Karin Sundqvist

Theoretical Approaches to ESL and Their Influence on Grammar Teaching as Reflected in Swedish Curricula and Upper Secondary School Course Books

Engelska
C-uppsats

Termin/År: Vårterminen 2012
Handledare: Solveig Granath
Examinator: Michael Wherrity
Title: Theoretical Approaches to ESL and Their Influence on Grammar Teaching as Reflected in Swedish Curricula and Upper Secondary School Course Books

Titel på svenska: Teoretiska inlärningsmetoder vid engelska som andraspråk och deras inflytande på grammatikundervisningen som den speglas i svenska läroplaner och gymnasial kurslitteratur

Author: Karin Sundqvist

Pages: 27

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to see to what extent theories of second language learning have influenced different curricula and textbooks in upper secondary school, and what the theory says about grammar teaching. This was done by studying different theoretical approaches, three curricula and three different textbooks used at the time for the different curricula, i.e. 1970, 1994 and 2011.

The results of this investigation show that the curricula have been influenced by the theory predominant at the time. No such trend can be observed for the three textbooks that were investigated: only one of them shows a certain influence by the dominant theory; the other two textbooks have been influenced by other theories than the dominant one.

This study highlights different theoretical approaches, factors that can influence learning, and what three curricula and textbooks say about grammar teaching.

Keywords: second language learning, theoretical approaches, teaching methods, grammar teaching

Sammanfattning på svenska

Syftet med den här uppsatsen är att ta reda på i vilken mån inlärningsteorier i andraspråksundervisningen har haft inflytande på läroplaner och kursböcker i gymnasiet, och vad de olika teorierna säger om grammatikundervisningen. Detta görs genom att studera olika inlärningsteorier, tre läroplaner och tre kursböcker som har använts vid tiden för de olika läroplanerna, 1970, 1994 och 2011.

Resultatet av undersökningen visar att den för den tiden dominerande inlärningsteorin har influerat läroplanerna. Vad gäller kursböckerna så har endast en varit under tydligt inflytande från den då dominerande teorin, medan de två andra böckernas grammatikövningar har influerats av andra teorier än den då dominerande teorin.

Undersökningen redovisar olika inlärningsteorier, faktorer som kan påverka inlärning, samt vad läroplaner och kursböcker säger om grammatikundervisningen.

Nyckelord: andraspråksundervisning, inlärningsteorier, undervisningsmetoder, grammatikundervisning
1. Introduction and aims

In today’s society people are likely to encounter English almost everywhere and therefore it is more important than ever to master English. Together with vocabulary, grammar is the foundation of a language and without grammar, it is almost impossible to make oneself understood. According to Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, grammar is “the study of the classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relations in the sentence.” In our native language, we acquire grammar automatically when we interact with people and objects around us for thousands of hours during our childhood (Lightbown & Spada 2006:19). When it comes to learning a second language in school, it is not as easy since we are obviously not exposed to the language to the same extent.

During my student teaching I noticed that the students were lacking in grammatical knowledge, and I’m not speaking of highly advanced grammar, but grammar of a more basic nature. The situation I am about to describe is unfortunately not an infrequent one and I have encountered it several times during my student teaching. For example, a student wrote are instead of is in a sentence; when I told the student that are was wrong, that another form of the verb must be used, the student suggested: be? I explained to the student that be is the infinitive form of the verb, the base form of the verb and that another form must be used. I asked the student if third person singular sounds familiar but it did not, so instead I mentioned he, she and it. The student told me that she knew what it meant, but she still did not know what form of the verb to use. When I revealed that the answer was is, I got a little smile of recognition. The student knew that there is a difference between is and are but could not account for it at all, nor did the student know when to use the different forms.

How do teachers teach English today? The methods and focus have changed over the years. Grammar teaching used to be explicit but today the pendulum seems to have swung towards implicit grammar teaching. What method is to be preferred and what does research say about this? Are there grammar exercises that students seem to benefit more from than others? According to Granath & Miliander (2007), the university students in their study felt that they lacked grammatical knowledge and they found the grammar book difficult to read. The same authors did a subsequent study of the students’ ability to apply grammar rules in a test
situation, and the results supported the students’ claim to a certain extent (Granath & Miliander 2007:27). Another study indicates that teachers also seem intimidated when it comes to teaching grammar and try to avoid it as much as possible (Lärkefjord 2006: 27).

In the early 1980s focus was not to be put on grammar, but on communication in accordance with Krashen’s hypothesis regarding the difference between acquisition and learning. Accordingly, learning grammar would not influence the students’ language development and the teaching should therefore be focused on communication (Tornberg 2009:142-3). Krashen says:

In general, utterances are initiated by the acquired system - our fluency in production is based on what we have “picked up” through active communication. Our “formal” knowledge of the second language, our conscious learning, may be used to alter the output of the acquired system […] (Krashen 1981:2).

Do Swedish syllabi and textbooks from the past 50 years focus on grammar or on communication?

The aim of the present paper is to see what theory of second language learning has influenced three different curricula and to see what they say regarding grammar teaching in upper secondary school. Should it, for instance, be carried out explicitly or implicitly? Because there are also certain teaching methods associated with specific theories, I will discuss the methods suggested in the syllabi and textbooks in the results section. I will also investigate whether text books follow the ideas of grammar teaching recommended by the curricula or not, and if the exercises are in line with the recommendations. How important is grammar in second language learning? What is the proportion of grammar exercises in the books used in the investigation, and can any major changes be perceived over time? The curricula I will look at are from 1970, 1994 and 2011. The text books are from 1973, 1995 and 2005.

2. Background

I will start this section with a historical survey of approaches to teaching a second language (2.1). Different theoretical approaches that have influenced and are influencing second language learning will be dealt with more thoroughly in 2.2, followed by an account of
different factors that play an important role in second language learning (2.3). Finally, 2.4 will give a short historical overview of language teaching in Sweden.

