to deny that we
are in a classroom. So I say, well we are in a classroom, but we are in my classroom
and in my classroom we speak German for everything. Considering the environment
and its artificiality, rather than take that as a weakness, construe that as a strength
where linguistic rules are out of action, but we are building towards a correct use of
language, rather than insisting on correct use of language at all times.

Appendix 3.5.d. Examples of answers to the final question.

Carla: | Sara: in Physics, for example, you are asked to recount the formulation of
one phenomenon or other... teachers therefore believe there is a value in
being able to recount a rule. Is there any value in being able to do the
same in FL and G teaching?

Carla: DEFINITELY! When I am asking students to tell me, for example,
what is the subjunctive, how does the subjunctive work, not just how it is
formed... when I teach grammar I don't just teach you know, the actual... I
teach the name, how it is formed; I also teach how to use it, and when it is
used, as well. It helps to tell them that the subjunctive is a mood... and
you teach them that it is used to express uncertainty... that everything that
is certain will always going the indicative. Talking like that and explaining;
I think it helps. [...] And I think there is a value to talk about language like
that. Coz they are skills... Because when you are learning a second
language you learn to think and express yourself in that language... and
then you are able to compare how your language [that] you know behaves
| **Hettie:** | I think it would help, if probably, if you have an idea of where things are coming from... IF you are taught grammar in your own language it helps... ’coz to understand your own language... you got a chance of understanding it in another one... I do not know. Possibly yes. |
| **Ruud:** | It is a tool that you need for using language. It goes together with lexical items. It goes together with communication... it is the building blocks that you need. But I do not think it can be taught in isolation. Maybe it can be taught in isolation only after the students have understood how to use it as a tool. It needs to be accessible as anything else... and that is why I reduce it to the minimum. The minimum can then allow me to build it up to a level where the students can see what they are doing. In the year ten lesson that you observed too what I did was start with the bare minimum ad then build it up. It is the language-making process that I want them to see. |
| **Jo:** | I mean I think it is central, isn't it... it has to be... otherwise it is just a collection of random words you cannot put together. How are you going to ever develop... or have autonomy... My tutor at uni said.... it is because you let the language control you. You feel intimidated by that language. What you have to do is take control of the language. I think this is what... If you really can understand some grammar, you can put things together... that is what you are doing; taking some control of the language. |
| **Carol:** | It is the way forward. It is the glue to learning a language. If you don't know some grammar, you don't know what is going on. It is like doing something with wood but not knowing that wood is from a tree. For me is something so fundamental. I am learning Arabic, and I have only vocabulary. If I will not have grammar soon I will not be able to make a breakthrough. |

**Sara:** what is the role of the communicative aspect in FL teaching?

**Carol:** I think they go hand in hand. I am not talking about accuracy. I am
not so much into accuracy, even if I sound like it. The problem we have is that because of the FCSE tests they got to get the tenses right, or you won’t get to the higher levels and we want students to succeed. The point is that there is a communicative element in that. IF you stick to the present tense you cannot communicate very much about what you did, do, what your plans are. As long as you get your point across it does not have to be perfect. I am not in any way a perfectionist in that. At all. I don’t care if it is not completely right if I understand what has been said. Communication has taken place.

Appendix 3.6. Data analysis

Appendix 3.6.b. Example of coding initial interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>What is grammar teaching for you?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segment transcribed</td>
<td>P1: yea, yea... Teaching sentence structure? ... E:m... teaching... the rules of the language...? Grammar teaching... To me, what comes first to mind would be a bit like... maths, really... give rules, give few bits... that the students have to put together to apply them, if that makes sense...? This is what grammar is to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding nodes</td>
<td>ROLE of g teaching, WHAT is g teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ROLE of g, WHAT is g. Cognitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OWN pedagogical practice - STRATEGIES for g teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial rough descriptions</td>
<td>Derived from the first research question: what are teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in FL teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ own definition of grammar, AND grammar teaching. Should I make two nodes..?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How their practice of teaching grammar is interpreted by them. Own strategies. Maybe these need a node of their own..? Teachers’ beliefs about their pedagogical practices. How they declare that they teach grammar in FL..?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>Teaching sentence structure. P keeps using the word structure, but I think she means ‘template’. She said she teaches sentence structure, but she has given lots of examples of a sentence where students would change a word, or a verb in the same tense Ex.1 : Quand j’étais petite je faisais beaucoup de sport, mais maintenant je me laisse aller un peu. Ex.2 : Quand j’étais petite je mangeais sainement, mais de nos jours je mange beaucoup de sucreries. I should have asked her what she means by teaching sentence structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>What is grammar teaching for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segment transcribed</td>
<td>P1: yea, yea... Teaching sentence structure? ... E:m... teaching... the rules of the language..? Grammar teaching... To me, what comes first to mind would be a bit like... maths, really... give rules, give few bits... that the students have to put together to apply them, if that makes sense..? This is what grammar is to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding node</td>
<td>What is G teaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial rough descriptions</td>
<td>Derived from the first theoretical question: what are teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in FL teaching? Teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar teaching in FL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo</td>
<td>Teaching sentence structure. P keeps using the word structure, but I think she means ‘template’. She said she teaches sentence structure, but she has given lots of examples of a sentence where students would change a word, or a verb in the same tense Ex.1 : Quand j’étais petite je faisais beaucoup de sport, mais maintenant je me laisse aller un peu. Ex.2 : Quand j’étais petite je mangeais sainement, mais de nos jours je mange beaucoup de sucreries. I should have asked her what she means by teaching sentence structure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.6.c. Coding Lesson observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research question 2):</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research question 3):</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Instructional modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit mode (I)</th>
<th>Explicit mode. Form-Focused Instruction (FFI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FonM Avoidance of G in the classroom (Oxford &amp; Lee, 2007, p. 121)</td>
<td>Deductive (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FonF (T-B)</td>
<td>Metalinguistic explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cope with language form incidentally (Oxford &amp; Lee, 2007, p. 121)</td>
<td>Reactive (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in a communication-oriented activity (Ellis, 2010, p. 438)</td>
<td>Repetition Corrective recasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental</td>
<td>Proactive (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary focus on meaning</strong></td>
<td>Consciousness-raising tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Practice activities (production based; comprehension based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target form made explicit</strong></td>
<td>Explicit correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Metalinguistic feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target form enhanced or otherwise made noticeable</strong></td>
<td>Repetition Corrective recasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A rule already explicit</td>
<td>Proactive (P)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

