

Implicit Grammar Teaching:
An Explorative Study into Teacher Attitudes and Classroom Implementations

by

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Abstract

Although much literature has been presented on implicit grammar teaching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, little is known on teachers' implementations of longitudinal implicit grammar teaching programmes in Dutch classrooms, or on how these implementations may relate to attitudes towards grammar teaching. This study used data from a questionnaire, interviews and observations to investigate teachers' attitudes, implementations and the relation between these two factors. No clear preference for either implicit or explicit teaching was found, and both were valued positively. In addition, most teachers viewed grammar as secondary to language skills (e.g. speaking, reading or writing). The teachers used different but recurrent strategies to implement implicit grammar, such as inductive teaching, focus on meaning and prosodically emphasizing input. They experienced teaching as more labour-intensive and demanding creativeness. Some teachers missed a small amount of basic grammar to fall back on, which would be especially helpful for less-proficient students. Feedback moments and null-responses were the only grammar-sensitive moments present in the classrooms. Implicit feedback (recasts) and null-responses were most used, but there were also types of explicit feedback present. Some attitudes were related to implementations, but there was no clear trend to be seen. There was individual variation between teachers in the results of all three methods.

1. Introduction

1.1 Grammar teaching in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts

The teaching of grammar in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts has long been a point of controversy. Researchers have posed questions regarding how much time should be dedicated to the teaching of grammar, and whether grammar teaching aids productive and receptive abilities in communication (Ellis, 2006). At the same time, a debate arose on whether learners would benefit more from learning grammar with either implicit methods or explicit methods. Explicit grammar teaching, which is a more traditional approach, focuses primarily on linguistic form and meta-linguistic explanation. Implicit grammar teaching, on the other hand, relies primarily on picking up grammar unconsciously from communicative interactions (Ellis, 2006).

Implicit grammar teaching is based on the theories on second language learning of Krashen (1982). He claims that grammar can only be acquired naturally, and, that learning (conscious knowledge of a language) need not precede acquisition (subconscious knowledge of a language) in second language learning. The utilization and knowledge of grammatical rules may serve as a conscious monitor, enhancing grammatical accuracy. This grammatical accuracy is for example required in (academic) writing. In a communicative setting, however, there is less time to utilise this monitor: spending time on the conscious application of rules is detrimental to the fluency of the conversation (Krashen, 1982). Developing implicit, or subconscious, knowledge of the language may enhance the communicative skills of EFL students. Krashen (1982) states, furthermore, that explicit grammar teaching as it is now applied in traditional classrooms, which is based on the principles of 'learning' grammar, cannot develop students' 'acquisition' of grammar.

Krashen's first plea for a naturalistic approach to teaching took place in 1982, and much research has been conducted on implicit and explicit approaches since then. However,

relatively little is known about the longitudinal effects of implicit grammar teaching in EFL contexts. Larsen-Freeman (2015) argues that there is still a gap between findings of grammar learning and teaching studies on the one hand, and the practice of EFL teachers on the other hand. She advises researchers to conduct more ecological research that fosters a reciprocal relationship with teacher practice. Adopting a more natural research setting (in-class research), conducting longitudinal studies, and having teachers conduct their own research may all help to enhance the interaction between research and practice.

Nazari (2013) devised a longitudinal intervention study to test the effects of implicit grammar teaching. In her study, the performance of an implicit instruction class was compared to the performance of an explicit instruction class. The learners were tested after ten learning sessions using a writing task and a grammar task focused on the present perfect. Nazari (2013) found that the explicit group outperformed the implicit group on both the grammar task and the writing task. She argues that this outcome shows the importance of metalinguistic awareness in EFL learning. It should be noted, however, that the grammar test primarily focused on retrieving the grammatical rule behind the form (e.g. gap filling). If the tests would have tapped into implicit knowledge more, the results of the study might have been different.

Piggott (in preparation) has recently started a longitudinal study which investigates the effects of a two-year implicit EFL grammar programme on Dutch children in their first and second years of secondary education. This study may yield different results than the study of Nazari (2013). Firstly, Piggott conducts in-class research which provides a more natural research setting. Secondly, the period of instruction will last significantly longer and there are more children taught by more teachers (8 teachers; 10 classes) at different levels of education. Thirdly, the teacher-researcher interaction is enhanced through Piggott herself being a teacher in the programme. Finally, the children in Piggott's study are younger than the participants in

Nazari's study, and they are in an initial learning state. There is some consensus in the field that grammar instruction may only begin to play a part after the initial learning phase, and that communication practice should precede grammar instruction (Piggott, 2016; DeKeyser, 2005). In Piggott's study (in preparation), explicit focus on form instruction is delayed for one and a half years. This means that there are neither grammatical exercises, nor corresponding explicit instructions on grammar in the curriculum. After this period of one and a half years, the students will start learning grammar explicitly. The current study will interview and observe the teachers in Piggott's research programme to investigate attitudes towards, and implementations of, implicit grammar teaching.

1.2 Teacher attitudes towards implicit and explicit grammar teaching

Because the longitudinal effects of implicit grammar teaching are not fully known yet, this teaching method is not often (wholly or partly) integrated in classrooms. Teacher practices and methods in the Netherlands are frequently adapted to the more traditional, explicit way of grammar teaching. Ellis (2006) further defines this as "the presentation and practice of discrete grammatical structures" (p.84). Despite a trend of explicit teaching in classrooms, teacher attitudes may vary towards implicit and explicit grammar teaching. Although Nazari (2013) did not report on the attitudes of the participants towards grammar, there have been a considerable number of other studies depicting teacher attitudes and beliefs towards implicit and explicit grammar teaching (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Başöz, 2014; Barnard & Scampton, 2008).

Burgess & Etherington (2002) investigated attitudes towards grammar teaching held by English for Academic Purposes teachers in Britain. They used a questionnaire which consisted of statements on implicit grammar, explicit grammar and grammar in general. Students of these teachers were non-native speakers from overseas, about to enter university education. Outcomes show that most teachers agreed with the statement that students can

learn grammar through exposure to language in natural use. However, they did prefer grammar as a basis for learning. Moreover, there was a preference for correcting the students' grammatical utterances, even when interfering with communication. These outcomes seem to point out a positive attitude towards implicit instruction, but not at the expense of explicit instruction. Explicit instruction was mostly valued in making sure the learners achieved an acceptable level of accuracy. This is also supported by the belief that their students feel insecure if there is a lack of explicit grammar teaching. Another interesting outcome is that implicit communicative 'games' are considered too silly, although this might be explained by the age of the learners and the teaching setting.

Another important study by Başöz (2014) studied the attitudes of prospective teachers of English studying in Turkey. The prospective teachers were also given a questionnaire, similar to the one developed by Burgess & Etherington (2002). Results show a preference for a more communicative approach. Teachers were positive towards grammar instruction, especially as a basis for reading and writing. They acknowledged, however, that the study of grammar may slow down English communicative competence and that grammar instruction may well be preceded by communicative practice. When it came to implicit or explicit approaches, the majority favoured implicit grammar instruction.

The different outcomes of these studies might be explained by diversity in teacher profiles: different (former) schooling, amount of experience and contextual factors may all influence teacher attitudes (Borg, 2003). The teachers in Burgess & Etherington's study (2002) were more experienced than the teachers in Başöz's study (2014). Also, diversity in student profiles may play a role in the different outcomes. The students taught by the teachers in Burgess & Etherington (2002) were advanced learners, aged >18 years old. The teachers in Başöz's study (2014) were assigned to practice teaching in high schools and primary schools. Hence, it is plausible that these teachers targeted younger and less advanced learners when

filling in the questionnaire.

In Piggott's study, most teachers have a traditional (explicit) teaching background. For the purposes of Piggott's research, however, these teachers should only teach grammar implicitly. Their attitudes towards implicit and explicit teaching may yield important insights about in-class implicit grammar teaching. The students in Piggott's (in preparation) study are 12 to 13 years old and have had little previous English education. Therefore, results may differ from Burgess & Etherington's (2002) findings. The fact that actual, not prospective, teachers will be questioned may in addition lead to reproducing a more natural teacher sample than the one used in Başöz's study (2014).

1.3 Teacher implementations of implicit grammar methods

None of the aforementioned studies (Nazari, 2013; Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Başöz, 2014; Barnard & Scampton, 2008) reported how teachers implement the implicit grammar instruction in their classroom, and what problems they may encounter. This may, however, be of significant importance. Teachers used to traditional teaching approaches may change their teaching strategies when it comes to participating in an implicit grammar research programme such as Piggott's (in preparation).

1.3.1 Focus on forms, focus on form, focus on meaning

Literature on grammar teaching distinguishes three different teaching approaches that complement the distinction between implicit grammar teaching and explicit grammar teaching: focus on forms, focus on form and focus on meaning. These three approaches are more directly applicable to classroom practices and are, therefore, considered relevant to explain in more detail. The first approach, focus on forms, is similar to what in section 1.2 was referred to as the traditional, explicit way of grammar teaching. It involves a conscious and systematic presentation and practice of (meta)linguistic features (Ellis, 2006). The focus is on grammatical form, not on meaning. The second approach, focus on form, relies on both

implicit and explicit teaching principles. In focus on form instruction, the attention is on (implicitly) conveying a message (communicative purpose). However, when the message is conveyed, the teacher may pay (explicit) attention to the linguistic forms. This enables learners to ‘notice’ the correct linguistic form, and its corresponding communicative importance (Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis, 2004). The third approach, focus on meaning, entails implicitness. No attention to forms is given and the classroom is wholly concerned with communication (Burgess & Etherington, 2002). The implicit grammar programme of Piggott (in preparation) relies primarily on principles of focus on meaning: there are no grammatical exercises in the curriculum and there is no corresponding explanation of grammatical constructions. In previous research, there have been no reports on certain strategies that teachers might use to implement these (focus on meaning) principles in a classroom.