2.1 A historical survey of approaches to teaching a second language

Over time, the approach to second language learning has changed radically. The predominant method prior to the 20\textsuperscript{th} century was the so-called grammar-translation method (Gascoigne 2002: 21). Grammar was taught deductively and explicitly, meaning that the student, after having been presented with a grammar-rule, moved on to practice the rule in exercises (Gascoigne 2002:22). The goal was not to develop oral fluency but rather to make it possible for students to be able to read literature (Lightbown & Spada 2006:138). This method was challenged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by, among others, Berlitz, who believed that second language learning should be acquired in the same natural way as the first language (Gascoigne 2002:22). The teaching was to be carried out in the target language all the time since the most important thing was to learn how to talk, then how to read (Ericsson 1989:155). The direct method, as it was called, taught grammar inductively, i.e. through practice, and did not use explicit or deductive methods (Gascoigne 2002:23). Another method, which was introduced in the 1930s, was the reading method (Gascoigne 2002:23). As the name implies, the acquisition of reading was considered to be the primary goal and students were taught not to translate a text but to extract its meaning. They were also asked to recognize grammar rules and forms, but they were not supposed to be able to account for them (Gascoigne 2002:23).

Due to an increased interest in languages where the emphasis was on oral skills, audiolingual instruction, based on behaviorism, arose in the 1940s, and it was claimed that this method would teach the students to actually speak the language (Lightbown & Spada 2006:138). According to the ideas of the audiolingual approach, language was a set of learnt habits and focus was put on the structure of the language, not on the content. Furthermore, it was the spoken form of the language that was important, not the written form. The students learned dialogues by heart, and an inductive approach towards grammar was used, i.e. a generalization of regularities, and rules based on examples were used. Grammar practice was carried out through pattern drills since grammatical structures were considered more important than learning vocabulary (Ericsson 1989:158). However, the frequent failure to produce fluency and accuracy when using the grammar-translation and audiolingual methods
paved the way for the development of communicative language teaching where the emphasis was more on acquiring fluency than accuracy. In the early 70s, Dell Hymes, a linguist and anthropologist, emphasized the importance of not just being able to communicate, but also of having the knowledge of how to communicate from a social point of view; hence Hymes coined the expression *communicative competence* (Ericsson 1989:62; Mitchell & Myles 1998:164). This is how Hymes (1972:60) expressed it: “A model of language must design it with a face toward communicative conduct and social conduct [...] There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless.”

2.2 Theoretical approaches to second language learning

There are several theories that have been offered as explanations of how a language is learned, primarily for our first language (L1), but these theories are also applied when explaining the learning of a second language (L2).1

Researchers often distinguish between second language and foreign language learning. Both terms imply a language other than the learner’s native language (Mitchell & Myles 1998:1), but if a distinction is to be made between the two, second language implies that the target language is more widely used in the community, whilst the foreign language is only rarely used (Lightbown & Spada 2006:199). According to The Swedish National Agency for Education, *Skolverket*, and the curriculum from 1994, English is the dominant language in the world for communication, and it must therefore play a central part in the Swedish school. Hence English is considered a second language in Sweden.2 On the other hand, languages such as French, German and Spanish have been given less important roles in school as the purpose of these languages is to give the students an opportunity to widen their view of the world,3 and they would therefore be considered foreign languages.

Three major theories play a significant role for second language learning in the 20th century: first, behaviorism; second, innatism and the Monitor Model; and third, the

---

1 L2 in this paper refers to English as a second language.


cognitivist/developmental perspective. The influence of behaviorism on second language learning was powerful from the 1940s until the 1970s when the innatist perspective with Universal Grammar started gaining ground. Stephen Krashen’s Monitor Model was a controversial yet well-known theory in the 1970s and 1980s (Gascoigne 2002:29). During the latter half of the twentieth century, psychological approaches such as cognitivist/developmental theory became central in second language research (Lightbown & Spada 2006:38). These three approaches will be described in greater detail in sections 2.2.1 to 2.2.3.

2.2.1 Behaviorism

One hypothesis of behaviorists is that when children learn their L1 it is through imitation. By imitating the language they try to reproduce what they have heard and will receive positive reinforcement from the environment, either as praise or as successful communication (Lightbown & Spada 2006:10). B.F Skinner was the best known proponent of this approach to language learning, and his idea was that “humans are able to learn languages because some linguistic forms are reinforced while others are not” (Gascoigne 2002:12). Behaviorism puts the emphasis on environmental factors and not on mental and internal factors (Gascoigne 2002:13), and learning equals the formation of habits (Ellis 1999: 299). Sentence patterns and dialogues are learned by memorization and mimicry (Lightbown & Spada 2006:34).

By the 1970s, a lot of researchers had become convinced that behaviorism was inadequate and started questioning it (Lightbown & Spada 2006:35). According to the researchers, behaviorism studies only the observable and ignores the unobservable such as mental processes and learner variables (Gascoigne 2002:13).

2.2.2 Innatism and the Monitor Model

One person who questioned behaviorism was the linguist Noam Chomsky. He said that language is not habit but rule-governed behavior, and that language is creative by nature (Hellström 1985:30). According to Chomsky, the language has an underlying abstract system of rules that can create, or generate, an infinite amount of sentences, and it is this theoretical approach that is at the center of his theory of Universal Grammar (Hellström 1985:30). His view of language acquisition is that all humans have an innate knowledge of grammar which allows children to acquire the language that is spoken in their environment. His hypothesis is that children are all born with an innate possibility to discover the underlying rules of the
language that they are exposed to (Lightbown & Spada 2006:35). However, this innate knowledge is only available during a critical period of the children’s development according to Chomsky; once past this critical period, the possibility of acquisition is either very difficult or even impossible. The idea of the critical period is regarded by many as the best way of understanding L2 acquisition, while others argue that it is not, since adults can learn a second language as well (Lightbown & Spada 2006:35-6). Universal Grammar (UG) is not primarily a theory of second language learning, but a theory of language which aims at describing and explaining human language. Nevertheless, UG has been very influential in the field of second language acquisition (Mitchell & Myles 1998:67), even though Chomsky himself was very skeptical about how his theory could contribute to language teaching (Hellström 1985:30). Chomsky wants the linguist to analyze the individual’s language in a homogeneous language community, where no external influences interfere. He uses the terms *competence* and *performance*, the former being the individual’s intuitive knowledge of her language and the ability to understand and make grammatically correct phrases, and the latter being the use of the language in tangible situations (Hellström 1985:31). Chomsky says that it is of less interest to him how the language is used and how it is affected by individual and social factors, since performance will always show imperfection, and inconsistency will affect the correctness in regards to competence. This is where Chomsky’s ideas were rejected by Dell Hymes, who claimed that since the whole social aspect is missing, it cannot be anything but theory. It is the rules of application of the speech-act, i.e. to know how to use the language, that govern the grammar and not the other way around (Hellström 1985:31).