341
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar rule supplied</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners directed to induce grammar rule</td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A rule already explicit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix 3.6.d. Coding lesson observations. Grammar teaching modes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implicit</th>
<th>FonM Avoidance</th>
<th>FonF(T-B) Incidental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoidance of G in the classroom (Oxford &amp; Lee, 2007, p. 120). Not instruction at all but instead merely classroom second language exposure Deals with G by exclusion and avoidance</td>
<td>Meaning-focused activities Cope with language form incidentally (Oxford &amp; Lee, 2007, p. 121), in a communication-oriented activity (Ellis, 2010, p. 438). Task-based grammar teaching Most important goal: to deal with communication breakdowns or difficulties in completing the task Identify gaps in their language and take action to solve these problems so that they might negotiate appropriate meaning in interaction with others (Oxford &amp; Lee, 2007, p. 121) Attracts attention to target form Is delivered spontaneously (e.g., in an otherwise communication-oriented activity) Is unobtrusive (minimal interruption of communication of meaning) Presents target forms in context Makes no use of metalanguage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Drawing students’ attention to linguistic elements (words, collocations, grammatical structures, pragmatic patterns, and so on), in context, as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication (Long, 1997, p. 1; in Oxford & Lee, 2007, p. 122)
13. Recasts
14. Input enhancement (color-coding, etc.)
15. Input flood (repeatedly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicit Form-Focused Instruction</th>
<th>Deductive (D)</th>
<th>Inductive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FFI</td>
<td>PDEFFI</td>
<td>PIEFFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalinguistic explanations</td>
<td>By means of linguistic explanations consisting of information about specific linguistic properties.</td>
<td>Consciousness-Raising CR tasks – discovery learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDEFFI</td>
<td>Explicit correction: The explicit provision of the correct form (; in Ellis, 2010, p. 442; Lyster &amp; Ranta, 1997, p. 46). Metalinguistic feedback: Contains either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student’s utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form.</td>
<td>Repetition of the student’s erroneous utterance with the location of the error</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metalinguistic Explanations</th>
<th>Explicit Correction</th>
<th>Metalinguistic Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By means of linguistic</td>
<td>The explicit provision of the correct form.</td>
<td>Contains either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student’s utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explanations consisting of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information about specific</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linguistic properties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice activities</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(production based; comprehension based): L2 data is provided in some form that requires operations on or with it to arrive at explicit understanding of some regularity in the data (Ellis, 1991b, p. 239; 2010, p. 442). Students are told to derive metalinguistic awareness of the target features. Intentional rather than incidental learning. Text manipulating; text-creating. Comprehension-based Interpretation tasks: structured input seeded with the target structure to demonstrate comprehension.</td>
<td>(incidental – after error has been committed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corrective recasts reformulates the learners’ erroneous utterance with the correct form highlighted intonationally (in C. Doughty &amp; Varela, 1998, p. 443; Ellis, 2010). Inductive because students are required to carry out a cognitive comparison of their original and reformulated utterances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proactive</strong> (preventive of error)</td>
<td><strong>Signalled by means of emphatic stress.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.6.e. Coding lesson observations. Types of metalinguistic explanations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code during analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of metalinguistic explanation (Ellis, 2010, p. 444; Sharwood-Smith, 1981).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for each teacher, tick each episode of metalinguistic explanation).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elaboration/conciseness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 TYPE A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covert but elaborate guidance (e.g., through the use of 'summarizers')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborated and explicit guidance (e.g., in the form of an algorithm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief indirect 'clues' that hint at a regularity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concise prescriptions using simple metalanguage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explicitness/intensity</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix 3.6.f. Coding think-alouds.

Figure 20. Carla's feedback. Think-aloud method.

Es especial, increíble e imprescindible hay un laboratorio y un gimnasio pero no hay una sala de actores y una piscina. Mis asignaturas son el inglés, el francés, el español, la historia, la religión, la matemáticas. Me gusta el inglés porque es [censurado] y le el profesor explica muy bien y tolerante. Juego mucho al fútbol porque me encanta el fútbol. Me gustaría llevar ropa de calle porque es cómoda y barata.

En mi opinión es muy especial pero odio el uniforme y se debe tener una camisa blanca, una chaqueta azul, un jersey azul y una corbata azul, una camisa blanca y unos pantalones negros. Con rayas azules el año próximo quiero desear un perro porque me encantan los animales.

Hasta luego!

ATENCIÓN:

[Diagrama]

Me encanta el fútbol
Odio el uniforme

la ropa [censurado] y barata

Me encantan los animales

(Censurado)

Me encanta el fútbol
Odio el uniforme

Figure 21. Carla's corrections. Think-aloud method.
Figure 22. Coding of Carla's think-aloud.

Figure 23. Carla's transcribed think-aloud. Part 1.

Figure 24. Carla's transcribed think-aloud. Part 2
### Appendix 3.6.g. Nodes’ definitions.

#### CONTEXT

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Departmental policy on grammar teaching</strong></td>
<td>Whether teachers believe or know that the department promotes a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>particular pedagogical approach to grammar teaching. Whether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>they feel that it is an actively discussed issue within the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>department. Their preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>School context</strong></td>
<td>Absolutely anything to do with it: Languages on offer; languages’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>popularity; behavioural issues; community languages;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mixed/single sex/comprehensive/state/selective; multicultural;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>multilingual; rich/poor; literacy concerns. Any STATEMENTS OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BELIEFS teachers pronounce regarding their context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>Support for FL</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ statements and/or beliefs indicating a supportive or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>unsupportive school context towards FL education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Declarative beliefs