1.3.2 Grammar-sensitive moments

Furthermore, the aforementioned guidelines of Piggott’s study (in preparation) only cover a setting of the classroom in theory. As the implicit grammar programme is implemented by the teacher, students initiatives or student-teacher interactions are likely to occur. It is important to speculate on how teachers will deal with these possible moments, in which naturally occurring grammar may play a significant part. Such moments will from now on be referred to as grammar-sensitive moments. Two forms of these grammar sensitive moments are expected to be prevalent: grammatical errors and grammatical questions of the students.

First, grammatical errors will be discussed. When a student makes a grammatical error in the classroom in teacher-student interaction (that is, the teacher notices the error of the student), a teacher might provide corrective feedback. Much research has already been done on implicit and explicit corrective feedback. These two types of feedback tap into respectively implicit and explicit learning. Recasts are the most common form of implicit corrective

feedback. Here, the learner's utterance is reformulated using the correct form. This form of feedback ensures that the communicative context is not interrupted and it enhances microprocessing (rehearsal of the correct form in short-term memory) needed in implicit learning (Ellis, Loewen and Erlam, 2008). Explicit corrections, repetitions and metalinguistic feedback are forms of feedback that can be related to explicit learning (Tedick & de Gortari, 1998). During explicit correction, the communicative context is shortly interrupted and the teacher draws the learner's attention towards the incorrect form. The incorrect and correct form are both provided, and there is some additional explanation (e.g. a comparison with the learner's L1). This is much like a repetition, where the teacher repeats the error with emphasized intonation and provides the correct form. When metalinguistic feedback is given, the communicative context is also interrupted. Here, besides the incorrect and the correct form, metalinguistic information about the construction is given (e.g. 'you need the past simple' or 'how would you make this sentence using the future?').

Another form of feedback is elicitation. With elicitation, the teacher questions the utterance produced by the learner, but does not immediately provide the correct form (saying: 'yesterday?' to elicit the past simple) (Tedick & de Gortari, 1998). According to Tedick & de Gortari (1998), elicitation can be categorised as explicit feedback, because the communicative context is interrupted, and the learner is made conscious of his mistake. To some extent, however, it might also be considered implicit feedback, because the elicitation can be used to improve the transfer of meaning and not that of form. The above mentioned categorisation of types of feedback (recasts, explicit correction, metalinguistic feedback, repetitions and elicitation) was devised by Tedick & de Gortari (1998) and will also be used in the current study to organise given feedback during the observations of lessons.

A most recent research on types of feedback in a traditional (focus on forms) classroom was conducted by Dilāns (2015). Dilāns (2015) also used the feedback categories

devised by Tedick & de Gortari (1998). He found, while observing types of grammar feedback in L2 Latvian classrooms, that there was a predominant provision of explicit isolated recasts. Other types of feedback (integrated recasts, elicitation, repetition) were behind in number of use. Dilāns (2015) distinguishes between explicit isolated recasts and integrated recasts. According to Dilāns (2015), when a teacher uses intonation with his/her recast, he/she makes the learner consciously aware of his mistake. In the current study, these two types will be both marked as implicit recasts. It is argued that intonation emphasis contributes to implicit learning because the learner is able to draw his attention naturally to the correct form. A limitation of Dilāns study (2015) is that the metalinguistic clues, that Dilāns mentions in his theoretical framework, do not appear in the data analysis. If these clues were also taken into account, the results may have been different. In the most extreme case, metalinguistic clues might have proven to be more prevalent than recasts. As such, it cannot safely be concluded that implicit feedback is more prevalent than explicit feedback. In the current study, metalinguistic clues will be taken into account.

Another study by Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis (2004) on feedback in a focus on form setting revealed many individual differences between the practices of teachers. They counted Focus on Form Episodes (FFE) (incidental time-outs initiated either by students or teachers to deal with inconsistencies) and found that there were significant differences in the amount of FFEs for the teachers. Also, for one teacher the FFEs involved more explicit corrections, while for the other two the FFEs involved more implicit corrections.

Another limitation of the above mentioned studies is that they did not report null-responses. That is, Dilāns (2015) did not report on instances in which there is a grammatical error noticed by the teacher, but the teacher chooses not to interrupt the communicative context. This is considered an implicit strategy used in reaction to grammatical errors. Basturkmen, Loewen and Ellis (2004) did report a ratio of FFEs (number of FFEs divided by

the length of observation), but it cannot be safely concluded from this ratio whether a lower ratio meant either a. the students made less errors, or b. the teacher gave more null-responses or c. the teacher's exercise was less grammar-sensitive.

There have been no studies conducted yet on feedback in a focus on meaning setting such as in Piggott's study (in preparation). Furthermore, there were no studies found in which grammar-related questions of students and teachers' corresponding reactions were analysed or discussed.

1.4 Relating teacher attitudes and teacher implementations

The question remains a whether relation can be found between teacher attitudes and teacher implementations of an implicit grammar method in class. Zeichner & Tabachnick (1981) state that a teacher's behaviour is influenced by his/her beliefs. Phipps & Borg (2009) investigated the beliefs and practices of grammar teaching of three EFL teachers. They confirm Zeichner & Tabachnick's statement about parallel findings between a teacher's beliefs and his/her practice. They claim, however, that this is true for deeper "core" beliefs: beliefs that learning is enhanced when students' expectations are met, when they are engaged and when the order in a lesson is maintained. These beliefs sometimes overrule more "peripheral" beliefs such as how to present grammar and how to practice grammar. For the peripheral beliefs, there were discrepancies between beliefs and practices. According to Phipps & Borg, these discrepancies were influenced by student expectations, student motivations and curriculum requirements.

In Piggott's study, the teachers were given instructions to leave out all explicit grammar in their classes. This could be a situational factor restricting the impact of teacher attitudes on their implementations of implicit grammar teaching. Another situational factor could be that students expect more grammar in their curriculum, but this factor may also be restrained by the fact that the students are in their first year of secondary school and do not have a clear reference.

1.5 The present study

The current study, in collaboration with Piggott (in preparation), will explore teacher attitudes towards implicit grammar teaching, as well as the implementation of implicit grammar instruction in a classroom setting. Furthermore, this study will investigate whether there is a relationship between teacher attitudes and teacher implementations of implicit grammar teaching. Data will be collected using interviews, observations and a questionnaire. The aim of this study is to explore different implementations of teaching without explicit grammar, to see how teachers deal with a non-traditional approach to grammar, and to relate these implementations to the teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching. Results of this study may be an important step in the process of designing suitable guidance for teaching without explicit grammar. Moreover, they may help interpreting the results of Piggott's (in preparation) study and any consequent effects of implicit grammar instruction on classroom teaching.

2. Research questions and hypotheses

The following research questions will be addressed in this study.

Research question 1: What are the attitudes of Dutch English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers towards implicit grammar teaching and grammar teaching in general?

Hypothesis: Prior research has shown that student profiles (e.g. age, proficiency) determine much of a teacher's attitude towards grammar teaching. Burgess & Etherington (2002) found positive attitudes of teachers towards a more explicit approach for older learners, from whom a high level of accuracy would soon be expected. Başöz (2014) found a trend towards implicit approaches for teachers with experience limited to high schools and primary schools, thus younger learners. Taking into account the student profiles (younger, inexperienced) in Piggott's study (in preparation), more positive responses to implicit than to explicit statements concerning grammar teaching are expected. However, it is also expected

from the literature that teacher profiles may influence this trend (Borg, 2003). Contextual factors (the teachers are enrolled in an implicit grammar teaching program) may enhance a positive trend towards implicit teaching. However, the teachers' former experience with grammar having a central role in the curriculum may still be visible in the results, thereby showing some preference for explicit teaching methods. Since teacher profiles are furthermore influenced by different former schooling (Borg, 2003), individual differences are also expected to attenuate any trend.

Research question 2: How do English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Netherlands, enrolled in an implicit grammar teaching programme, implement implicit grammar instruction in their classrooms?

Hypothesis: In terms of general implementation strategies in a focus on meaning (or delayed explicit focus on form) setting, there is a lack of prior research. Therefore, predictions cannot be made. However, it is expected that some grammar-sensitive moments will occur in the form of questions, feedback and null-responses. Again, a lack of prior research on questions and null-responses results in the absence of hypotheses concerning the frequency, form and reaction towards these phenomena. In terms of feedback, following Dilāns' (2015) results, recasts will be most prevalent in the classroom. However, since metalinguistic feedback was not taken into account, Dilāns' (2015) results might be biased. Other results can also be expected. Individual differences concerning feedback are expected based on the results of Basturkmen et al. (2004). It should be taken into account that Dilāns' (2015) results were generated in a focused on forms setting, and that the results of Basturkmen et al. (2004) were generated in a focus on form setting. No predictions can be made for corrective feedback in a focus on meaning setting, specifically.

Research question 3: Is there a relationship between teacher attitudes towards grammar teaching and the implementation of implicit grammar instruction in their classrooms?