The Monitor Model, developed by Stephen Krashen, was influenced by innateness theory and consists of five hypotheses (Lightbown & Spada 2006:35). It is one of the most well-known language learning theories and even though it is considered quite controversial it has had a big influence on language pedagogy (Gascoigne 2002:29). The first hypothesis is the *acquisition-learning hypothesis* which says that there are two ways for humans to become competent in a second language: either through *acquisition*, which means a subconscious use of the language for communication, or through *learning*, i.e. a conscious use of the language (Gascoigne 2002:29). A natural interaction with the language through communication equals acquisition, and a learner being made aware of the linguistic rules through a classroom experience equals learning (Mitchell & Myles 1998: 36). *The natural order hypothesis* is the second hypothesis; it claims that humans learn a language in a predictable order, similar to how we acquire a L1 (Gascoigne 2002:29). *The monitor hypothesis* assumes that conscious knowledge, or more
exactly, the things that we have learned, acts as a monitor or editor and corrects what the acquired system has produced. But in order to do that, the speaker must have the time, the will, and be able to access relevant rules. The input hypothesis says that acquisition is only possible when the learner is exposed to comprehensible language that he or she has already acquired, together with language that is just beyond the learner’s comprehension level. The affective filter hypothesis is the fifth hypothesis and simply means that the learner must be available for acquisition and receptive to input; lack of motivation, anxiety or boredom can act as filters and hinder acquisition (Lightbown & Spada 2006:37).

2.2.3 The cognitivist/developmental perspective

While behaviorism focuses on observable aspects of learning, cognitivism focuses on unobservable aspects such as abstract mental processes and does not acknowledge habit formation learning (Gascoigne 2002: 26). The cognitivists look upon the human brain as a computer where the students can store information, and as the students learn new information, the brain adds it to information acquired earlier, thus creating a “spiral of learning” (Guide Belin 2005:16). The students build up knowledge that eventually can be called on automatically, either for speaking or for an understanding. However, in order to be able to understand or produce language, the students need to “pay attention”, and by that, the cognitivists mean the “use of cognitive resources to process information” (Lightbown & Spada 2006:39). In cognitive methods, language is not seen as a set of habits but as a conscious creative activity (Gascoigne 2002:26). While UG researchers focus on competence on the language dimension of second language learning, cognitivist researchers focus on the learner as an individual and are interested in both competence and performance (Mitchell & Myles 1998: 72-3). One example of a cognitive approach is connectionism. Connectionists do not think that there is such a thing as innate grammar knowledge, but simply an innate ability to learn. To the connectionists, the role of the environment and the frequency with which the learner is exposed to specific linguistic features are of greater importance (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 41).

2.3 Factors influencing L2 learning

There are a number of factors that influence L2 learning according to researchers. These factors are crucial no matter what theory one chooses to use.
The quality of the teaching is a factor that is crucial in the teaching process according to Ericsson (1989:29), as it can either obstruct or facilitate learning. This is a view shared by researchers in the project Göteborg, undervisningsmetod i engelska (GUME)\(^4\) who say that there is no need to argue about the method the teacher is using, but instead one should look at the personality of the teacher and his or her language training (Malmberg 1993:52). How something is presented to the learners is of the greatest importance in the learning process. The number of hours of teaching is another factor that influences the quality of the language learning (Ericsson 1989:29), and also the distribution of the hours (Hedge 2000:25). The more time given the students, the greater the chances of successful learning. The number of hours, at what age English teaching should begin, and whether students should have the option to choose between an easier or a more advanced course are other issues to take into consideration (Malmberg 1993:31). The size of the classes and resources available in the institution are also factors that affect the quality of the teaching (Hedge 2000:25). Another factor to take into consideration according to Hedge (2000:25) is whether there should be an opportunity for students to “retake” a course or not. Classes with a mix of abilities demand much more flexible and varied learning resources which will affect the quality of the teaching.

A student’s will and ability to learn are factors influencing the learning process (Ericsson 1989:29). Robert Gardner and colleagues carried out a study on the relationship between positive motivation and successful learning. It turned out that it is almost impossible to know whether positive motivation affects successful learning or if successful learning creates positive motivation. Even though the research results in this area are inconclusive, there is evidence that a willingness to keep learning is associated with positive motivation (Lightbown & Spada 2006:63). Other factors that can affect the student’s will and ability to learn are social background and school fatigue (Malmberg 1993:52). According to Hedge (2000:25) the effort the teacher will have to put into motivating the students to learn English depends partly on social attitudes.

In order to learn a new language, many students use strategies that allow them to analyze the language. When analyzing a language, the patterns and rules that create the language can become apparent to the learner. One way of analyzing the language is by doing a contrastive analysis, i.e. a comparison between the first and second language, in order to discover the

\(^4\) A Swedish project that in the 1970s studied different teaching methods in English language learning.
similarities and differences between the two languages. However, learners may not always be aware of how they learn language, but they do have beliefs and opinions about how instructions from the teacher should be delivered, and that is often based on previous learning experiences. When learners’ instructional preferences are taken into consideration, the repertoire of learning strategies will expand, since the teacher can use the different preferences and create a greater flexibility in the learners’ language learning (Lightbown & Spada 2006:66-7).

2.4 An overview of L2 teaching in Sweden

For a long time, the grammar-translation method was the dominant method in language teaching and Sweden is no exception. In the 19th century, the grammar-translation method was used at the seats of learning; it was intended for the elite of intellectuals who studied Latin and Greek which had the status of high education and refinement (Ericsson 1989:67). The written word was of greater importance than the spoken one, and reading, analyzing texts, and learning grammatical rules were the most important features of this method (Ericsson 1989:66-7). The target language was hardly ever spoken; the native language was the language used in the classroom (Ericsson 1989:154-5).