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Teachers’ grammatical subject knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ beliefs about their confidence in their metalinguistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>subject knowledge. How teachers value the pedagogical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>effectiveness of their subject knowledge. To be compared with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>teachers’ pedagogical strategies. Definitions considered - as in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Myhill 2012.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>FL policy</strong></td>
<td>Beliefs about aspects of policy: elective status; exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>requirement; assessment; G and schemes of learning; g in literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>strategy; teachers, grammar and the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td><strong>G and Communicative Language Teaching</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ beliefs on the nature, aspects of communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>language teaching. Statements and beliefs that I collected and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>that I think (researcher) enter into the definition of CLT pedag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ogy and methods. Teachers’ personal accounts at encountering CLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>Consensus on GT</strong></td>
<td>consensus at micro and macro level (own school and amongst the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>profession)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>Explicit grammar teaching as discrete subject</strong></td>
<td>The interview should have given more room for questions on the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>role of explicit grammar teaching. the questions should have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>been more explicit on this issue! i feel this will limit the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>study. Values attached to it. Values of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>G role in teacher training and formation</strong></td>
<td>Teachers expressing beliefs about the importance of grammar in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the formation of a FL teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>Significant events influencing teachers’ beliefs</strong></td>
<td>Teachers expressing beliefs about what changed or influenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>their grammar pedagogies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. <strong>What is G?</strong></td>
<td>What grammar is. The cognitive role of G. Examples of definitions for G and of cognitive processes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. <strong>What is the role of G teaching?</strong></td>
<td>Derived from the first theoretical question: which are teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar in FL teaching. Teachers’ beliefs about the role of grammar teaching in FL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. <strong>L2 and L1 grammar interdisciplinary issues</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ beliefs regarding grammar issues between subject English and FL teaching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. <strong>How SS learn grammar</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ beliefs about how students learn grammar, including their views on whether g is for lower or higher achievers; whether students are aware that they are taught grammar.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. <strong>Teachers’ statements of pedagogical strategies</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ statements of pedagogical strategies and aspects for teaching grammar helping or hindering students. This was complemented of the codings previously under the node ‘Aspects of GT helping or hindering students’, as I noticed that many codings were in common. This node was closely related to ‘own strategies’, collecting statements of beliefs on how aspects of grammar teaching or grammar help or hinder students' progress and achievement in language learning. The assumption to fuse the two nodes is that teachers must teach according to those aspects that they think best help students achieve in language learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. <strong>Teachers’ own pedagogical strategies for GT</strong></td>
<td>How their practice of teaching grammar is interpreted by them. Teachers’ strategies. It collects only Teachers’ beliefs about their pedagogical practices - how they think that they teach grammar in FL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. <strong>How research could help FL teachers</strong></td>
<td>Teachers’ beliefs on: how research could help them; teachers’ involvement in research. Dialogue between research and practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grammar in teacher education. Comments referring to participants’ experience of grammar learning during their education**

1. **Grammar-based or inclusive education**
   This is to code when teachers educated in UK or abroad signal their encounter with grammar at various stages of their education.
2. **Grammar-deficient education**
Appendix 3.6.h. Nodes gathered around the five categories identified from the coding of the initial interview method.

Figure 25. Initial interview. Five categories of parent nodes and relatives sub nodes.

Figure 26. Lesson Observations. Five categories and subnodes.
Figure 27. Think-alouds. Five categories and subnodes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Created On</th>
<th>Created By</th>
<th>Modified On</th>
<th>Modified By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
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<td>SL</td>
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<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
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<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 28. Final interview. Five categories and subnodes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Created On</th>
<th>Created By</th>
<th>Modified On</th>
<th>Modified By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30/04/2013</td>
<td>14:54</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>SL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.6.i. Memos.

Figure 29. NVivo memo: research journal.

Figure 30. Memo written whilst visiting school 1.
Figure 31. Memo written whilst observing Enise’s lesson. School 1.

Figure 32. Consecutive memos observing Carla’s lesson. School 3.
Figure 33. Consecutive memos observing Heather’s lesson, School 5.
Appendix 3.6.j. Participants’ validation

Table 20. Example of individual participant validation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Confidence in their grammatical content knowledge; consequences for their pedagogical choices; value in their pedagogical strategies;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hettie feels confident about her knowledge of the FL grammar and of English grammar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hettie told me the teachers in her department are very ‘independent’, and experienced. They embrace change only if they believe in it. I asked her where she thinks their independence comes from, and she believes it comes from ‘experience’, which she defined as the years of teaching experience. ‘R: What do you think makes them independent? P: partly experience. Three… The main French teachers… the other two French teachers are very experienced; they have been doing it for a long time. Ehm… having said that, they would embrace new ideas, as long as they happen to like them’. I asked Hettie: ‘R: How confident do you feel in your knowledge of the foreign language grammar?’
And she replied:
‘P: Pretty confident, actually.
R: Where does this confidence come from, this belief in your confidence?
P: well, being a language teacher, I was always quite good at it. So... I... yea... experience, I guess... the fact that I am reasonably literate, and always have been... so.... Ehm... yea, I mean I used it all my life, really’.

When asked if she feels confident in guiding her students through understanding language and grammar, Hettie replied:
‘P: yes, I am’.

Hettie believes that her knowledge of the target language comes from her year abroad whilst at university, and that her knowledge of the target language was acquired during her teaching experience:

‘P: I went to Surrey university and did Linguistics and International Studies for four years...
P: I would say my actual language speaking skills come from my period abroad at university. I would say most of my knowledge about the language came from teaching’.
Table 21. Example of group validation

**PARENT NODE: DECLARATIVE BELIEFS**

**SUB-NODE: FL Policy**

**DEFINITION:** beliefs about aspects of FL policy: mandatory; elective…;

Only experienced teachers, with considerable management responsibility within the FL department felt like contributing to this question. After reading this extract from participants’ contributions, do you feel like adding your observations? Would you agree or disagree? Would you have any more information on this teacher’s beliefs?

Another emerging consideration seems to be that the ‘languages for all’ policy seems to lead to teachers being stuck by the comprehensive policy into strict pedagogical cadres, where progression is stuck to the minimum attainable language skills. It also seems to push teachers towards communicative pedagogies which exclude grammar teaching, as this proves to be too difficult for some students who are either less motivated or less able. Would you like to comment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo believed that the status of FL improved when the subject became elective, as beforehand it was very difficult to “get all the students through with very low motivation up to GCSE”. This finding is directly correlated to Macaro 2008’s findings. Macaro too believes that the subject enjoyed better results and consideration when it was elective. Macaro considers both lack of motivation and lack of perceived attainable results as reasons for FL decline (the ‘double whammy’).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference 1 - 1.38% Coverage

*P: I have been here in two settings. I was here when it was compulsory, and I taught compulsory all the way to year 11, and I have been here when it was a choice for the students. My honest opinion here in the school is that the choice*
is working better. Trying to get all the students through with very low motivation up to the GCSE. It was very difficult for us at the beginning when it was compulsory and I am quite happy that they select it now at GCSE.

Elsewhere Jo mentioned that the change to elective status meant reducing the teachers’ corpus. Her final conclusion, however, seems in favour of FL having elective status, especially considering the increased cognitive demands of more recent GCSE assessment:

Reference 2 - 0.28% Coverage

With the new assessment they really have to be able to understand much more about the concept.