Hypothesis: Despite relationships found between core beliefs and teacher practices in prior research (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981; Phipps & Borg, 2009), no relationship is expected between peripheral beliefs (Phipps & Borg, 2009), on which the questionnaire will focus, and implementations of the implicit grammar instruction. Situational factors in general (test requirements, student proficiency and age) are expected to be influential. Furthermore, situational factors specific for Piggott's (in preparation) study (teachers are instructed to leave out explicit grammar) are also expected to play a role in the outcome (Phipps & Borg, 2009).

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

To answer the three research questions, seven teachers of English as a foreign language in Steenwijk, the Netherlands were interviewed and given a questionnaire. Furthermore, the lessons of five of the teachers were observed. These teachers all teach students in their first year of secondary school. For these students, a new implicit teaching method has been developed by Piggott (in preparation), which consists of an adapted version of the book *More!* (Puchta & Stranks, 2008), which leaves out all grammatical exercises. In addition, teachers are instructed to avoid any explicit explanations about grammar.

Table 1 shows information about the teachers that were included in the study.

Table 1
Teacher and class information

Teacher (number)	Teaching experience (years)	Time at the school	Class (level)
1	18	11	MAVO; HAVO
2	9	4	VWO
3	12	10	HAVO; MAVO/HAVO
4	11	6	HAVO/VWO
5	11	11	HAVO/VWO
6	1.5	1.5	HAVO
7	8	2	VWO

As is evident from table 1, the working experience of the teachers varies between 1.5 years and 18 years ($M = 10.1$; $SD = 4.9$). Time at the school varies between 1.5 and 11 years ($M = 6.5$; $SD = 4.2$). The participants teach at various educational levels, namely VWO (Pre-university Education), HAVO (Senior General Secondary Education), HAVO/VWO, MAVO (Vocational Education) and MAVO/HAVO. This is the first year the teachers are working with the experimental method. Two teachers (teacher 1 and 2) could not be observed because they had stopped teaching first-class students before data collection took place.

3.2 Materials, procedure and analysis

In order to explore the teachers' attitudes towards and implementation of implicit grammar instruction as thoroughly as possible, three methods were used in this study.

3.2.1 The questionnaire

To answer the first research question, the teachers ($N=7$) were asked to fill in a questionnaire about their attitudes towards grammar in general, as well as towards implicit and explicit grammar instruction. This questionnaire can be found in appendix A. It is an adapted version of the questionnaire developed by Burgess & Etherington (2002). The questionnaire consisted of 24 statements in English that needed to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to total disagreement and 5 corresponded to total agreement.

For the analysis, the statements were divided into three constructs. One construct measured attitude to grammar in general (statement 1abcd), while the other two constructs measured a positive attitude towards respectively implicit and explicit grammar teaching. For the first construct (grammar in general), a mean score was calculated for 1abcd separately. The remaining statements were divided into two other constructs: either consisting of all question pro explicit (pro explicit construct) or all questions pro implicit grammar (pro implicit construct). The original paper (Burgess & Etherington, 2002) does not report which

questions cluster together. Therefore, a division was made between pro implicit and pro explicit by the researcher herself, in collaboration with Piggott. The internal consistency of these two constructs was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The internal consistency was high, with a Cronbach's Alpha of .839 for the explicit construct and .776 for the implicit construct. Then, two mean scores for each of these constructs were calculated (pro implicit and pro explicit score). A paired samples t-test was used to compare means.

3.2.2 The interview

In order to answer the first and the second research question, a semi-structured interview of approximately 30 minutes was conducted with each of the teachers (N=7). The interview guide can be found in appendix B. Semi-structured interviews allow for examples and explanations, but still create a standardised situation which may enhance internal validity and facilitate data analysis. The interview consisted of 14 questions in Dutch, most of which were supported by multiple choice options. Teachers were encouraged by the interviewer to elaborate and provide clarifications where needed. Questions were devised to describe how the participants divide their time in lessons for different learning components (writing, grammar et cetera), how they deal with questions from students about the absence of grammar and, what their perspectives are on implicit and explicit grammar teaching, among other things.

The interviews were conducted by myself, except for one, which was conducted by Piggott's research assistant. Our objectiveness was enhanced by the fact that we did not know the participants personally in advance. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. A qualitative analysis was done in three rounds. In the first round of analysis, relevant selections of text from the transcriptions were sorted and given a suitable general label (e.g. attitudes, questions, materials, impressions). There were 227 text-selections in total. For the second round, the text-selections per label were scanned once more and more specific abstract themes

were assigned when possible. This generated recurrent specific abstract themes. For the third round, the ten most recurrent themes were extracted. Three of these will be presented in section 4.1.2, because these themes cover information on attitudes towards grammar. The other seven themes will be presented in section 4.2.1, because they cover information on implementations. An example of this procedure can be found in Appendix C.

3.2.3 The observation

In addition to interviews with the teachers, participants were also observed teaching their classes. Five of the seven teachers were available for observations and were all observed twice, except for teacher 4. Teacher 4 was observed once due to a cancelled class. Eight of the observations were done by myself, one was done by Piggott's research assistant. For the first observations, the teachers were told to devise a grammar-sensitive lesson, in which the students would have to produce language (preferably sentences). This could for example be a speaking assignment. Grammar-sensitive moments (questions of students concerning grammar; grammatical errors of the students and either feedback or null-response; any other observation that fits the description of a grammar-sensitive moment) were written down by the observer in the observation format (see Appendix D). The registration of grammar-sensitive moments was supplemented by overall impressions of implicit grammar strategies. These were created bottom-up: what is the teacher doing instead of explicitly teaching grammar; how can these things be related to theory about implicit grammar teaching. This ranges from the language in which a lesson is taught, to the way an assignment is prepared.

It should be noted that not all teachers interpreted the assignment (devising a grammar-sensitive lesson) in the same way. That is why some teachers generated fewer grammar-sensitive moments. Therefore, for the second observations, the teachers were told that someone would observe, but the teachers were given freedom in devising their lessons. This would, furthermore, give a better impression of how the teachers devised their lessons

without intervention of an observant. Any extra grammar-sensitive moments that appeared in this lesson were added to the list of grammar sensitive moments from the first observations. The second observations generated data about implicit learning strategies and materials used.

During the data analysis, it became evident that there had been no questions of students concerning grammar, nor any other moments that fit the definition of grammar-sensitive moment. The observed grammar-sensitive moments were confined to grammatical errors of the students and the corresponding null-response or teacher's feedback. That is why only these particular moments could be analysed. The feedback and the null-responses were categorised using the feedback categories from Tedick & De Gortari (1998) and a self-devised category of null-response. This null-response shall for the convenience of the analysis be further noted as a type of feedback. Percentages of types of feedback were calculated. Furthermore, materials used and implicit teaching strategies were all analysed and recurrent strategies were extracted from the data.

3.2.4 Analysis of relations

To answer the third research question, the data will be analysed per teacher. First, scores per teacher on the implicit and explicit constructs from the questionnaire will be calculated. Then the relative amount of feedback type per teacher will be presented and discussed. Lastly, the implicit strategies extracted from the data will be assigned two teachers that represent this strategy most. This was assessed by the observer based on the observations of the lessons and the materials used by the teachers in these lessons. Then, relations will be sought in these three forms of data per teacher. Because teacher 1 and 2 were not observed, they will not be included in this part of the analysis.

4. Results

In this section, the results will be presented following the order of the research questions.

First, the attitudes will be presented through the questionnaire results and the first part of the

qualitative interview data. Then, the implementations will be presented. The implementation section will start with the second part of the qualitative interview data, followed by the data from the observations. This data will be split up in two parts: a general overview of implementation strategies and materials used, and a section on the feedback results. Lastly, data from the questionnaire and the observations will be presented per teacher to answer the third research question about the relationship between implementations and attitudes.

4.1 Attitudes

4.1.1 The questionnaire

Table 2 shows the teachers' attitudes towards grammar in general. These were measured by question 1 of the questionnaire. Statement 1c is most agreed with by all teachers. This means that the teachers see grammar most as something which is added onto language proficiency: a refinement of more basic knowledge. Statement 1a is, on average, least agreed with by the teachers. However, there is some individual variation in the answers ($SD = 1.25$).

Disagreement with statement 1a shows that the teachers see grammar least as a framework for the rest of the language-- a basic system to build everything else on.

Table 2
Mean Score and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Teachers' (N=7) Attitudes towards Grammar Teaching.

Statement: Grammar is as..	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1a: a framework for the rest of the language—a basic system to build everything else on	2.71	1.25
1b: the building blocks of language, which are combined to form a whole.	3.00	1.16
1c: something which is added on to language proficiency: a refinement of more basic language knowledge.	4.29	0.49

Id: an equal pillar in supporting language proficiency. 3.43 0.54
 (Other pillars could be knowledge about pronunciation, appropriacy or culture etc.)

Note. Score 1 is disagree and 5 is agree on a 5-point Likert scale

Table 3
Mean Score and Standard Deviation (SD) of the Teachers (N=7) for Attitudes Towards Implicit and Explicit Grammar Teaching.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Explicit	3.09	0.46
Implicit	3.59	0.58

Table 3 shows the teachers' mean scores for attitudes towards explicit and implicit grammar teaching. The teachers scored 3.09 pro explicit grammar teaching and 3.59 pro implicit grammar teaching. A paired samples t-test revealed that the difference between the scores of the teachers was not significant ($t = -1.335$; $df = 6$; $p = 0.230$). This means that there is no clear preference for either implicit or explicit teaching and that both are viewed as agreeable teaching strategies.