The direct method was introduced as a reaction to the grammar-translation method and it differed radically from the grammar-translation method. For instance, all teaching was done in the target language. The direct method was supposed to teach English in the same way as children learn their native language; thus, the first priority was to learn how to talk, then how to read (Ericsson 1989:155).

When the new curriculum for the nine-year compulsory school came out in 1962, the grammar-translation method was replaced by the direct method, which, although a bit altered, became known as the modified direct method (Ericsson 1989:159). According to the people behind the curriculum it was supposed to correspond to the audiolingual approach. The most important difference, however, between the direct method and the modified direct method was that, if required, grammar rules could and should be given in the native language instead of the target language (Ericsson 1989:159). The modified direct method allowed elements from the grammar-translation method but kept the heart of the direct method: comprehensive language proficiency (Malmberg 1993:67).
In the 1970s there was a change in language learning due to Dell Hymes’ ideas of *communicative competence*. What Hymes wanted to express by inventing this term was that the most important thing is that students can express themselves in the target language but not necessarily apply good grammar (Malmberg 1993:74). This notion still lingers in language teaching today; the keyword in language teaching is communication (Malmberg 1993:79). This is shown very clearly in the curriculum from 1994 where it says that the students should “develop their ability to communicate and interact in English” (Lpf94, goals to aim for), and in the curriculum from 2011 where it says that the students should “develop all-round communicative skills” (Gy11, aim of the subject).

3. Methods and material

The aim of the present paper is to see if three different curricula and a selection of English course books have been influenced by any particular theory, and what is said about grammar teaching: should it be taught explicitly or implicitly? I will also look at whether the text books follow the ideas of grammar teaching recommended by the curricula or not, and what kind of exercises there are in the books, and what percentage of the exercises in the text books concern grammar. I will do this by examining different curricula as well as course literature used around the time the different curricula were in force, to see if any of the approaches described in sections 2.1 and 2.2 have had an impact on the curricula and Swedish textbooks in English.

3.1 Curricula

I will look at the curricula for upper secondary school dating from 1970, 1994, and 2011. The curriculum from 1970 will hereafter be referred to as Lgr70, the curriculum from 1994 as Lpf 94, and the curriculum from 2011 as Gy11. All curricula consist of a main section stating general values, tasks, goals, and principles for the Swedish school, followed by more specific subject curricula.

Lgr70 was introduced because of an organizational reform where Sweden replaced the 2-year continuation school from 1965 with an integrated upper secondary school consisting of 2-, 3-, and 4-year course programs (Skolverket 1996:16). Lgr70 consists of three parts: I General Part deals with the stipulated goals and guiding principles, and general instructions. II
Supplement Part provides supplementary instructions and comments mainly for the 2-year programs, and finally, III Supplement of Planning for the 3- and 4-year programs contains proposals for the planning and carrying out of the teaching. These proposals give recommendations, examples and models for how the teaching can be executed. I will concentrate on parts I and III since part II mainly concerns 2-year vocational programs.

In 1994, the school system was reformed once again, and the vocational programs were made into 3-year programs. The reason for this was that working life was considered to demand more and broader basic knowledge from the students attending these vocational programs than before. The number of obligatory and major subjects was set to eight, and the running of the schools was decentralized and assigned to the municipalities instead of the Government (Skolverket 2011:10-11). Lpf94 consists of a main section giving general values, tasks, goals, and principles for the Swedish school, followed by more specific subject curricula, e.g. English.

The most recent curriculum, Gy11, is from 2011, and two of the reasons why a new curriculum was introduced were that education must provide students with an adequate preparation for future work or university studies, and that the education must show uniformity, no matter what program the students attend. Because of a constant increase of specially designed programs, it had become difficult for students and parents to have an overview and understanding of where the different educational paths would lead to (Skolverket 2011:12-3).

I will go through each curriculum in order to find out which theory has influenced it. This I will do by listing features significant for the theory in question. Once I have determined the features, I will look at to what extent these features have influenced grammar teaching by examining the type and number of grammar exercises in three different textbooks.

3.2 Textbooks

The textbooks that I selected for my study are books that were used in the second year in upper secondary school around the time the different curricula were in force. They are Reach Out 2 from 1973, which appeared a few years after Lgr70 was implemented, Impact 2 from 1995, which appeared a year after the implementation of Lpf94, and finally Masterplan II
from 2005, which appeared ten years after the implementation of Lpf94 and six years before the implementation of Gy11.

*Reach Out 2* was written by Inge Berglund and consists of a textbook and a workbook. There is no preface and the only information given about the book is that the texts have been tested and selected in cooperation with teachers and students in the second year in upper secondary school. This information is provided on the back cover of the book.

*Impact 2* was written by Christina Hargevik and Stieg Hargevik. It consists of only one book with texts and exercises. In the preface it says that this book is aimed at students who want to learn and practice English actively in as many ways as possible with exercises such as group work, discussions, debates and so on. Exercises on word formation and translation have been added or given more space in the book. The book consists of seven units where each unit consists of two or more chapters with texts and exercises.

*Master Plan II* was written by Gunn-Marie Larsson and Catrin Norrby, and this is also a book where texts and exercises are both included. According to the preface of *Masterplan II*, the book consists of a variety of texts, listening exercises, and speaking and writing exercises. One unit in the book has been organized as a reference chapter. It is supposed to help the students master different skills such as speaking and writing, as well as increase their vocabulary and knowledge of grammar.

The reasons for choosing these books are that they are all intended for the 3-year programs, and both *Reach Out 2* and *Master Plan II* have been, and the latter is still, used in English classes in the upper secondary school that I attended as a student. I have also worked with *Master Plan II* myself when I was teaching upper secondary school. I have no previous experience with *Impact 2*.