Jo made an important reflection on the fact that the more recent assessment criteria not only were more cognitively demanding, but also placed more responsibility on the teachers to ensure that students ‘access’ 60% of the grades; that their teaching is translated in successful pupils’ strategies at putting ‘it together themselves, write with very basic notes and a few words’. 60% of the marks, in fact, are direct responsibility of FL teachers, who assess students’ speaking performance (30%) and written performance (30%). The marking of the writing is only partially controlled by the teachers, as it must be moderated and then marked externally:

Reference 3 - 2.68% Coverage

P: it’s the GCSE: they have to be able to write and speak in controlled conditions. They do not have a dictionary, they do not have a textbook, they do not have any support, and they do not have an exercise book. Assessment, previously coursework… they could do it at home, practically copy it from a book, change some words, and it would be acceptable as a piece of coursework as long they’ve taken the material themselves. Now what they
have to do is put it together themselves, write with very basic notes and a few words. They have to be able to see their own mistakes as they are writing. So it has to be... If they don't do different tenses they cannot access the top marks, and we have control over 60% of their marks now, within the school now. We've never had so much control before, so if we do not get it right, if they do not get it right they are not going to access the grades.

Reference 5 - 1.44% Coverage

P: Yes. This, up to a degree, is still fine up to KS3. But with the new assessment this has shifted because up until now in the GCSE their listening exam was limited to tick boxes, and recognise key words, key phrases and a few examples of the tenses. The same with the reading: ‘is it past, present or future?’. But generally the tests were different. Now they the focus is much more about them to create things. Write things down, understand how the language comes together.

However, Jo also added an important reflection on the time that teachers had to fulfil the successful pedagogical transfer of their grammatical knowledge. The time factor detracted from pursuing teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Despite their chosen practices of explicit, exploratory grammar teaching, she felt that due to lack of time, sometimes some teachers felt that the only choice was to give students set phrases to learn by heart, ticking the requirement boxes of ‘present, past, future tenses and a complex structure’:

Reference 4 - 1.18% Coverage

Yea, we all should teach the different tenses at least a few phrases... this is probably where we differ... and with the amount of time... to write a piece of course work, about healthy eating... you could just teach the students how to say... ‘I eat, I used to eat, I am going to eat’... and this would be sufficient... to pass a GCSE; their coursework. If they understand and they know a few phrases...
Jo therefore identified an important discrepancy between teachers’ pedagogical beliefs and the impossibility to apply them in practice due to policy and time constraints.

Jo’s further reflection on FL policy was on the shift from the previous ‘communicative’ assessment, and the more analytic present one:

P: Until now, as a department, what have we done is to teach towards an assessment. I haven’t really even given… it was all the communicative approach… it was all about being able to communicate approach, just…

R: what was the communicative approach?

P: it’s just like answer the questions they are posed in their assessment. So they can communicate with us on some basic level about […] the question in the speaking test would be ‘what did you do at the weekend?’ and they are able to say ‘I went swimming with my friends and I went to the beach. That’s all they needed to know in order to get the levels that…

R: We are talking about a list of set phrases?

P: Yes. This, up to a degree, is still fine up to KS3. But with the new assessment this has shifted because up until now in the GCSE their listening exam was limited to tick boxes, and recognise key words, key phrases and a few examples of the tenses. The same with the reading: ‘is it past, present or future?’. But generally the tests were different. Now they the focus is much more about them to create things. Write things down; understand how the language comes together.
From her description, however, it seems that what she describes as ‘communicative’, was in fact more close to a functional-notional syllabus, where students need to respond to communicative prompts, and where teachers’ main aims were to help students pass the assessment.

The descriptions she gives of the more recent approach are in fact closer to the communicative language teaching as theorised by Canale and Swain 1980 and adopted in the analytic strand of the LA movement, as theorised by both Hawkins (1984) and Hudson 2006 (Language Education: Grammar).

Jo’s generous contribution therefore offers an insight on another discrepancy; this time the discrepancy seems to be between the teacher’s perception of CLT theory and practice as the previous ‘notional functional’ approach, instead of the more current one, inclusive of explicit grammatical teaching combined with the pursuit of more communicative activities.

Carol expressed a strong belief in FL policy limiting students’ progress in those schools where teachers observed the policy requirement not to introduce the past tense in year 8 and 9. The example she produced is her child’s experience of learning French in year 8 in another school:

Reference 1 - 1.62% Coverage

*If he were here, he would be already using past and future because we teach those phrases… we have set language phrases… that are for use in the classroom from the very beginning… that means that students are already operating at ‘level 6’ already if they are saying ‘I have forgotten my book’… already that is a past tense, which is level 5. The problem is that he is stuck, and I know that I am thinking too much in terms of the national curriculum levels, but being stuck in the present tense is boring…*

However, the ‘knowledge’ of verbal tenses she seems to refer to does not seem one derived from explicit grammatical teaching, but one derived from
students learning by heart set phrases in the future or past tenses, and being given the opportunity to rehearse them in class, in real communicative contexts, such as having to explain the reason for having forgotten their books.

Carol thinks that teachers should question policy, suggesting that policy halts potential progress for being focused around the static and ‘dry’ textbook resources:

Reference 2 - 2.53% Coverage

P: I think they need to re-think their schemes of learning, because their schemes of learning seem to be focused around the textbook, but the textbook is a dry object.

Her reflection ties up with those made by P6 in her answer regarding teachers’ beliefs regarding departmental policy. P6 was also concerned with lack of progression at year 8 for having to linger on the present tense. Together with her initiative to base the curriculum around grammatical structures to avoid repetition, Carol has also introduced ongoing targets prior to GCSE. In year 9, her students attempt the FCSE, equivalent to a D grade at GCSE:

Since we’re doing the FCSE, which is the equivalent of getting a grade D at GCSE in year 9… because yes the EBacc has influenced the way students are now doing languages at KS4…

Carol’s further reflection on the status of FL ties up with those made by P2 within this node (motivation; elective sbj; teachers’ independence; Macaro 2008):

‘but we were still doing extremely well even before the EBac. It was still going up. And we’ve got our 50% uptake target at KS4 even before the EBac, so
we’d hit our target already, but the thing that we started doing the FCSE was an incredibly motivating factor, because they have a qualification even if they don’t do it later. They do a qualification and they have something which is useful to them. And also, we can reject the textbook

In support to her claim of teachers’ need to actively question the policy restrictions, Carol adduced her teaching experience in her previous employment, where she was tied to a topic-based curriculum. This is no longer her case; as head of department, she is free to apply innovative changes to FL teaching, in the drive to make it a more creative experience. One of these changes is to use grammar as the base of her pedagogical strategy.

Reference 3 - 0.89% Coverage

In the first school I taught, you did family in year 8, and then again family a year later… nothing much changed unless you had a new dad or something... The point is once you’ve done family, you don’t need to do family again. You just need to revise it very quickly and move on.