4.1.2 Interviews

Seven teachers were interviewed in total. Recurrent themes depicting attitudes towards implicit and explicit grammar teaching will be reviewed in this section. Recurrent themes depicting implementations and impressions of the implicit grammar intervention will be considered in Section 3.2. Illustrative quotes per theme can be found in appendix E1 for the attitudes and in appendix E2 for the implementations.

Young children easily pick up things from the input

Most teachers see no problem in delaying explicit grammar when children are young and

beginning learners. If the children are offered correct input for one and a half years before switching to explicit grammar teaching, they are likely to have heard, and may have produced, the correct structures often enough to pick up the explicit grammar more easily. The teachers expect the first year students to be able to create patterns and generalizations from the input, similar to a child learning its first language.

Focus on form

There are some teachers that believe grammar should play a role. Grammar in the first year, however, should not be explained by abstract rules (metalinguistic explanations), but through focus on form approaches. Most teachers name the past and the present simple as an example, or the verb form 'to be'. In a focus on form approach, these structures could be taught with reference to communicative situations (e.g. the past simple can be used to tell something about what happened yesterday). Also, the teachers wish for less focus on linguistic forms that are not frequently used in communication (e.g. the passive).

Grammar should be secondary to skills

The teachers agreed that grammar should be secondary to skills. Basic grammatical constructions, however, are considered helpful to explain (to add to the communication or reading skills, for example). Furthermore, in these moments, explaining the abstract rule is considered supportive, not redundant. Some teachers also comment that grammar could be helpful when there are individual problems with structures (e.g. when a child has trouble with picking certain things up from the input).

Summary

The teachers seem to have a positive attitude towards implicit grammar teaching. They believe that young students are capable of learning grammar implicitly, and they see the

benefits of skills preceding explicit grammar in the curriculum. They do, however, assign a supportive role to explicit grammar teaching.

4.2 Implementation

This section firstly presents the results of the interview. These give information about certain changes in the classroom or in teachers' experiences since the implicit grammar programme has started. They also give information about students' reactions to these changes. Then, the data from the observations will be presented. Observed implementation strategies and materials will be described. The last part of this section maps out teacher-student interaction in terms of the distribution of feedback types (including null-responses). Other results on grammar-sensitive moments cannot be presented, because there were no other types of grammar-sensitive moments observed.

4.2.1 Interviews

Division of lessons

Figure 1 presents estimates of the time spent by the teachers on activities in the lessons per week for this year and last year. While in 2014/2015 35% of the total time was spent on grammar, in 2015/2016 this was reduced to 3%. However, this 3% indicates that even though the teachers were instructed to leave out all grammar, there has still been some grammar in the curriculum. There is a slight growth on all other components, but the relative division between the components remains more or less equal, except for the skill of writing. The time spent on the skill of writing was doubled: from 11% in 2014/2015 to 25% in 2015/2016.

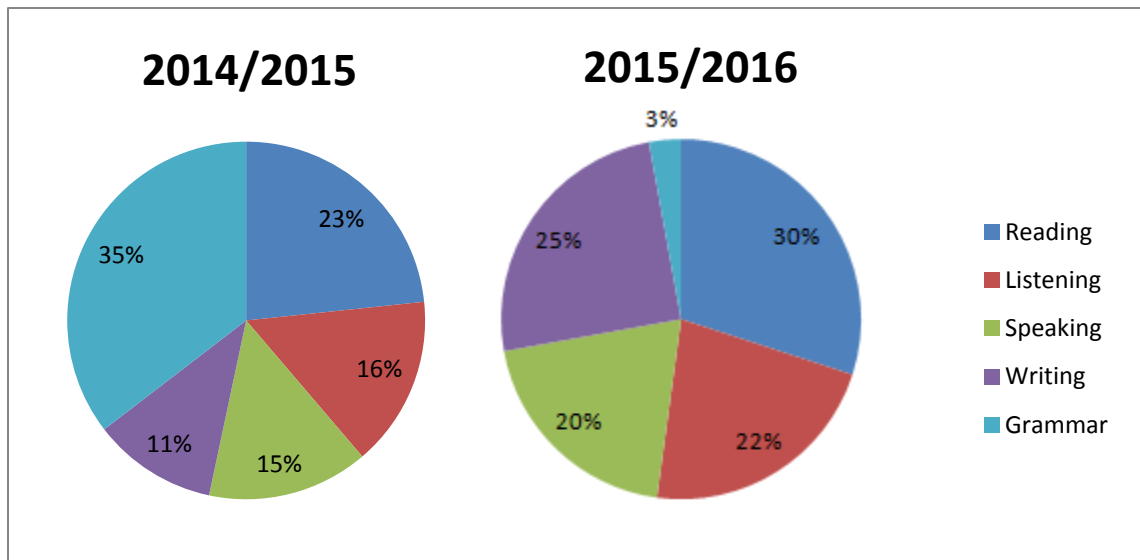


Figure 1
Mean Percentage of Time Spent on Activities in the Lessons per Week Estimated by the Teachers Concerning the 2014/2015 First Year (N=6) (Grammar) Compared to the 2015/2016 First Year (N=7) (No Grammar)

In the interview some teachers noted that they replaced the amount of grammar taught last year with vocabulary exercises this year, an option that was not included in the interview-format. Although it cannot be read from the figure above, vocabulary thus takes up part of the lesson. Other teachers also commented that they viewed vocabulary exercises as integrated in one of the 4 other skills (e.g. a reading exercise combined with filling in words).

Reorganising the lessons

One aspect that all teachers agree on is that the regular method, with deleted grammar exercises, leaves a gap in their lessons. There is more spare time to do other exercises. Some teachers see this as a disadvantage, because they find it difficult to come up with new materials. Other see this as an advantage, because they like being creative and coming up with new ways to teach. Some take more time for skills (reading-, writing- and speaking exercises), others expand on the exercises in the regular method, and still others use the spare time to go through the material at an easy pace. Most teachers also value that they have some extra time for “fun and games, but learning”. Vocabulary learning now happens more in the lesson through such games, while before, the students had to learn this by themselves at home.

A second aspect, which connects to the former mentioned aspect, is that the teachers feel that their lessons are less structured. Most teachers viewed grammar as a basis to build their lesson around. Without grammar, the teachers have to keep switching between skills, which results, for some, in a more chaotic lesson. Teaching was viewed as more intensive and there were fewer moments where students could work individually. Moreover, it was somewhat harder to keep the focus of the students without grammar as a basic foundation in the lesson.

Student awareness

All teachers agree that very few students notice the absence of grammar in the curriculum. They indicate that either no or 1-10 students asked questions about the absence of grammar throughout the year. The teachers comment that because this is the first year of secondary school and most students have not had any English classes before, they do not know any better and are not critical of teaching strategies yet. The students accept the authority of the teacher. Questions that arose came from external factors, such as parents or a tutor. In answer to these questions, some teachers told the students about the study that was going on, and others told the students that grammar was not yet of importance in the first year. None of the students asked further questions.

Questions about grammar-related aspects

The general perception among teachers is that there are few questions about aspects of grammar (1-10 students a year). No teacher mentions any questions about metalinguistic aspects of grammar. The questions that were mostly asked took one of these forms: “How do I say this/ Is this the right way to say this?”, “What is the difference between much and many?”, “Why is it she walks, but I walk?”. The teacher then provided the correct form and either provided similar examples (chunks), made a comparison with the student’s native language (L1), told the student that s/he will learn that next year, or used his/her authority:

“That’s just how it goes in English”. The students were easily satisfied by the teachers’ answers. The teachers name loyalty to the study as a factor which made them try not to explain grammatical aspects.

Feedback: avoiding interruption of communicative setting

When asked how the teachers reacted to grammatical mistakes made by students, all teachers name (frequent) recasting. Metalinguistic explanations are not mentioned. Another frequent correcting strategy is making a comparison with student’s first language (L1). Five of seven teachers report that, when doing a speaking exercise with the students, they often do not respond to mistakes that are made. This is because they do not want to interrupt the communicative context. What is more, they do not want to weaken the student’s already fragile self-confidence in speaking English. The teachers furthermore note that they try to give feedback only if it adds to the communicative purpose of the utterance. For instance, if the focus is on telling a story about what a student did yesterday, most teachers will correct the students that use present tense. If the focus is on something else, the teachers will correct less. Also, the more difficult the structure becomes, the less the teacher will correct. One teacher also names individual differences as a feedback factor: the student’s aptitude and abilities indicate how much the teacher will correct (more is expected of students with a higher proficiency/aptitude).

Few difficulties not explaining grammar

When asked whether the teachers could think of moments at which they would have rather explained the grammatical rule, four of the seven teachers did not encounter any problems or obstacles. Two of these comment that such problems might arise the following year, when the students may become more critical and some students will be ahead of the others. The teachers that did encounter difficulties point out that these were minor. They express concerns about recurrent mistakes in the students’ grammar. Not explaining the rule or not explicitly

correcting these mistakes might result in some persistent flaws after the intervention period. One teacher also comments that when aiming at one particular structure in writing exercises (e.g. the future) , it would sometimes have been easier to give a short grammatical outline of this structure.

A minor role for grammar

All teachers share the opinion that grammar should play a minor role in the curriculum. They feel that in comparison to last year, the absence of grammar does not result in students performing worse, and they like that they have the time to focus more on the practical goals of learning a language and providing input. However, some grammatical explanations would be helpful for students that are less linguistically skilled and less prone to picking up generalizations from the input. Also, two of seven teachers notice that the students in the intervention group have more difficulty with employing the words they have learned in sentences, because they are missing some basic grammar.