I will look at the textbooks in order to establish whether they share the same view of grammar teaching as the corresponding curricula, and I will do that by looking at the different exercises in the books in order to determine if the exercises are worked out in an implicit or an explicit way, and how many of the exercises in the books concern grammar, calculated as a percentage. I will not count exercises concerning word formation as grammar exercises; I choose to look upon them as vocabulary exercises.
4. Analysis and results

Each curriculum and the corresponding textbook will be presented in a subsection of its own, where the first part will present the curricula and the second part will present the analysis of the textbooks. This table will serve as an overview of the curricula, the textbooks, and the dominant theories at the time for the curricula.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lgr70 (1970)</td>
<td>Reach Out 2 (1973)</td>
<td>The modified direct method, the audio-lingual method, and behaviorism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Lgr70

Lgr70 states in the general part, in the section about teaching, that there is no type of teaching or method of working that can be considered to be the most advantageous for all teachers, students and subjects (p. 31). Lgr70 states further that it is important that teachers try to find their own methods since they need to take into account the motivation, the activity, and the individual differences of the students. The fact that teachers can choose their own methods of teaching and adapt them to the students will stimulate the pedagogical development of the students (Lgr70, allmän del, undervisning, p. 31). Researchers in the GUME-project say that it is more important to look at how something is presented to the students than to argue about a learning method, and that agrees with Lgr70 which stresses that teachers should find their own methods. Other factors that can influence L2 learning according to researchers are the students’ social background and school fatigue, and Lgr70 takes this into consideration by saying that teachers must take into account the individual differences of the students.

The general viewpoints of the supplement of planning do not provide any information regarding teaching methods other than that the teachers should familiarize themselves with the teaching, the curriculum, and the textbooks used in secondary school. Guiding terms such
as motivation, activity, and individualization are said to be just as valid in upper secondary school as they were in lower secondary school (Lgr70, planeringssupplement, p. 6).

In the section about listening comprehension and oral proficiency in the supplement of planning, Lgr70 makes a distinction between structured and free oral exercises, where the first aims to practice and strengthen structures and vocabulary (p. 6). The structured oral exercises are supposed to help the students achieve a more fluent speech where they can express values, feelings, opinions, and information (p.6). This is done by demanding complete linguistic correctness (p.6), preferably by using exercises in the form of dialogues (p.7), hence avoiding the possibility of making grammatical mistakes. The students can read a dialogue in chorus, or they can memorize it, thus strengthening their knowledge of words and structures (p. 8). Once memorized, words and structures can be replaced within the dialogue in order to widen students’ vocabulary and give them the opportunity to learn more phrases (p. 8). When it comes to the free oral exercises, the demand for complete grammatical correctness is not as high as for the structured exercises, but serious mistakes should be corrected (p.8). Free oral exercises are supposed to give students the ability to express themselves orally in a spontaneous and natural way; this can be achieved by having conversations about everyday life, answering questions about a closely read text, discussions, oral summary, and dramatization (p.8-9). It is important that these two types of exercises be kept apart when it comes to learning new matter (p. 6); nevertheless, the students should be given the opportunity to use structures and words learned in the structured exercises in free oral production as soon as possible (p. 7). Such structured exercises agree with the ideas of behaviorism and the audio-lingual and the direct method approaches where students are supposed to learn the second language by imitating words and structures. As was stated above, structured oral exercises are supposed to result in free oral production, which means that free oral exercises also reflect the ideas of behaviorism, i.e. free oral exercises are based on structured oral exercises.

In the grammar section in the supplement on planning, it is stated that grammatical structures must be practiced by making phrases containing the grammatical structure in question. Each exercise should also be exemplified in a natural context and presented so clearly that the students know what they are supposed to practice (p. 10). The exercises should to the greatest possible extent be executed in the foreign language, but they can exceptionally be executed in Swedish if it can clarify and help the students better understand (p.10-11). The exercises are
usually summed up in a grammar rule by the teacher, preferably with the help of the students, and if needed, the rule might be given in Swedish. The students that can profit from grammar rules should also be provided with them, while the others will have to depend more on learning by examples (p.11). Lgr70 states further that it is important that the students experience that their answers are of value from a communicative perspective when they are working with exercises (p.11). Dialogues and the making of phrases containing a special grammar structure correspond to the audio-visual method and the behavioristic ideas, and since the grammatical rules might be given in Swedish it also corresponds to the modified direct method. Grammar might also be taught deductively, which is a feature associated with the grammar-translation method. The providing of grammar rules to students who can profit from them agrees with the cognitivist perspective; the students store the information and build up knowledge which they can later use.

The section “writing exercises” says that writing exercises should support the oral practice of words, phrases and grammatical patterns and that they should be seen as a final confirmation of the achieved language proficiency (p. 25). Structured writing exercises are supposed to strengthen structures and words and will eventually lead to fluent writing, just as with oral exercises. Therefore, a distinction between free and structured exercises must also be made in the writing exercises. Some examples of writing exercises are copying texts, dictation, translation, dialogues, and writing summaries. Writing essays, notes and letters are also examples of exercises that the students should work with. This is yet another area where behavioristic ideas, the direct method and the audio-visual method prevail since it is about imitating words and structures, only this time in writing. The ideas of behaviorism, though, have been a bit altered here since the reinforcement of the produced structures will come later, not instantly. The grammar-translation method is apparent in dictation and translation exercises.

To conclude, it is the (modified) direct method, the audio-visual method, and behaviorism that appear to have influenced the curriculum of 1970. However, the grammar-translation method still lingers on here and there, as in the area of grammar where it is attested by the fact that grammar can be taught deductively. The cognitivist perspective can also be seen since grammar rules should be provided to students if called for, thus making it possible for students to store information they later can access. Lgr70 states that there is no method of teaching that can be thought of as most advantageous for the students, and it says that it is
important for every teacher to find their own method. This agrees with the view of the GUME-researchers who state that it is how something is presented that is important in the learning process of the students.

### 4.1.1 Reach Out 2

In *Reach Out 2* there are a total of 114 exercises, 19 of which are on grammar, and calculated in percentages; the result shows that 17% of the exercises deal with grammar. The grammar exercises deal with prepositions and their use in different contexts, the conditional construction, collective nouns, and tag-question. Almost every exercise is constructed in the same way: a phrase containing the correct grammatical structure followed by a short explanation, or rather an explanation why a particular phrase is constructed in a certain way. Then the students are given either phrases to rewrite, or words which are to be used in sentences. Sometimes the students are given more than one example of the grammatical structure in question, but this is not always the case. A couple of the exercises are constructed differently, however. In these exercises the students are given phrases containing the grammatical structure and are told to notice the use of the grammatical structure, and then to rewrite the sentences.