5 P5’s reflection recorded how FL policy changed regarding grammar teaching in English schools, whereby students now seem to enter secondary education with some knowledge of grammar, after KS2 recent policy provision for grammar teaching:

Reference 1 - 0.88% Coverage

And then also grammar teaching wasn’t really done at all in English schools at the time; we didn’t even have the literacy hours in primary schools, whereas now you’ve got some grammar teaching in primary schools. At the time there was none.
Differently from P2 and 3, P6 expressed favour for the ‘languages for all policy’. The example she proposed was a teacher who, in her opinion, managed to get all students learning by using a communication-based (instead of explicit grammar-based? Does P6 believe that now the pedagogy is grammar-based? I am not sure I understood her). At first glance, she seems to agree with participants 5 and 7. However, hopefully classroom observations will hopefully clarify her classroom approach. I should, however, have explored further her theoretical concept of communicative language teaching to be in a position to better interpret her belief.

P: I did a PGCE in 1994. But I remember, even going round and doing the observations there and… seeing a gentleman teaching a bottom group and he said he’d never have thought that they could have learned a FL, and it was all due to the fact that they could do this much more communication-based language learning, than trying to learn about the grammar.

Her belief in ‘languages for all’ policy is further reinforced by the following statements of belief:

*And I am very pro the value of all students learning a foreign language… In the first school that I taught in, everybody had to do a foreign language all the way up to 16, even if it was not up to that stage part of the NC.*

and further:

*it was in [NAME OF THE CITY], and the city had still got grammar schools… so we never ever had the brightest students, and yet they all went through doing a foreign language through to 16 and they never complained about it.*

Her next observation, however, grasps the discrepancy between languages for all policy and actual teacher task of getting all students to the same attainment levels:

Reference 2 - 0.29% Coverage
I don't know how we get round that. When the students don't all… manage to make it to that level.

Carla's following statement reinforces Carol and Jo's beliefs that policy has become more grammar based. She interprets current policy grammar requirement as one of 'accuracy':

Accuracy obviously is one of the elements that will be considered as successful in terms of their language competence at the end of the year. Thinking of how the students are going to be assessed, grammar is a component regardless of my opinion about grammar. It is an element that is going to be part of their assessment, so it's something that we also need to teach.

Policy requirements of grammatical accuracy entail pushing her pedagogical beliefs aside and teach grammar regardless her firm beliefs in communicative language teaching greater efficacy:

'but if I am honest, from what I have seen, at the end of the day the way languages have [been] taught... are very much subject to timetables, exam pressures... so in the end teachers end up teaching the curriculum that is going to produce exam results.
Table 22. Examples of participant's replies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol's reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In response to the message from Liviero, Sara, 03/04/2013</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07 April 2013 14:06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi Sara,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I didn't do Spanish at Uni. It did GCSE in the sixth form as self-study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also 'schemes of learning'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last thing, we are just called Languages not MFL or FL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best wishes,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June's reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In response to the message from Liviero, Sara, 04/12/2012</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 December 2012 15:44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello again Sara,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is very interesting to read your reports and I find it very interesting to see what others think. I am beginning to think more deeply about things, but I am not sure I can verbalise my ideas yet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope you have a good Christmas and New Year,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carol's reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In response to the message from Liviero, Sara, 04/12/2012</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 December 2012 21:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi Sara,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your report is really interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy with all the comments about me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regards,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ruud's reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06 September 2012 15:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You replied on 06/09/2012 15:53.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Sara,
I hope you’re well. I was just wondering how you were getting on with your PhD and if you had a draft chapter of your data analysis as it relates to [School 3] and/or German at [School 3], because I would be really interested in finding out what your findings are.
Good luck with the (hopefully) final stages of your PhD and all the best,

**Jo’s reply**

In response to the message from Liviero, Sara. 01/12/2012
10 December 2012 17:32

HI Sara
Hope your research is going well.
I’ve had a read through your notes and have made some comments as my feelings on reading the text were that it didn’t actually fully reflect my feeling about grammar.
I hope you’ll find them useful. If there is anything you want me to elaborate on, please let me know.
Jo

**[Jo’s amendments]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence</th>
<th>Confidence in their grammatical content knowledge; consequences for their pedagogical choices; value in their pedagogical strategies;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jo expressed lack of confidence in her knowledge of both TL and English L <strong>terminology on occasion with respect to word functions in a</strong></td>
<td>‘But this grammar, it’s not my… coz I did not do linguistics; any studies at all. It is not a strength in my teaching. I find it particularly interesting, and I find it really necessary’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo stated feeling uncertain about her knowledge of <em>some</em> grammar terminology of her language of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
specialism – Spanish (*this is not just in Spanish, but in general – but only with respect to word labelling*). She attributes it to her lack of grammar studies until university, where she *was first introduced to explicit grammar teaching and* found it particularly challenging *with respect to indirect and direct objects*. She feels confident in her written performance in Spanish. She has implicit knowledge, but not *a fully developed* declarative knowledge of *some* grammatical terminology. *She would not be able to explain some key grammatical concepts (it depends what you refer to in this respect - with respect to the labelling of word, yes, this may be true depending on the vocabulary)*. However, she stated that she likes grammar, and that it was the key to her success of becoming fluent ‘In language learning, for example, I like grammar’...
‘So of course language learning the way I was taught suited me. I made progress, got my degree. Became practically fluent’.
## APPENDIX 4.1. Sample. Participants and Schools.

Table 23. Participant profile at a glance (1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Enise</th>
<th>Jo</th>
<th>Carol</th>
<th>Elliot</th>
<th>Ruud</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Carla</th>
<th>Heather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality and first language(s)</td>
<td>French / Turkish/ Greek trilingual</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Belgian German/ French bilingual</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English L1 / L2</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L2</td>
<td>L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other languages known</td>
<td>Italian, Spanish</td>
<td>Hispanic, Portuguese, French</td>
<td>German, Italian, French</td>
<td>Spanish Italian Catalan</td>
<td>Italian, German, Latín, Russian</td>
<td>French, Spanish, German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages taught</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Spanish, French</td>
<td>German, French</td>
<td>Spanish, French</td>
<td>German, Geography (French) CLIL</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience / years</td>
<td>E 10</td>
<td>E 6</td>
<td>E 7</td>
<td>I 5</td>
<td>I 5</td>
<td>E 25</td>
<td>I NQT</td>
<td>E 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional role</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>HoD</td>
<td>HoD</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>HoD (German), CLIL geography (French)</td>
<td>KS3 Learning Coordinato r</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>HoD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24. Participant profile at a glance (2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pre-Training education</th>
<th>PGCE / year</th>
<th>Other postgraduate qualifications</th>
<th>Other relevant work experience and/or education.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enise</td>
<td>France, England</td>
<td>UK, 2001</td>
<td></td>
<td>First degree in English Philology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>UK 2005</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Bank clerk, au pair, PA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>UK 2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>Au pair in Italy. Lived in Berlin for 6 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elliott</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>UK 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>Worked in a factory for one year; year abroad in Caceres, Extremadura.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruud</td>
<td>Belgium, England</td>
<td>UK 1997</td>
<td>MA; PhD</td>
<td>Educational Publishing – editing books for German-speaking students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carla</td>
<td>Spain, England</td>
<td>UK, GTP 2010</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>University Lecturer since 1993: Spanish, translation studies. Researcher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Experienced teacher (E)** = More or equal to 6 years