Summary

The results from the interview show that teaching grammar implicitly is more labour-intensive and demands creativeness. There is much more focus on skills and vocabulary. Feedback strategies are said to be adapted to the communicative learning environment. The results furthermore show that students are not that conscious of the absence of grammar and that they, at least on short term, are not experiencing many disadvantages. Disadvantages that were visible in the students' performances were the lack of basic grammar (recurrent mistakes) and inability to form grammatically correct sentences (despite having built a sufficient vocabulary).

4.2.2 Observations

In this section, an overview of general implementation strategies and materials used will be

presented and discussed. Furthermore, teacher-student interaction in the form of feedback moments that were observed will be presented.

4.2.2.1 General implementations

The observation results generated a general overview of materials and implicit teaching strategies used in the classrooms. This overview can be found in table 5.

Table 5
General Overview of Observed Implicit Teaching Strategies and Materials Used

Teacher implementations	
Materials used	Class reading Regular method (vocabulary, making sentences, class reading and listening) Listening to audio novel Vocabulary games (Youtube) Clip Writing exercise Punctuation exercise Listening exercise
Strategies used	Focus on meaning Lesson taught in English Providing correct input Prosodically emphasizing input Inductive teaching Comparison with L1 output Making the to be learned form explicit (without metalinguistic explanation)

First, there will be a short explanation of the materials that were used by the teachers during the observations. Not all materials played an equally important role in the implicit teaching strategies, but the overview illustrates the design of a lesson without grammar. Many teachers still made use of the regular method, which now consists of alternating reading, listening, and vocabulary exercises. In addition to this, most of them came up with texts from either the regular method or someplace else and read this with the students. After reading, the students were asked to write something and then read it aloud. The other materials (listening to an audio-novel, punctuation exercise and Youtube clips) were used sporadically. Vocabulary games were often chosen to end the lesson with.

Now, the implicit teaching strategies will be discussed. The implicit strategies were generated bottom-up, that is, the observed strategies were only later aligned to abstract theoretical concepts. The concepts will be named first, followed by their explanation (that is, what was observed in the lesson), and comments about why these strategies can be seen as implicit. The strategies were recurrent, but not all teachers used all strategies. Some teachers used one strategy while others used another. The strategies exclude each other, but two strategies can be used at once (e.g. using the *Lesson taught in English* strategy while also using the *focus on meaning* strategy in a vocabulary exercise). The strategies were ordered from most implicit to least implicit strategy, although it should be noted that the first four strategies are considered evenly implicit.

The first strategy used is *focus on meaning*. With this strategy, the teacher does not ask questions about the forms that the students use, but he/she asks content-related questions (e.g. one teacher taught the students how to write a recipe to learn the imperative. She did not focus on the imperative but only asked content-related questions: “What do we need when writing a recipe?”, resulting in answers concerning food-vocabulary). This results in much correct input

and no interruptions of communication.

The second strategy, *teaching the lesson in English*, is a straightforward strategy which provides communicative opportunities and correct input.

The third strategy, *providing correct input*, was primarily used in reading exercises, where the teachers would read the text or listen to an audio-book in which only correct input was provided. This strategy may pay off in a somewhat longer term. The strategy also involves frequent recasting: providing the correct form in different functional sentences within a short period of time.

Providing prosodically emphasized input is the fourth strategy and may help focusing the attention of the students on the correct forms. This may result in a better information uptake.

The fifth strategy used is *inductive teaching*. With this strategy, the teacher focuses on a relatively simple grammatical construction (past simple) and first lets the students read a text with this structure. Then they have to write something in which the grammatical construction is necessary (“What did you do yesterday?”). The teacher does not make explicit that the reading and writing is focused on grammatical constructions.

The sixth strategy, *comparison with L1 output*, involves comparing a (wrongly formed) sentence with a sentence in the students first language (L1). This may help the students to understand that certain grammatical patterns and their exceptions are similar to what they know implicitly about their L1, without referring to abstract rules.

The last strategy involves *making the to be learned form explicit* (for example structures students continue doing wrong) and, besides giving the correct form, also providing the students with practical contexts in which the form can be used (“If we want to talk about what we are going to do tomorrow, we use -will- and -going to-”). There is no metalinguistic explanation involved. This was for example done by a teacher that wanted to focus on the

grammatical structure ‘the future’. This teacher watched a short clip with the students and read texts with them about the future (“what will happen in 100 years?”).

All teachers seem to implement the implicit grammar teaching in a slightly different way. They all had one or two different main strategies they employed, while not or barely utilizing the others. This can be noted from table 7 presented in section 4.3.4. There, individual differences will be further examined.

4.2.2.2 Feedback strategies

During the observations of five teachers, 47 feedback moments and 17 null-responses were noted by the observer. For the analysis, these were taken together and all analysed as ‘feedback moments’. They were classified using the five different feedback types of Tedick & de Gortari and the self-designed category ‘null-response’. The result of this classification is shown in figure 2. The implicit feedback types recast and null-response account for the biggest part of the total ‘feedback’ (28% and 27%, respectively). Elicitation, which is somewhere in between implicit and explicit feedback, accounts for 16% of the total feedback. Repetition and explicit correction account for 3% and 17%, respectively. Nine % of the total feedback is accounted for by metalinguistic clues, which is be considered the most explicit feedback type. This implies that although implicit feedback is used most, some teachers also still use explicit feedback in their classrooms.

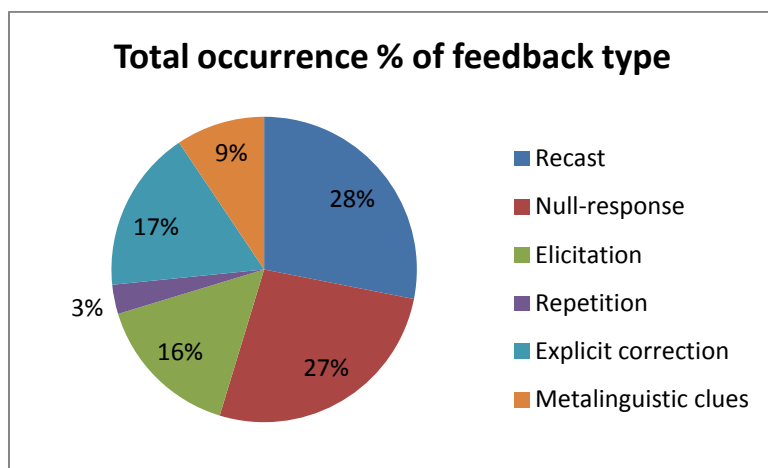


Figure 2

Percentage of Types of Feedback During Grammar-Sensitive Moments (N=64)

Table 4 provides an example of every type of feedback, extracted from the feedback moments in the observed lessons.

Table 4
Examples of Feedback Used during the Observations Categorised by type

Feedback type	Example
Recast	S: "We went with the family picknicken.." T: "You had a picknick, okay.."
No response	S: "Tomorrow I go to school" T: -
Elicitation	S: "Sandra and Tony are.." T: "Maar dat waren ze gisteren, wat zeggen we dan?" [<i>But they were yesterday, how do we say that?</i>] S: "Oh, were?"
Repetition	S: "Where was you.." T: "Where was you? Where were you!"
Explicit correction	S: "I wake up on 9 o'clock.." T: "No, kloktijden at en niet on. Anders sta jij op de klok." [<i>No, clock times at, not on. Otherwise you would be standing on the clock</i>]
Metalinguistic clues	S: "I am went on vacation." T: "I am went, zeg je dat in het Nederlands ook? Dat je twee keer een werkwoord voor de verleden tijd gebruikt? Ik ben ging? Ja dan wordt het dus ik ging ja." [<i>I am went, would you say that in Dutch? Using a verb twice when making the past tense? I am went? Yes, so it becomes I went, yes.</i>]

4.3 Relating attitudes to implementations

Teacher 1 and 2 will not be included in the analysis of relations, because these two teachers

were not observed and observation results can thus not be provided. Table 6, table 7 and figure 3 provide information about the results of the questionnaire and the observations (respectively implementation strategies and feedback) per teacher. Relations per teacher will consecutively be discussed using the results from table 6, table 7 and figure 3, starting with the most explicit teacher and ending with the most implicit teacher. This was based on having either a predominant positive attitude towards explicit/implicit teaching and/or implementing either most implicit strategies (involves least learner consciousness) or less implicit strategies (involves some learner consciousness).