In Lgr70 it says that exercises should be in English and that grammatical structures must be practiced by making phrases that contain the grammatical structure in question. All the exercises in *Reach Out 2* are in English and the grammatical structures are practiced by having the students make phrases. Lgr70 further says that a grammatical structure should usually be summed up in a grammar rule, but this is not done in the book.

To conclude, the grammar exercises in *Reach Out 2* cannot be said to be either explicit or implicit, but rather deductive and inductive. Since the grammar is not explained, the students will have to reason deductively, i.e. apply knowledge that they have acquired earlier - stored information - which agrees with the cognitivist perspective. In some of the exercises, the students will have to reason inductively while trying to figure out the grammatical structure themselves.

### 4.2 Lpf94

The curriculum for English in Lpf94 consists of three sections: the aim of the subject, goals to aim for, and structure and nature of the subject. The curriculum is followed by a syllabus for
each English course, in this case three: English A – C, representing year 1 to 3 in each program. The syllabus states the goals the students are supposed to have attained on completion of the course, and criteria for the grades pass, pass with distinction and pass with special distinction.

In the section on the aim of the subject, the curriculum says that

The subject aims at developing an all-round communicative ability and the language skills necessary for international contacts, and an increasingly internationalized labour-market, […] as well as for further studies (“The aim of the subject”).

According to the curriculum, English plays a central part in the Swedish school since the language is not just the official language in a great number of countries, but also the dominant language of communication throughout the world.

Further, the curriculum states the goals that the school should aim for, and the first four goals concern communication and interaction. The students are supposed to “develop their ability to communicate and interact” in different situations, to “deepen their understanding of English as spoken in different parts of the world”, to “develop their ability to take part in conversations, discussions and negotiations” in English, and to “develop their ability to speak in a well structured way” (“Goals to aim for”). The aim of the subject and the first four goals to aim for concern spoken English and communication, and agree completely with the communicative approach that was predominant at the time when this curriculum appeared. Dell Hymes’ expression communicative competence can be found in the fact that students are supposed to develop their ability to communicate in different situations. Written English is only mentioned after these first four goals, and the text says that the students should “deepen their ability to read, understand, and reflect critically” upon different texts, to “improve their ability to read with good understanding literature in English”, and to “refine their ability to express themselves in writing” (“Goals to aim for”). Exchanging ideas and opinions, or taking part in a discussion can be done both orally and in writing; either way, it is about communication. The goals that talk about improving the ability to read and to understand literature agree better with the grammar-translation method where emphasis is put on the ability to read texts.

In the section on the structure and nature of the subject, it is stated that
The different competencies involved in all-round communicative skills have their counterparts in the structure of the subject. Related to these is the ability to master a language’s form, i.e. its vocabulary, phraseology, pronunciation, spelling, and grammar. Competence is also developed in forming linguistically coherent utterances, which in terms of contents and form are progressively adapted to the situation and audience (“Structure and nature of the subject”).

The order of precedence of these competences shows that grammar is mentioned last, while vocabulary is mentioned first, followed by phraseology. This could be interpreted as the order of importance of different aspects of learning a language. Phraseology seems to be quite important, and competence is, according to the curriculum, developed by forming coherent utterances, which eventually will be adapted to different situations and audiences. The importance of phraseology and the making of coherent utterances agree with the ideas of behaviorism, the audio-lingual method, and the modified direct method, i.e. the students learn phrases that eventually can be improved by adding new vocabulary. It also agrees with UG and the innatist perspective that the individual has the knowledge to understand and make grammatically correct phrases. The progressive adaptation of the utterances agrees with Dell Hymes’ view of the importance of being able to know how to communicate from a social point of view.

To conclude, it is the communicative approach that prevails in this curriculum, although behaviorism, the direct method, the audio-lingual method, UG, and Hymes’ communicative competence seem to have influenced some of it. The importance of being able to communicate and interact is the first thing that is mentioned in all the different sections of the curriculum, except when it comes to written English. The ability to express oneself in writing ends up last among the goals to aim for. When it comes to the competences needed to master a language, spelling and grammar are at the end of the list.

4.2.1 Impact 2

Impact 2 consists of a total of 182 exercises, of which 10% deal with grammar. The book deals with the following grammatical structures: phrasal verbs, irregular verbs, relative pronouns, the difference between make/do, tag questions, prepositions, the infinitive, countable/uncountable nouns, some/any, different ways of expressing the future, numerals, the genitive, the conditional construction, tricky adjectives, and modal auxiliaries.
The exercises are all constructed in the same way. Each exercise begins with a reference to the section in the grammar book that deals with the structure in question, and ends with sentences that are supposed to be completed, rewritten, or translated. All the exercises in *Impact 2* are in English, but the grammar book is in Swedish. Instead of giving examples or explanations of grammar directly in the textbook, there are references to sections in the grammar book, hence providing the students with explicit grammar rules. Grammar teaching in *Impact 2* turns out to be both explicit and deductive. The grammar teaching is explicit since the grammar book provides the students with a thorough explanation together with examples, and when the students work with the sentences given in the exercises using the explicit rules, the grammar teaching is deductive. The students are made aware of the linguistic rules in a classroom experience, not by natural interaction through communication, which is equivalent to *learning* according to Krashen’s *acquisition-learning hypothesis*. The cognitivist perspective can also be seen here since the grammar rules are presented in an explicit way to the students. There is one example of an inductive exercise, though, where the students are told to try to find a word and a feature that occurs in some of the incomplete sentences before they check the grammar book. The students are then asked to complete the sentences by using the grammatical structure that the exercise deals with. The exercises must be considered as structured since they are about translating, completing, or rewriting sentences: this corresponds very well to the modified direct method, the audio-lingual method, and the grammar-translation method. Krashen and the cognitivist perspective is also part of this. Because of the way the exercises are constructed, they do not give the students the chance to use the grammar structures freely in a written text, or in a discussion, unless the teacher chooses to work differently with the exercises. The grammar exercises show no sign of the communicative approach.