**Inexperienced (I)** = Less than 6 years.

**HoD** = Head of Department

**NQT** = newly qualified teacher

**GTP** = Graduate Teaching Programme
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Brief school description</th>
<th>Recent Ofsted</th>
<th>Eligible student % for free school meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>An inner-city secondary, community school with a mixed student population of 1,114, aged 11-16.</td>
<td>Good (Feb 2013)</td>
<td>Well above national average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A secondary, foundation school for girls, mixed in the sixth form. Pupils on roll were 1,144 (219 in the sixth form); in an affluent heritage city in the South of England.</td>
<td>Good (April 2013)</td>
<td>Below national average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A comprehensive, foundation, mixed gender school for pupils aged 11-18. Pupils on roll were 934 (180 in the sixth form). The school is both day and boarding, located in an affluent area in the north of London.</td>
<td>Outstanding (Dec 2007)</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A comprehensive, community college for students aged 11-18. Pupils on roll were 2668 (531 in the sixth form). The school is located near the seaside in the South West of England.</td>
<td>Good (Nov 2009)</td>
<td>Below national average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A comprehensive, community college for students aged 11-19. Pupils on roll were 1039 (146 in the sixth form). The school is located near the seaside in the South West of England.</td>
<td>Good (Jan 2010)</td>
<td>Below national average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4.2. Contexts.

School 1

Figure 34. Foreign languages used to reflect on Black History Month.

Figure 35. Posters in the Community Language.
There are no handles upon a language
Whereby men take hold of it
And mark it with sights of it remembrance
It is a river, its language:
Once in a thousand years
Breaking a new course
Changing its way to the sea.
It is mountain effluvia
Moving to valley.
And from nation to nation,
Crossing borders and mixing.
Languages die like rivers.
Words wrapped round your tongue today
And broken to shape of thought
Between your teeth and lips speaking.
Now and today
Shall be faded hieroglyphics
Ten thousand years from now.
Singing and singing—remember—
Your song dies and changes
And it is here tomorrow
Any more than the wind
Blowing ten thousand years ago.

Figure 36. Poems used to reflect on language.
“English is simply not enough. We cannot understand the world in English...”

Figure 37. Posters reflecting on monolingualism.
School 2

Figure 38. Displays of assessment criteria 1.
Figure 39. Languages department trips and events.
Congratulations to all our students who did a language at GCSE, AS and A2 level.

The girls in the photos represent lush linguists because they achieved or exceeded their target grade because they made excellent use of the 4Rs.

Figure 41. Rewards.
School 3

Figure 42. Year 7 French.
Figure 43. Bilingual Humanities
**Figure 44. Geography CLIL (French)**

- La mitigation

En plus, les personnes qui sont dans le gouvernement, pour la force des bâtiments, comme le dessin à gauche. C'est un ingénieur avec une échelle, du ciment et des matériaux inébranlables.
Figure 45. Trips and exchanges.
Figure 46. Peer assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIOS</th>
<th>NOTA</th>
<th>COMENTARIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTENIDO</td>
<td>** **</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIPO DE LENGUA</td>
<td>** **</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAMATICA</td>
<td>** **</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRONUNCIACION</td>
<td>** **</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMENTARIO FINAL:
Excellent at pronouncing words, content made sense. Grammar was correct but could use a little more vocab. Overall excellent.

Figure 47. Metalinguistic feedback.

7 El martes tengo matemáticas, historia y educación física.
8 El miércoles tengo bienestar, dibujo y educación física.
9 El jueves tengo ciencias, francés y inglés.
Obviamente tengo tecnología, inglés y francés.

¡Bien hecho!
Atención:
- Acentos
- Francés
- Inglés
Figure 48. Metalinguistic explanation. Colour coding.
Figure 49. Metalinguistic corrections.
### Appendix 4.3. Lesson observations’ précis.

**Case 1: Enise.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson 1</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intended Learning Outcomes:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Trouvez l’intrus’ is the one she mentions at the beginning. However, the main part of the lesson is on the alternation of present and imperfect tenses to talk about lifestyle habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main lesson:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enise started from a modelled task in the target language aimed to prepare students for the written assessment, and preceded by translating it. Subsequently, she asked students to justify the use of certain vocabulary or verbal structures. In this particular instance, she proposed a series of sentences in the present tense and imperfect tense. She told students a few connectives to link these sentences, explaining that in the GCSE these were key aspects for obtaining higher grades at level 5 or 6, corresponding to the A and B grades. She then recapitulated the formation of particular verb tenses. Finally, she asked students to change certain words in a sentence whilst keeping the same verbs already conjugated. She recommended that the students do not attempt new language, but that they stick to the model by changing only a few words. This recommendation appears in various GCSE guidelines, which teachers follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plenary:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not clear. She reminds them about the controlled-conditions written assessment upon their return from half term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lesson 2</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intended Learning Outcomes:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life styles: ‘comparing your lifestyles with when you were younger’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main lesson:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The lesson was spent in writing a ‘short paragraph on comparing your lifestyles with when you were younger’. Enise told them it was an exercise in preparation for the controlled written assessment. The lesson was mainly about translation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and piecing together the sentences copied during previous lessons. The teaching mode was explicit, composed of metalinguistic explanations, metalinguistic feedback and explicit corrections.

Enise was going round helping students individually and writing examples on the board. She started from an example in the Power Point presented in Lesson 1, letting students elaborate on given examples of sentences containing present and imperfect tenses. She provided the vocabulary and the verbs they did not know, and she corrected pupil's spelling and pronunciation.

**Plenary:**
Students continued composing the paragraph until the end of the lesson. Some were more focused than others.

---

**Case 2: Jo.**

**Lesson 1**

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

A film review of ‘María llena eres de gracia’ by Joshua Marston; a Colombian movie about drug trafficking.