Table 6
Mean score on Attitude towards Implicit and Explicit Grammar Teaching per Teacher

Teacher	Explicit	Implicit
1	2.55	4.00
2	3.09	3.50
3	3.00	3.13
4	3.45	3.50
5	2.45	4.63
6	3.64	2.88
7	3.45	3.50

Table 7
The Two Teachers that Used a Certain Strategy Most as Assessed by the Observer

Strategy	Teachers
Focus on meaning	3, 4
Lesson wholly taught in English	6, 4
Providing correct input	3, 6

Prosodically emphasizing input	3, 7
Inductive teaching	7, 5
Comparison with L1 output	5, 3
Making the to be learned form explicit (without metalinguistic explanation)	7, 5

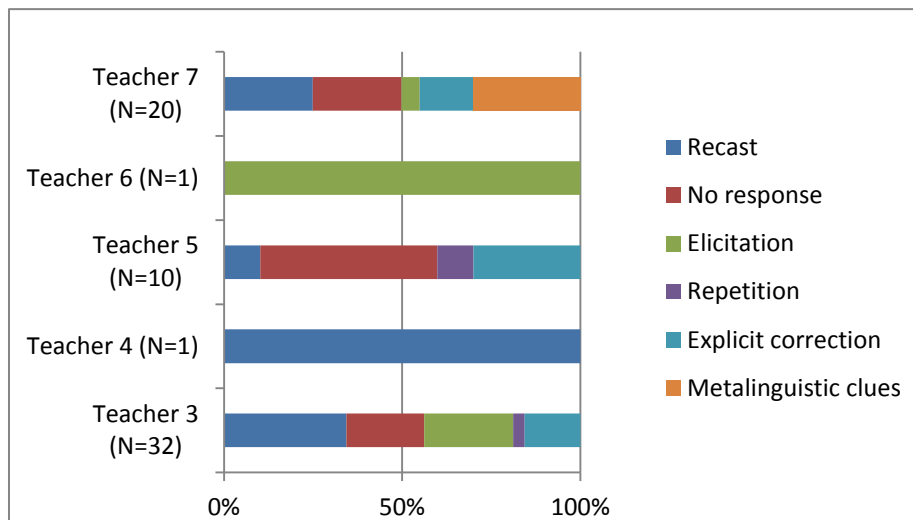


Figure 3
Distribution of Feedback Types per Teacher, in which 100% represents all Grammar Sensitive Moments Per Teacher.

Teacher 6 is the only teacher with a predominant preference for explicit teaching. The feedback results of teacher 6 cannot not be interpreted safely, because only one feedback moment occurred in his classroom. A preference for explicit teaching does not show in this teacher's implementations. Teacher 6 teaches in English and providing correct input is his most used strategy: he read an audio-book with his class and did a vocabulary assignment in which grammar was not addressed. There is thus no relation between the attitude of this teacher and implementations in the classroom.

Teacher 7 has no predominant preference for either explicit or implicit teaching. This teacher, however, was the only teacher that gave metalinguistic clues as feedback. The teaching strategies she employs (inductive teaching, making the learned form explicit,

prosodically emphasizing input) also suggest that this teacher likes to focus on grammatical forms, be it implicitly.

Teacher 3 has no predominant preference for either implicit or explicit teaching. This can also be seen in her feedback results, which show that she uses both implicit and explicit feedback types. Her most employed teaching strategies were focus on meaning, providing correct input, prosodically emphasizing input and comparison with L1 output. This indicates that teacher 3 likes employing different strategies, consistent with her attitude towards grammar.

Teacher 4 has no predominant preference for either implicit or explicit teaching. The feedback results of this teacher cannot be interpreted. The most employed teaching strategies (lesson taught in English and focus on meaning) that despite her neutral attitude towards implicit/explicit teaching, she employs implicit strategies in the classroom.

Teacher 5 is the only teacher with a clear preference for implicit teaching. This also shows from the feedback results, in which for teacher 5 the implicit no response occurs the most often. The teaching strategies (comparison with L1 output, inductive teaching) match this teacher's attitude.

In summary, it can be concluded that a teacher's attitude does not always match their implementations.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This section will first present the answers to the three research questions and their hypotheses. Then a general discussion will be provided. Lastly, limitations of this study will be presented. Suggestions for further research are integrated in both the general discussion and the limitations section.

1.1 Attitudes

This section answers research question one. The data from the questionnaire shows that both concepts (implicit grammar teaching and explicit grammar teaching) were valued positively (values above 3). This is partly in line with the hypothesis that was formed based on prior research on student profiles (the younger the student, the more implicit grammar is valued) (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Başöz, 2014). The less expected result that teachers also value explicit grammar can be illustrated by the results of question 1abcd and the extracted themes from the interview. The teachers view grammar as ‘something which is added on to language proficiency: a refinement of basic knowledge’ most. This is in line with the extracted themes *grammar should be secondary to skills* and *focus on form*. The teachers value (explicit) grammar teaching, which is why this concept scores high on the questionnaire, but they would ideally assign a minor role to it, which is why the concept of implicit grammar also receives a high score (illustrated by concepts *young children easily pick things up from the input* and also *focus on form*). The results of the questionnaire show no significant difference between a positive attitude towards explicit grammar teaching and a positive attitude towards implicit grammar teaching for the studied teachers. This corresponds with above mentioned results. Also, this confirms expectations that any trend towards a certain construct would be attenuated by contextual factors concerning teacher profiles (teaching in an implicit grammar programme vs. more experience with explicit grammar teaching) (Borg, 2003). However, on the basis of the current results it cannot be interpreted to what extent these contextual factors influenced any trend.

1.2 Implementations

This section answers research question two. Firstly, no predictions were made beforehand for general implementation strategies in a focus on meaning setting. The results show that, overall, teachers are content with the programme. They do not encounter many difficulties nor

grammar-related questions from students. However, the teachers do admit that their teaching is more labour-intensive and they feel that the programme demands creativeness. Some teachers are worried about students falling behind or students' recurrent mistakes. The teachers have different ways of implementing implicit grammar in their classrooms. Some adhere more to a focus on form approach (*inductive teaching, making the to be learned form explicit, comparison with LI*), which can be considered less implicit. Others adhere more to a focus on meaning approach (*focus on meaning, providing correct input*), which can be considered most implicit. A combination of these strategies was also seen in some teachers. Metalinguistic explanation is absent from the teachers' strategies. That is, there was no teacher that deliberately planned a metalinguistic assignment or utilized metalinguistic explanation to teach the children grammar.

Furthermore, it was expected that grammar-sensitive moments would occur in the form of questions, feedback and null-responses. There were no grammar-sensitive moments in the form of questions. Reasons for this might be the ignorance of the students towards grammar as a concept, their lack of curiosity into metalinguistic aspects of the language, or their accepting attitude towards the teacher. This can be traced back to their young age and their lack of former experience with (traditional) grammar teaching. Grammar-sensitive moments in the forms of feedback and null-responses did occur. The hypotheses made based on earlier research by Dilāns (2015) and Basturkmen et al. (2004) were to an extent applicable to a focus on meaning setting. That is, recasts were the most prevalent feedback in the classroom, which is consistent with the findings of Dilāns (2015). Individual differences in the feedback, predicted on the basis of the results of Basturkmen et al. (2004), were also visible. Null-responses, besides recasts, took up a large part of the grammar-sensitive moments. This displays that most teachers valued the communicative goal of the lesson. An interesting finding from the feedback results is that 29% of the feedback (when feedback also

includes null-responses) remained explicit feedback, despite the devised focus on meaning setting.

It can be concluded from these results that although teachers did not encounter many difficulties with the implicit grammar programme, some teachers found it harder than others to abandon grammar completely. This was, for example, because some were worried over students' recurrent mistakes, but also, because it was difficult for some teachers to deal with the freed-up lesson time. The teachers' former experience with the traditional approach to grammar teaching (focus on forms) might have led to less ideas on how to implement implicit grammar teaching. These teachers seemed to use a mitigated focus on form approach in which the focus was on communication, but in which there was still a tendency to link this communicative setting to certain grammatical structures (e.g. the future, the past simple). Also, when grammatical errors occurred, some teachers tended to make the learner consciously aware of his/her mistake (explicit feedback). This might be the result of a former traditional classroom setting. In such a setting, grammar had to be made explicit partly because the students' explicit knowledge was called upon in tests. Even though the tests in Piggott's study (in preparation) have been adapted and do not tap explicit grammatical knowledge, the teachers may still have a tendency to make the students conscious of their mistakes. This also traces back to the fear of recurrent mistakes the teachers express ('If I don't explicitly correct them, they will keep making the mistake') and the fact that they like to link grammatical structures to practical use ('In this situation you can use this form, in the other situation you can use the other').

1.3 Relations

For the third research question on whether implementations could be linked to attitudes towards grammar, it was hypothesized that there would be no relationship found between

these two concepts due to situational factors (Phipps & Borg, 2009). This hypothesis was partly confirmed. No relationship was found for three teachers. The other two did show a relationship (both teaching methods employed and no preference; preference for implicit teaching and implicit strategies). A reason as to why there were no strong opposite relations found (implicit preference, explicit strategies), may be that teachers were instructed to leave out explicit grammar and at least to a major extent adhered to this. It should however also be noted that there was only one teacher who had a clear preference for both implicit teaching and implicit strategies. This shows that situational factors did not result in abandoning positive attitudes towards explicit teaching.

1.4 General discussion

The overall results of this study show the reality of implementing a theory-based concept in practice. Larsen-Freeman (2015) already suggested that the non-interface position (grammar can only be acquired, not learned) as proposed by Krashen (1982) has had little impact on grammar teaching in practice. Larsen-Freeman (2015) proposes that this might be due to the attitudes of students and teachers, who feel that grammar is necessary and effective.

Furthermore, she proposes that (traditional) grammar teaching is viewed as important by those who set the educational policy. The current study might provide further insights into why the non-interface position (or focus on meaning approach) is difficult to implement in its entirety into a classroom-setting.

A first reason as to why there are limited opportunities for the teachers to put a focus on meaning programme into practice is that only limited time is available for the teachers to teach the students their EFL: three hours per week. Compared to the amount of exposure children get when acquiring their L1, or the amount of exposure students in immersion programmes get, this exposure is very little (Hummel, 2014).