### 4.2.2 Masterplan II

*Masterplan II* is constructed a little bit differently from the other books. The book has regular chapters with texts and exercises, but there is also a self test after each chapter where the students can test themselves on the things they have been working with in the chapter. There is also a chapter called “Tricks of the Trade” where the students get additional information about, for instance, grammar. I will not include “Tricks of the Trade” in this investigation.

The total number of exercises in the chapters is 156, and the number of exercises dedicated to grammar is 10%. *Masterplan II* deals with the grammatical structures verbs followed by the
ing-form, contracted sentences, relative pronouns and verbs, personal pronouns, verbs of motion and irregular verbs, prepositions, phrasal verbs, the genitive, contracted forms, and the passive. All the exercises and explanations are in English, except for the grammar explanations in “Tricks of the Trade”.

Every exercise is constructed in the same way. They begin with a rather thorough explanation of the grammatical structure, followed by sentences for illustration. The exercises end with sentences either to be translated, rewritten or gap-filled. There is one exercise that differs a bit from the others. The students are provided with sentences in English that contain a certain grammatical structure. They are then asked to translate the sentences into Swedish and to try to spot the difference between English and Swedish. No grammar explanation is provided, only a heading that gives the name of the grammatical structure, leaving the students to work it out themselves. This exercise requires the students to analyze contrastively by making a comparison between the first and second language.

The exercises in Masterplan II must be considered to be both explicit and deductive. Grammatical explanations are provided to the students, even though they are not very comprehensive, and when the students use the explicit rules when they translate the sentences, they reason deductively. The students are supposed to call on previously acquired grammatical knowledge and this agrees with the cognitivist perspective and Krashen’s monitor hypothesis. Just like the exercises in Impact 2, the exercises in Masterplan II correspond well to the modified direct method, the audio-lingual method, and the grammar-translation method. The exercises are structured and are all about translating sentences, and unless the teacher chooses differently, the exercises will not give the students the chance to use their knowledge in a freely written text, or a debate. There is no sign of the communicative approach in the grammar exercises.

4.3 Gy11

The curriculum for English in Gy11 consists of two sections: English and aim of the subject. The curriculum is followed by a syllabus for each English course, in this case three: English 5-7, representing year 1-3 in the program. For each course the syllabus outlines the core content and the knowledge requirements for the different grades A-E.
In the section on *English*, the curriculum states that

The English language surrounds us in our daily life […]. Knowledge of English increases the individual’s opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts […]. Knowledge of English can also provide new perspectives […] enhanced opportunities to create contacts […] (“Gy11, English”).

In the section “aim of the subject” it says that the teaching of English should aim at helping students develop their knowledge of the language, hence giving them the ability and desire to use English in different situations. The aim is to help the students develop all-round communicative skills in the areas of reception, production and interaction, both in speech and in writing. The students should also be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language, both in speech and in writing. In the section on the aims of the subject it is further stated that “[t]eaching should as far as possible be conducted in English” and “[students] should be given the opportunity to interact in speech and writing.” This section lists five areas which the teaching should give the students the opportunity to develop: an understanding of spoken and written English, the ability to express themselves and communicate both in speech and in writing, the ability to use different language strategies, the ability to adapt the language to different purposes, recipients and situations, and finally, the ability to discuss and reflect on, for instance, living conditions.

To conclude, it is the communicative approach that permeates Gy11. The teaching is supposed to give the students all-round receptive, productive and interactive communicative skills, and Gy11 emphasizes that it concerns both speech and writing. Students are supposed to be able to adapt the language to recipients and situations, and that agrees with Dell Hymes’ ideas about *communicative competence*, that students must know how to communicate in social situations. Gy11 states that the teaching should, as far as possible, be conducted in English. This feature is part of the communicative approach, but it also points to the influence of the modified direct method. Grammar is not mentioned in this curriculum at all, only that the students should be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language.

5. Discussion

In the section about teaching, in the general part, Lgr70 says that there is no type of teaching or learning method that can be considered as the most advantageous, and therefore teachers
should try to find their own method. Teachers must take the individuality, the motivation and 
the activity of the students into consideration. This point of view agrees well with Krashen’s 
*active filter hypothesis*, saying that students must be receptive to input, as well as research 
findings that say that how something is presented to students is more important than what 
learning method is used. However, Lgr70 says in the sections on listening comprehension, 
oral proficiency and writing exercises that a distinction between structured and free exercises 
must be made. The students are supposed to work with structured exercises, thus helping the 
students to avoid grammatical mistakes, and these structured exercises will later be replaced 
by free exercises, eventually leading to fluent speech or writing. Although Lgr70 states that it 
is important that teachers find their own methods of teaching, Lgr70 promotes exercises and 
ideas that strongly agree with the ideas of behaviorism, the audio-lingual method, and the 
modified direct method since they represent the idea of structured exercises.

Lgr70 does not say explicitly whether grammar is important or not; the only indication given 
is the order of precedence of the different sections, where grammar comes as number three, 
preceded by listening comprehension and oral proficiency. In *Reach Out 2* grammar does not 
seem to be of the outmost importance either, since only 17% of the exercises deal with 
grammar, but on the other hand, certain grammatical structures can be said to be dealt with 
thoroughly since the book only deals with four different grammatical structures. According to 
Lgr70, all grammar exercises should be in English and grammatical structures should be 
practiced by making phrases containing the structure in question; this agrees with the 
(modified) direct method, the audio-lingual method, and behaviorism. The exercises in *Reach 
Out 2* are constructed accordingly. Grammar structures should according to Lgr70 be summed up in a grammatical rule, but that is not done in the textbook. The students will have to reason deductively and use previously acquired grammatical knowledge since grammar is not taught in an explicit way and only four different grammatical structures are presented.