**Main lesson:**

Jo started the lesson asking the students to recapitulate the film plot. She then showed a few possible starters to talk about the film, the characters and students' opinions on a power point.

She subsequently showed them an example, and kept asking students to contribute by adding their descriptions of the plot, the main characters and their opinions on the film.

Jo addressed grammatical points as they arose, but she was trying to focus students’ output on the use of the past tenses.

Students eventually started to write their own versions, and Jo went around helping students individually. At the end, students were asked to read their piece. If they declined, Jo read it for them.

The whole lesson is conducted in target language, with very few exceptions for individual student feedback.

**Plenary:**
The lesson ends as film reviews are still being read. Homework is given for the following week.

**Lesson 2**

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

Dependencia. Las palabras claves listadas son: estar en contra de algo; estar a favor de algo; tomar droga o usar droga

Students start by putting drug categories in socially accepted, medical and illegal drugs.

**Main lesson:**

The lesson continues with vocabulary based activities. Students are required to read and remember. Jo stresses that there is no need to write.

Students are chosen to read a passage out loud from the textbook. Secondly, they are asked to work out unknown vocabulary in pairs. The task is repeated for each reading passage, with regular intervals for checking comprehension.

Jo is using the target language, with few exceptions.

**Plenary:**

Students are asked to write sentences on the topic of drugs, alternating present and imperfect tenses. Whilst Jo conducted the first part of the lesson entirely in target language, in the final part she used English to explain the meaning and the function of the imperfect tense, drawing various comparisons with English.

---

**Case 3: Carol.**

**Lesson 1**

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

To prepare for the last batch of tests for the FCSE tests on the topic of New Technologies.

**Main lesson:**

Carol checked students considered their previous task and the corrective feedback on a previous written task. She then introduced the vocabulary defining new technologies and the adjectives for describing the same.

The lesson involved analysing the examples, analysing word classes and their grammatical behaviour with certain adjectives.
Carol also checked their pronunciation by reading and asking students to repeat the presented vocabulary.

Students were also asked to draw pictures of each technology and write the name by it. They were given time to draw and colour in. in the meantime, she answered individual questions, or checked work.

Students were also asked to conduct pair work to reflect on the grammatical properties of the language presented.

Students were asked to read out their work and were corrected in front of everybody.

Plenary:

Students were asked to recapitulate the work they did and its purpose towards the assessment.

**Lesson 2**

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

Carole introduced the task to express opinions and reasons for their opinions about various types of New Technologies.

**Main lesson:**

The lesson started with a recapitulation of the previous lesson and the implication of the learning in progress towards the assessment.

The lesson started with an example of ‘what can be done’ with technology. Carole asked various students to translate it, at the same time asking the grammatical analysis of selected passages. Students were again very comfortable to ask questions, make mistakes and did not feel inhibited when asked to speak.

Students copied the title and the sentences Carol gave as an example. Carol proceeded analysing the sentences grammatically together, noticing ‘what happens’ if changes are made.

Students were then given time to translate opinions on new technology and the reasons for their opinions on the power point.

Plenary:

Carol told students they would have looked at comparatives. She made sure students knew where they ‘were going with this’, in terms of the project they were preparing: a leaflet on new technologies with advantages and disadvantages.
She checked students knew what linguistic contents would allow them to perform above level 4.

Case 4: Elliot.

**Lesson 1**

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

Feedback on the ‘Zoo Project’ completed for that week.

Elliot: We probably will revisit ‘describing animals’ in the future, but we're moving on. Today's objective is to be able to ‘describe your eyes and hair’. [...] We are still going to be using some of the vocabulary that we have been using so far. [...] We going to be applying as well the same grammatical laws and rules that we've learned so far.

**Main lesson:**

Elliot started by asking the translation of the sentence ‘I have blue eyes’. The translation elicited the recapitulation of adjectival agreement.

The next twenty minutes consisted in students in turn reading and translating sentences describing eyes and hair colour and styles. Elliot was very encouraging of their efforts.

The second part of the lesson consisted in students drawing a table, where they entered words according to categories: noun, adjectives, verbs…

Subsequently, Elliot tested students' understanding by dividing them in two groups and scoring them on true or false understanding about descriptions of Elliot’s and then of students' eyes and hair. Students obtained a point if correct, or lost a point for their group for wrong answers.

Elliot then asked if they would be able to start describing themselves by now, and started asking students for examples. He then advised them to use a range of different adjectives, for example to say ‘I have short, black hair’. At this point, students were asked to ‘produce two sentences: one is to describe yourself; the other one to describe someone else’ [...] We are going beyond our objective to describe ourselves by describing other people’. Elliot then helped students individually, later giving their homework out.

**Plenary:**
Elliot asked individual students to describe their eyes and hair. He recapitulated adjectival agreements and word order. Finally, he described the project that they would have completed by Christmas (within a month).

**Lesson 2**

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Describing physical appearance.

Main lesson:

Elliot starts by asking students to put random words on the board in a complete answer. Students busy working out how to put the sentence in order. He is going round the desks to help some of the students. Inductively, he asks the following questions to elicit their explicit understanding of some regularity in the data.

- Is it singular or plural?
- Is the door red or red door?
- Think about how *marron* is going to be plural.
- Is that word going to be describing eyes or hair? Eyes, very good.

He then asks to work in pairs, and finally works the solution together. Finally, students search eight words in order to exercise ‘dictionary skills’. They are all words they can add to the task of describing themselves.

**Plenary:**

Students read out their works and receive explicit corrections and metalinguistic explanations.

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**Case 5: Ruud**

**Lesson 1**

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Talking about town and environment

Main lesson:

Ruud used German throughout the lesson to communicate and to instruct students. He recapitulated what previously done in class; then wrote a simple sentence and asked students to add to it.
Students then wrote their own description, as they were recommended to write complex sentences, adding adversatives as well as conjunctions. Ruud went around and helped students individually. The students asked many questions and tried to defend their linguistic choices. Students freely asked questions and translanguaged in English and German.

| Plenary: |
| Ruud asked them to read their work out, and the class applauded each effort. |

### Lesson 2

| Intended Learning Outcomes: |
| More extensive work on town and environment. |

| Main lesson: |
| Ruud introduced the types of questions to be answered in the assessment. He did not give templates. Instead, he wrote ‘fragen’ in the centre of the board and around it he wrote ‘why, when how, etc…’ in German. Students did more writing and he went round helping them individually. |

| Plenary: |
| Students read their work and received feedback. The whole lesson was in German. |

### Case 6: June

| Lesson 1 |
| Intended Learning Outcomes: |
| Talking about the weather |

| Main lesson: |
| June introduced visitors, equipment and learning objective in French. She asked students to recapitulate the main language learned about the weather: set phrases. Students were asked to copy down the sentences on the board. June helped them translate them as they took notes. June continued explaining in French, but increasingly she started translating the main vocabulary and sentences. Students filled in a word search with weather expressions for the first 20 minutes. At the end, each phrase is checked and translated. |
Students successively had to do an exercise in the book: matching letters to numbers attached to pictures of different weather.