Furthermore, there are some student restrictions that may interfere with teachers' intentions to adhere to the implicit grammar programme. Student restrictions in earlier research (Burgess & Etherington, 2002) were that teachers believed that their students felt insecure if there was a lack of grammar teaching. This is what Larsen-Freeman (2015) refers to as the necessity of grammar. In the current study, however, it was shown that it is not the students feeling insecure or noticing the absence of grammar, but that there are teacher concerns about students falling behind. Whether these concerns are correct can only be confirmed in Piggott's study (in preparation), but the concerns of teachers indicate that individual differences in students should be taken into account while teaching grammar implicitly. In a classroom-setting, however, it may prove to be difficult to pay attention to individual differences.

A third factor that may restrict the teachers in implementing implicit grammar teaching in their lessons is that the teachers are still to a certain extent embedded in the traditional Dutch educational system. This is similar to what Larsen-Freeman (2015) mentioned in her study. The teachers are still required to provide test results (e.g. of a vocabulary test). As was mentioned before, students are used to a conscious learning setting in which learning for a test is rewarded. This might be why some teachers met students' expectations by sometimes providing explicit feedback.

Despite certain constraints on the implementation of implicit grammar teaching, results of this study also show that more implicit possibilities were created than are usually present in secondary schools. The teachers have naturally developed very feasible implicit strategies in the programme because of the absence of explicit grammar. They have also become more conscious of their teaching and less focused on test requirements. Assigning a minor role for grammar in general has been proven to be feasible for both teachers and students. The developed strategies (materials, assignments, communicative aims) can be

useful for further research into implicit grammar teaching or teaching with a focus on form approach, and they might even be implemented in other classrooms that now still teach in a traditional way.

1.5 Limitations

Limitations of this study were that there were not that many teachers included in the analysis. There is a good chance that the teachers (N=7) were representative for all teachers that were involved in the implicit grammar teaching programme of Piggott (in preparation). However, for quantitatively analysing the questionnaire, the number of participants was very low. Also, two teachers were not included in the observations because they stopped teaching first classes before the data could be collected.

What is more, the observations could have been more structured. The teachers were told to prepare a grammar-sensitive lesson, but it was not explained to them what was expected of such a lesson and it limited the teachers in showing how they normally teach. For the second round of observations they were not given any instructions, which was more natural, but there might still have been ambiguities in what was expected of the teachers. This may have influenced their teaching strategies. As was mentioned above, the questionnaire was hard to analyse quantitatively with only seven teachers. Moreover, it would have been viable to devise a 1-4 point Likert scale. This is because many teachers now chose option 3. From option 3, no real conclusions can be drawn. The teachers then do not agree but they do also not disagree. This might have been the cause of the 'grey area' among the teacher's attitudes.

Furthermore, the interview contained multiple-choice options for most questions. This was meant to make the analysis more structured. The teachers, however, received a copy of the interview while it was taking place, so in this way it could also have biased the interviewees towards an answer, because it did not invite the teacher to come up with their

own answers. The interviewer has, however, tried to avoid this by asking for elaborations and explanations.

Finally, the educational level of the students was not taken into account while analysing the results. This choice was made because there were not enough classes per level (N=2) to be able to conceive reliable results. Further research may investigate whether teacher implementations differ for educational levels. This may then correspond to research in which opportunities for implicit and explicit teaching adapted to individual students' needs and skills are explored.

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Appendix A: Teacher Questionnaire (Adapted from Burgess & Etherington, 2002)

APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

1. The role of grammar in language is as: (please answer for each option)

a) a framework for the rest of the language—a basic system to build everything else on.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

b) the building blocks of language, which are combined to form a whole.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

c) something which is added on to language proficiency: a refinement of more basic language knowledge.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

d) an equal pillar in supporting language proficiency. (Other pillars could be knowledge about pronunciation, appropriacy or culture etc.)

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

2. Students can learn grammar through exposure to language in natural use.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

3. Formal instruction helps learners to produce grammatically correct language.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

4. Student use of language does not involve conscious knowledge of the grammatical system and how it works.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

5. Students can improve their grammatical accuracy through frequent practice of structures.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

6. Students need a conscious knowledge of grammar in order to improve their language.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

7. Practice of structures must always be within a full, communicative context.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

8. Separate treatment of grammar fails to produce language knowledge which students can use in natural communication.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

9. Students need to be consciously aware of a structure's form and its function before they can use it proficiently.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

10. The separation of work with a grammar focus from the rest of the language syllabus is useful for students.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

11. Decontextualised practice of structures has a place in language learning.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

12. Productive practice of structures is a necessary part of the learning process.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

13. Grammar is best taught through work which focuses on message.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

14. Participating in real-life tasks with language is the best way for students to develop their grammatical knowledge.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

15. Students learn grammar more successfully if it is presented within a complete text.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

16. Teachers should only correct student errors of form which interfere with communication.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

17. Comparison and contrast of individual structures is helpful for students learning grammar.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

18. Form-focused correction helps students to improve their grammatical performance.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

19. Grammar is best taught through a focus on individual structures.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

20. Explicit discussion of grammar rules is helpful for students.

Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree

Appendix B: Interview

Naam Docent:

Aantal jaar werkzaam als docent Engels:

Tijdsverdeling lessen

1. Geef een schatting van hoe jij de verdeling van lestijd die besteed werd aan onderstaande onderdelen hebt ervaren bij de eerste klassen van vorig jaar (dus eerste klas 2014/2015)

Leesvaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Luistervaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Spreekvaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Schrijfvaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Grammatica-instructie + oefening:% van de totale lestijd
 _____ +
100....%

Ik had vorig jaar geen eerste klas.

Opmerkingen:

.....

2. Geef een schatting van hoe jij de verdeling van lestijd die besteed werd aan onderstaande onderdelen hebt ervaren BIJ DE HUIDIGE EERSTE KLASSEN (dus eerste klas 2015/2016)

Leesvaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Luistervaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Spreekvaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Schrijfvaardigheid:% van de totale lestijd
 Grammatica instructie + oefening:% van de totale lestijd
 _____ +
100....%

Opmerkingen:

.....

Deze vragen gaan over de HUIDIGE EERSTE KLASSEN, dus alle eerste klassen 2015/2016

3. Hoe vaak werk je met eigen/ander materiaal naast de leergang?

- Alleen tijdens VTO-lessen.
- Tijdens VTO-lessen en af en toe in de reguliere les.
- Tijdens VTO-lessen en geregeld in de reguliere les.
- Tijdens VTO-lessen en heel vaak in de reguliere les.

Opmerkingen:

.....

.....

.....

4. Wat voor soort materiaal was dit? Vink de drie meest gebruikte materiaalsoorten aan.

- Het materiaal in de bijgeleverde reader
- Interactieve spellen met elkaar
- Digitale (interactieve) spellen
- Film
- Leesmateriaal
- Luisteropdrachten
- Spreekopdrachten
- Schrijfoopdrachten
- Anders, namelijk:

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Is het jouw leerlingen opgevallen dat er geen grammatica in het curriculum zit?

- Nee, niemand. (0 leerlingen)
- Een enkele leerling (tussen de 1 en 10 leerlingen over het hele jaar)
- Ja, af en toe gedurende het jaar (gemiddeld 2 a 3 leerlingen per maand)
- Ja, veel leerlingen gedurende het jaar (5 of meer leerlingen per maand)
- Ja, heel vaak (bijna elke les wel een leerling)
- Anders, namelijk:

6. Als het leerlingen is opgevallen, hoe heb jij erop gereageerd? Je mag meerdere opties aanvinken.

- Door ze te vertellen over het onderzoek
- Door ze te vertellen dat het volgend jaar aan bod komt
- Door ze uit te leggen wat de rol van grammatica is bij het leren van een vreemde taal
- Door een ontwijkend antwoord te geven. (bijv. 'dat is nu niet belangrijk')
- Anders, namelijk:

.....

 7. Hebben leerlingen gedurende het schooljaar vragen gesteld over grammaticale aspecten van de taal?

- Nee, niemand. (0 leerlingen)
- Een enkele leerling (tussen de 1 en 10 leerlingen over het hele jaar)
- Ja, af en toe gedurende het jaar (gemiddeld 2 a 3 leerlingen per maand)
- Ja, veel leerlingen gedurende het jaar (5 of meer leerlingen per maand)
- Ja, heel vaak (bijna elke les wel een leerling)
- Anders, namelijk:

8. Zo ja, weet je nog wat de vragen waren?

.....

9. Hoe heb jij gereageerd op de vragen over grammatica? Je mag meerdere opties aanvinken.

- N.v.t.
- Door het te omzeilen. bijv. door aan te geven dat het er nu niet toe doet
- Door een paar voorbeelden te geven van wanneer je die grammaticale vorm gebruikt.
- Door de grammaticale regels (grammaticale vorm en gebruik van de vorm) aan de desbetreffende leerling uit te leggen en weer door te gaan.
- Door de grammaticale regels (grammaticale vorm en gebruik van de vorm) aan de hele klas uit te leggen.
- Door alleen aan te geven wat de goede vorm is, dus verbeteren.
- Door in je antwoord de goede grammaticale vorm te gebruiken maar er verder geen aandacht aan te besteden.
- Anders, namelijk:

.....

10. Hoe reageerde je meestal als leerlingen grammaticale fouten maakten in hun schrijfopdrachten in de les? Je mag meerdere opties aanvinken.

- Niet.
- Onderstrepen maar verder geen aandacht aan schenken.
- Onderstrepen en de grammaticale regel (grammaticale vorm en gebruik van de vorm) aan de desbetreffende leerling uit te leggen en weer door te gaan.
- Onderstrepen en de grammaticale regel (grammaticale vorm en gebruikt van de vorm) aan de hele klas uit te leggen.
- Door aan te geven wat de goede vorm is, dus verbeteren.