The communicative approach prevails in Lpf94 even though the ideas of behaviorism, the 
audio-lingual method, and the modified direct method can be seen since phraseology and the 
making of coherent utterances are important in Lpf94. The communicative approach, 
however, is not evident in the grammar exercises in *Impact 2* and *Masterplan II*. The 
exercises are in English, which agrees with the communicative approach as well as the direct 
method, but in the end, it is all about translating or rewriting sentences, in accordance with 
behaviorism and the audio-lingual method. The most important feature in Lpf94 is to be able
to communicate and interact, while grammar is one of the least important features. This is noticeable in the textbooks where only 10% of the exercises are dedicated to grammar. *Impact 2* and *Masterplan II* have fewer grammar exercises than *Reach Out 2*; instead, they deal with more grammatical structures and the students are provided with explicit grammar rules, which agrees with the connectionist approach. Each grammar structure in *Impact 2* has a reference to the corresponding section in the grammar book, while *Masterplan II* provides the students with a thorough explanation of the grammatical structure.

Just as with Lpf94, it is the communicative approach that prevails in Gy11, with only a few differences. Gy11 emphasizes the fact that communicative skills concern both speech and writing, while Lpf94 puts more emphasis on speech. Grammar is mentioned in Lpf94 but is not mentioned in Gy11; the closest reference to grammar is that the students should be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language. Here, as well as in Lpf94, students are supposed to know how to adapt their language to different situations in order to achieve *communicative competence*. Gy11 does not seem to have been influenced by any other theory than the communicative approach.

All three curricula have been influenced by the theory dominant at the time of publication, most of the time together with other theories as well, although with various degree of influence. It seems as if theories and methods never perish completely; they continue to have impact on teaching, big or small. It can even be very contradictory. In Lgr70 it says that no type of teaching should be considered to be the most effective, and yet the teachers are told to use structured exercises when teaching speaking and writing. In Lpf94 and Gy11, it is the communicative approach that prevails, inferring that being able to communicate is more important than to know how to apply good grammar. However, the textbooks that were in force around the time for these two curricula seem to take grammar more seriously and provide the students with explicit grammar rules. The number of grammatical structures dealt with has increased from four in *Reach Out 2* to an average of 13 structures in *Impact 2* and *Masterplan II*. Even though the importance of grammar has decreased over the years according to the curricula, the textbooks seem to show a different picture. They increase the number of different grammatical structures they deal with, although the number of grammar exercises decreases, and the grammar rules are provided in an explicit way. The importance of grammar was perhaps not very great in Lgr70 either, considering the fact that only 17% of
the exercises in the textbook dealt with grammar, in comparison to 10% in later textbooks. Grammar is not explicitly said to be important in Lgr70.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, the three curricula have been influenced by the theory predominant at the time they were in effect. Lgr70 primarily by behaviorism, the modified direct method, and the audio-lingual method. The grammar-translation method, however, still lingers here and there, and there are influences from the cognitive perspective. Regarding Lpf94 and Gy11, it is the communicative approach that influences them both, although Lpf94 still was under some influence of behaviorism, the modified direct method, and the audio-lingual method, as well as a little bit of UG and communicative competence.

Grammar teaching based on behaviorism and the audio-lingual method means imitating and learning grammatically correct phrases. The audio-lingual method and the modified direct method take an inductive approach towards grammar; according to the modified direct method, grammar rules should be provided in the target language, but they can be given in the native language if necessary. This view of grammar teaching agrees with what Lgr70 says about teaching grammar and the grammar exercises in the textbook used at the time for Lgr70, Reach Out 2, follow the recommendations of the curriculum. The exercises consist of sentences to be either translated or rewritten, and can be considered structured; this corresponds very well with the ideas laid out for teaching grammar in Lgr70. Out of the total number of exercises in the book, 17% concern grammar dealing with four different grammatical structures.

As the name implies, the communicative approach focuses on communication, and grammar is of less importance. It is more important that students know how to express themselves than to apply good grammar. This is made very clear in Lpf94 and Gy11 where grammar is mentioned as one of the least important competences in mastering language in Lpf94, and not at all in Gy11. The grammar exercises in the textbooks used at the time for Lpf94, Impact 2 and Masterplan II, do not agree with this curriculum and its communicative approach, but rather with Lgr70. The exercises are structured since, like in Reach Out 2, they consist of mere translation and rewriting of sentences. There is no exercise where the students explicitly
get to try the grammatical structure in free speech or writing. Furthermore, the students are provided with explicit grammar rules in Impact 2 and Masterplan II which agrees with the grammar-translation method. 10% of the total number of exercises in the textbooks deal with grammar, whereas Impact 2 deals with 16 different grammatical structures. Masterplan II deals with 10 different structures. Gy11 has not had any impact on the textbooks since it is from 2011.

Although grammar teaching seems to have lost importance in the curricula from 1994 and 2011, it does not seem to have lost much of its importance in the textbooks. The number of exercises dealing with grammar has decreased slightly since Reach Out 2, although the grammar rules have gone from being inductive to being explicit, and the number of different grammatical structures that the textbooks deal with has increased. This could imply that grammar is still regarded as an important part of acquiring language proficiency. Thus, even though the curricula say that communicative skills are what counts, grammatical knowledge is still needed.

The methodology used for this investigation consisted of looking at three different curricula and three different English textbooks that were used around the time the curricula were in effect in order to see if they had been affected by any theories and methods, and if so, which ones. The investigation led to results which showed the methodology feasible, although it cannot be said to be all conclusive due to a too narrow field of investigation. The results could have been different if other textbooks had been chosen or if more textbooks had been used in the investigation. Moreover, this investigation only shows what textbooks and curricula say, it does not say anything about teachers’ attitudes towards grammar or how they teach grammar.

How teachers teach grammar and what their attitudes are towards grammar are questions that I was not able to pursue in my investigation, and it would be interesting if teachers’ attitudes towards grammar teaching were to be further studied. My investigation provides information about currents and ideas regarding the teaching of grammar laid out in Swedish curricula and textbooks and can be of help when trying to understand teachers’ attitudes towards grammar teaching.
References


Skolverket, kursplan för engelska, Lpf94


Skolverket, ämnesplan för engelska, Gy11

http://www.skolverket.se/forskola-och-skola/gymnasieutbildning/amnes-och-laroplaner/eng


Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary

http://www.merriam-webster.com/ (accessed 2012-08-11)