There are long pauses between activities, and students are very chatty.

Plenary:

She announces the next activity. Students are rather noisy while she tries to help individual students.

**Lesson 2**

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

- Television weather forecast

**Main lesson:**

Students needed to complete a project whereby they would have presented the weather forecast to the classroom. June instructed the students to use future, past and present tenses, listed in a powerpoint slide. June started progressively to use more English as she helped students, but attempted to use French to communicate to the students.

Students use their past notes and the book to complete the weather forecast.

**Plenary:**

Some students are asked to read their weather forecast.

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**Case 7: Carla**

**Lesson 1**

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

Revision of the topic ‘El colegio y los problemas en el colegio’ in preparation of the speaking GCSE exam.

**Main lesson:**

Carla conducted the lesson by speaking the target language throughout. She started by asking students to describe their school and its features, and express opinions about them. At the same time as recasting their output, she helped with the spelling of key words. Students replied in target language, but were free to ask questions in English. Carla, however, replied in Spanish also to explain grammatical points and the lesson’s implications towards the preparation of the speaking test.
In the second part of the lesson, Carla asked students to talk about their opinion on various ‘school issues’, such as stress, bullying, etc.

Plenary:
Carla played a game where students were required to speak to compose sentences on school and school issues containing at least 15 words, including facts, opinions and justifications.

Lesson 2
Intended Learning Outcomes:
At the start of the lesson, Carla asked students in Spanish to talk amongst them about what they needed to revise for the exam. After five minutes, she gathered their conclusions on exam revision requirements.

Main lesson:
As in the previous lesson, she used the target language throughout the lesson. Carla explained that she put various exam-type questions in a pencil case, which would have circulated as she played a song. When she stopped the song, the pupil with the pencil case would have extracted a question and replied it. Students explained to each other it was like ‘pass the parcel’, or ‘hot potato’, and were delighted that she chose ‘Danza Kuduro’ for a song. Students were more or less elaborate in their answers, but they were all complying to the task. At the end of the activity, Carla spoke in English to explain aspects of the speaking test. The last activity required students to draft their answers to the speaking test questions previously answered orally. Carla played music by Shakira, and some students were quietly singing along as they wrote. Carla went round helping them individually, speaking in Spanish.

Plenary:
The lesson ended whilst students completed the previous task.

Case 8: Heather
Lesson 1
Intended Learning Outcomes:
‘Extending sentences’. To revise for the controlled GCSE assessment (writing and speaking). The aim was ‘not to write like an English essay about school’, but ‘purely an exercise in showing off how much French you know’.

Main lesson:

Heather reminded students that ‘to access the top grades they needed to expand and describe… give opinions and reasons’. She read the last part from the examination board requirements. Heather first gave some examples of isolated sentences describing the school, and asked students what could be added to make them more complex. Students were referred to lists of previously learned phrases, conjunctions, adverbs, and adjectives that would have helped them link isolated sentences into more complex ones, express and justify elaborated opinions. Students first read out their sentences, which Heather analysed and discussed in English; secondly, they were asked to turn to their partners and say three sentences using all the connectives previously discussed. Heather repeated various times that the task was ‘an artificial exercise improving how much you know; not telling me information about your school’. Students were then asked to start writing down sentences describing their school and adding as many of the above mentioned connectives as possible. Sentences were analysed; mistakes were put on the board and explicitly corrected in English by both metalinguistic explanations and feedback.

Plenary:

The lesson finished whilst students were completing the writing task.

Lesson 2

Intended Learning Outcomes:

‘This is not an exercise in English... on how fantastinc you r writing is. It’s is an exercise in proving what you know in French’. [...] It doesnot have to be mindblowingly exciting. It could be as simple as last lesson, last week, in this lesson the teacher was... we did... I learned nothing... someone fell off a chair…’

Main lesson:

Heather revises ‘superlatives’ by asking students content that was previously given them in ‘control sheets’. The explanation contained both explicit and implicit metalinguistic instructions, as heather proceeded to explain rules but also to ask students to guess what grammatical characteristics verbs and vocabulary had in
certain grammatical contexts. Students were then asked to keep writing a mock copy of the controlled assessment, which they had to memorise in order to be able to reproduce it in controlled conditions. Heather helped students individually by helping them translate examples that they would ask her in English.

Plenary:

The homework is to 'use what you have done already and extend it... everything you have done you can use in your assessment; I then can mark it. Whatever you write, I will mark. After that, I will no longer be able to mark anything that you do'.
Appendix 4.4. NVivo Screenshots

Appendix 4.4.a. Initial Interviews

Figure 50: Theme 1. Contextual influences on grammar teaching.

Figure 51: Theme 2. Teachers’ reported beliefs about grammar teaching.

Figure 52: Theme 3. Teachers’ reported beliefs about foreign languages and first language grammar interdisciplinary issues.

Figure 53: Theme 4. Teachers’ reported beliefs about grammar in teacher education.
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLIL</td>
<td>Content Language Integrated Learning</td>
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<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>FFI</td>
<td>Form-Focused Instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>FonM</td>
<td>Focus of Meaning</td>
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<td>FonF</td>
<td>Focus on Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>FonFs</td>
<td>Focus on Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL</td>
<td>Foreign Languages checked no more in text only in appendices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLNC</td>
<td>Foreign Languages’ National Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>KAL</td>
<td>Knowledge About Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>KS2</td>
<td>Key Stage Two (Primary School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KS3</td>
<td>Key Stage Three (First three years of secondary school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>KS4</td>
<td>Key Stage Four (Fourth and fifth year of secondary school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Language Awareness</td>
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<td>LINC</td>
<td>Language in the National Curriculum</td>
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<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
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<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>NC</td>
<td>National Curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>NQT</td>
<td>Newly Qualified Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>PGCE</td>
<td>Post Graduate Certificate of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
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<td>SLL</td>
<td>Second Language Learning</td>
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<td>Task-Based</td>
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<td>TEFL</td>
<td>Teaching of English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TL</td>
<td>Target Language</td>
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