Anders, namelijk:

.....

Toelichting bij aanvinken van meerdere opties:

.....
.....
.....

11. Hoe reageerde je meestal als leerlingen grammaticale fouten maakten tijdens het spreken? Je mag meerdere opties aanvinken.

Niet

Verbeteren (de zin herhalen met de goede vorm).

De goede constructie nadrukkelijk in je reactie gebruiken, maar verder de grammaticale fout niet expliciet benoemen.

Verbeteren en aan de leerling uitleggen waarom het fout is.

Verbeteren en aan de hele klas uitleggen waarom het fout is.

Anders, namelijk:

.....

Toelichting bij aanvinken van meerdere opties:

.....
.....
.....

12. Hoe bevalt het jou om zonder aandacht voor grammatica te werken?

Verschrikkelijk

Niet geheel naar wens

Het bevalt mij aardig, maar:

Het bevalt goed

Geweldig

Opmerkingen:

.....
.....
.....

13. Wat voor rol zou grammatica voor jouw gevoel moeten spelen in de eerste twee jaar van het voorgezet onderwijs?

.....
.....
.....

14. Op welke momenten in de les is het moeilijk om grammaticale structuren niet uit te leggen?

.....
.....
.....

EINDE INTERVIEW

Appendix C: Qualitative Data Analysis of the Interview (Example)

Teacher	Text selection	General label	Colour	Specific theme + <i>eventual theme</i>
2	Op die manier, en je kan iets meer tijd steken in bijvoorbeeld naja eh leesvaardigheid nou jongens we gaan eens even zoeken naar moeilijke woorden, hoe kan je die nou oplossen zonder een woordenboek te hebben?	Use of other materials		More spare time <i>Reorganising the lessons</i>
1	Maar verder ik heb het woord grammar helemaal niet genoemd.. dus en dan vragen ze er ook niet naar.	Noticing absence of grammar		No <i>Student awareness</i>
2	Ik word er zelf wat onrustig van.. Haha. Laten we het daarop houden. Ik hou heel erg van af en toe okee jongens we hebben nu even een stuk instructie,	Impressions of teaching without grammar		Less structure, disquieting <i>Reorganising the lessons</i>
2	Gewoon heel simpel; wat zijn de hulpwerkwoorden en hoe kan je ze toepassen? En hoe moet je een vraag maken? En hoe maak je een ontkenning, en op die manier er mee bezig zijn,	Attitudes towards grammar		Only very basic forms <i>Focus on Form</i>

Appendix D: Observation Format

Name:	Date:
Amount of grammar-sensitive moments + description of interaction:	
Types of responses:	
General impression:	
Division of lesson time (+materials used), strategies implemented:	
Language:	
Comments / page nr. in <i>More!</i> (Puchta & Stranks, 2008):	

Appendix E1

Young children easily pick up things from the input

Teacher 1: Ik weet niet, ik vind dit eigenlijk wel prima, om het later aan te bieden als ze al heel veel taal zegmaar geconsumeerd hebben. Dan is het misschien logischer voor ze omdat ze al heel veel gehoord en gelezen en gezien hebben.

[I don't know, I am quite okay with offering them [grammar] after they have consumed much language input. It might be more natural for them because then they would have heard, seen and read much of the English language.]

Focus on form

Teacher 2: Meer zulk soort dingen in plaats van "ze moeten de passive weten en ze moeten een perfect weten en ze moeten de modals weten", dat vindt ik veel minder belangrijk, maar ik hou er veel meer van dat ze ook de praktische dingen van de grammatica leren.

[More things of that nature instead of "they have to know the passive, they have to know a perfect and they have to know the modals". I consider that less important, I like them learning the more practical aspects of grammar.]

Grammar should be secondary to skills

Teacher 6: I think that skills should be the most important thing, and I think that grammar should be secondary to those things.

Teacher 4: Maar dan zou ik inderdaad zou ik het niet erg vinden als het een mindere rol ging spelen dan wat het nu doet.. Maar er zouden wel wat dingetjes bij mogen van mij.. Dus helemaal zonder grammatica vindt ik weer het andere uiterste..

[I would not mind grammar playing less of a part than it is doing right now.. But some things might be added.. I think that teaching completely without grammar is the opposite extreme.]

Appendix E2

Reorganising the lessons

Teacher 1: [grammar], maar dat kost je zo, delen van lessen, terwijl ik dan liever met kinderen kijkvaardigheid wil doen, of spreekvaardigheid wil doen, dat vind ik veel waardevoller.

[But grammar takes up so.., takes up parts of a lesson, while I would rather watch something with the children or do a speaking exercise, I consider that way more valuable.]

Teacher 4: Maar ik vind het wel lastig, omdat je juist weer zoveel moet verzinnen ook.. Dat vind ik wel lastig, soms is het ook gewoon wel makkelijk om een grammatica lesje te doen en dan daar weer op terug te komen, dat is dan je houvast als het ware dat ben je nu eigenlijk een beetje kwijt.

[I do think it is difficult, because you have to come up with so many extra material. I find that difficult, sometimes it is easier to just do a grammar lesson and then relate back to that, to have a solid ground. Now, you don't really have anything like that in your lesson.]

Teacher 3: Je bent veel intensiever bezig met die kinderen toch met woordjes of toch iets meer erbij.. En bij grammatica leg je het uit, kunnen ze bezig en als anderen vragen hebben kun je het nog een keer doen en kan de rest een vocabulary opdracht doen bijvoorbeeld, [...] je moet wat creatiever worden.

[You are working more intensively with the kids, with words or other extra things. And with grammar you would just explain, they then can get to work and if there are any questions you can explain things again, while the rest goes on doing a vocabulary exercise for example. So you have to become more creative.]

Student awareness

Teacher 6: I'm actually kind of surprised how little difference it makes to the kids, like they

don't really.. yeah.. to them it's just doing what they have to do and they don't really notice the absence of grammar I think.

Questions about grammar-related aspects

Teacher 1: Nou bijvoorbeeld van ehm waarom het een bepaalde werkwoordsvorm is, of waarom het, nou she walks is en I walk, nou ja dat hebben we in het Nederlands ook he, ik loop hij loopt, nou dat is hetzelfde, “okee”, nou klaar. dan vroegen ze ook niet eh..

[Well for example, why it is that particular verb-form, or why it is she walks but I walk, “well we have the same thing in Dutch, you know, I walk, He walks, that is the same.”, “Okay”.

Well that's it, then there were no more further questions.]

Teacher 6: No, because I don't think that I can. I don't think we're supposed to talk about grammar.

Feedback: avoiding interruption of communicative setting

Teacher 5: he als, ik vind het vooral al heel goed dat ze spreken en als ze dan heel de tijd verbeterd worden dan ben ik bang dat ze daardoor juist minder gaan spreken.. Dus ik ben geen fan van spreekvaardigheid constant verbeteren.

[You know, I most value the fact that they are speaking, and by correcting them all the time, I become afraid that they might speak less. So I am not a fan of constantly correcting speaking.]

Teacher 5: beetje 50/50 aan de ene kant verbeter ik het, maar ook heel vaak niet. Dat hangt een beetje van de leerling af, als er een leerling is waarvan ik weet dat het niveau nog niet zo heel goed is dan laat ik de fouten wat meer zitten, en als ik een leerling heb die wel wat meer kan dan ben ik wel geneigd om te zeggen van nou dit moet zo zijn..

[Somewhat 50/50, on the one hand I do correct, but I also often don't. It moreover depends on

the student, if a student is not yet on a certain level of proficiency, I leave the mistakes for what they are. But if a student's aptitude is higher, I am more inclined to correct them.]

Difficulties not explaining grammar

Teacher 2: Nee het is niet moeilijk. Alleen op momenten dat het dus echt constant en structureel fout gedaan blijft worden.

[No it is not that hard. Except when students constantly and structurally keep making the same mistakes.]

Teacher 7: Ja ik denk dat volgend jaar misschien dat ik het wel ga missen gewoon leerlingen die wat vooruit lopen, dat ik die dan wel wat meer zou willen vertellen en wat meer als ze tijden met elkaar, verschillende tijden gaan gebruiken dat ik dan uit kan leggen wat de ene dan wel doet en wat de andere dan niet doet en.. Dus ik denk volgend jaar misschien wel maar tot nu toe in het eerste jaar heb ik nooit behoefte om iets met grammatica uit te leggen..

[Yes, I might miss it next year, for students that are a bit ahead of the others. I would like to tell them some more, for example when they start using different tenses, to explain to them about these tenses. So I think next year, maybe, but up until now in the first year I haven't felt the need to explain grammar.]

A minor role for grammar

Teacher 3: Ja. En dan denk ik dat je wel dus bij die ehm, dat je die kinderen dan meekrijgt als je het een beetje uitlegt, weetje wel, gewoon, maar niet zoals we hebben gedaan, dat hoeft niet dat geloof ik wel, dus iets meer om er wat meer grip op te laten krijgen voor leerlingen die ehm nou die net zo'n push nodig hebben.

[I think that for some kids, some grammatical explanation is needed for them not to fall behind, you know, not like we used to teach [grammar], I don't think that that is necessary, but just for some students to get a bit more grip, for students that need a bit of a push.]

Teacher 6: The thing that I think is interesting about the way that we're doing things this year is that I notice that the student's vocabularies are growing, and that they're learning words, but they're not really learning how to use those words in sentences