

“SIKSI, ETTÄ SE TUNTUU HELPOSTI
OPETTAJASTAKIN TYLSÄLTÄ”:

Communicative methods in English
grammar teaching in Finland

Bachelor's Thesis
Suvi Anttila

University of Jyväskylä
Department of Languages
English
May 2015

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author Suvi Anttila	
Työn nimi – Title ”Siksi, että se tuntuu helposti opettajastakin tylsältä”: Communicative methods in English grammar teaching in Finland	
Oppiaine – Subject englanti	Työn laji – Level Kandidaatintutkielma
Aika – Month and year toukokuu 2015	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 21 + 1 liite
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Sekä kieliopin opetusta että kommunikatiivista opetusta on tutkittu Suomessakin melko laajalti, mutta näiden kahden kohtaaminen ei toistaiseksi ole päässyt tutkimusten kohteeksi. Kielioppia pidetään usein vaikeana ja jopa tylsänä opetettavana, eikä kommunikatiivisuuden toteuttaminen kielioppitunneilla tunnu välttämättä kovin helpolta. Globalisoituvassa maailmassa kommunikointi vieraalla kielellä on yhä yleisempi ilmiö, minkä vuoksi sen opettaminen lukeutuu kieltenopettajien tärkeimpiin tehtäviin. Tällaisessa asetelmassa kieliopin asema herättää herkästi kysymyksiä.</p> <p>Tutkielman tarkoitus on selvittää, miten englannin kielen kieliopin opetus on kehittynyt Suomessa viimeisten vuosikymmenten aikana, ja missä määrin kommunikatiivisuus näkyy tässä kehityksessä. Myös opettajien asenteet kieliopin opetusta kohtaan ovat tutkielmassa keskiössä. Tutkielman aineisto koostuu 20 opettajan vastauksista verkkokyselyyn. Nämä 20 opettajaa valikoituivat 106 vastaajan joukosta satunnaisotannalla. Opettajien vastaukset analysoitiin sisällönanalyysin keinoin.</p> <p>Tulokset osoittivat, että suuri osa opettajista on omaksunut ainakin joitain kommunikatiivisia metodeja kieliopin opetukseensa. Monet vastaajista kertoivat hyödyntävänsä kommunikatiivisen opetuksen keinoja jatkuvasti kielioppitunneillaan. Jokainen vastaaja opetti kuitenkin myös nk. perinteisin keinoin, ja tulokset osoittivatkin, että myös ei-kommunikatiiviselle opetukselle on paikka kielioppitunneilla.</p> <p>Vaikka tutkielma onkin tietyiltä osin rajallinen, osoittaa se mielenkiintoisia kehityssuuntia kieliopin opetuksessa Suomessa. Se myös kannustaa lisätutkimukseen, sillä vastaisuudessa voisi olla hyödyllistä tutkia myös oppilaiden ajatuksia kommunikatiivisesta kieliopin opetuksesta ja verrata niitä opettajien näkemyksiin.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords CLT, grammar, grammar teaching, questionnaire, content analysis	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository JYX	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	3
2 GRAMMAR TEACHING	4
2.1 Defining grammar	4
2.2 Ways of teaching grammar	5
2.2.1 A vast variety of methods	5
2.2.2 Communicative language teaching (CLT).....	6
2.3 Research on grammar teaching in Finland	7
3 THE PRESENT STUDY	8
3.1 Research question	8
3.2 Data	9
3.3 Methods of analysis	10
4 DEVELOPMENTS IN GRAMMAR TEACHING	10
4.1 Views on grammar teaching	11
4.2 Personal development in grammar teaching	13
4.3 Different grammar teaching methods	15
4.3.1 Noncommunicative methods	15
4.3.2 Communicative methods	16
5 CONCLUSION	19
BIBLIOGRAPHY	21
APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE	22

1 INTRODUCTION

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is a method focusing on teaching through communication. This means that instead of individual work or explicit instruction, students learn through interaction: discussions, debates, peer feedback in the target language and so on. CLT rose in the 1970s and 1980s, and has since been a part of foreign language teaching. However, even though CLT has been a recognised and well-studied approach for a rather long period of time, it is unclear if, and to what extent, it is used by teachers in grammar teaching, especially in Finland. In fact, no previous studies could be found on communicative grammar teaching in Finland when conducting the present study. There is, therefore, a need for such a study, as it might provide some useful information related to CLT.

In a globalising world, communicating in foreign languages is an increasingly common part of everyone's lives. It could thus be argued that teaching people to perform in such situations is one of the most important goals of every language teacher. In this scenario, grammar teaching easily becomes an issue, as it is often seen as somehow separate from communication. In other words, using communicative methods in grammar teaching does not seem to be the easiest task. The aim of the present study is, therefore, to see if English grammar is taught in communicative ways in Finland, and also to raise awareness in terms of how diversely grammar can be taught. The study is also expected to give a broader picture of the state of English grammar teaching in Finland.

First, I will look into some different definitions of grammar, as slightly different views exist on what the term consist of. Second, I will discuss grammar teaching more generally and define CLT, discussing it in more detail. I will also introduce some relevant previous studies. These form the base of the present study and provide some useful details about and views on grammar teaching. Third, methods of data collection and analysis will be explained. The data consist of 106 teachers' responses to a questionnaire (see Appendix), 20 of which were chosen for the present study by means of random sampling. Methods of content analysis were then used to analyse the data. Fourth, I will present the analysis, observing both teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching and the methods they utilise. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the information gained through the analysis.

2 GRAMMAR TEACHING

In this chapter I will briefly address the issue of defining the term *grammar*. I will then discuss grammar teaching, focusing first briefly on the vast variety of different teaching methods in general, and then addressing CLT in more detail. Lastly, some previous studies and works on grammar teaching in Finland will be presented.

2.1 Defining grammar

The Oxford English Dictionary (2015) defines the term *grammar* as follows:

That department of the study of a language which deals with its inflexional forms or other means of indicating the relations of words in the sentence, and with the rules for employing these in accordance with established usage; usually including also the department which deals with the phonetic system of the language and the principles of its representation in writing. Often preceded by an adj. designating the language referred to, as in *Latin, English, French* grammar.

When observing this definition, it becomes clear that *grammar* covers a great deal of information. In this definition, grammar is described as something focusing on the rules and systems of language. However, several other sources go beyond these very concrete aspects: Hinkel and Fotos (2002) argue that grammar is not a mere set of absolute rules, as some might see it, but it seems to be related to the more abstract side of language as well. According to Nassaji and Fotos (2011: 1), there is no language without grammar. Hinkel and Fotos (2002: 105) also use the term grammatical knowledge, which, in brief, means the ability to use correct forms in order to convey certain meanings and intentions. This means that, in addition to understanding linguistic forms, grammar is related to the understanding that different grammatical forms are suitable for different situations for different reasons. In other words, grammar can also be seen as covering meanings and how they change depending on the context.

Dykes (2007: 5) suggests that a simple way to define grammar is "a language to talk about language". This means that grammar is a tool for analysing linguistic elements, which can relate to both form and function. Indeed, similarly to Hinkel and Fotos's (2002) views on grammar, Dykes (2007: 4) sees it as concerning not only the formation of language, but also its transmission. This view is further shared by Huttunen (1986: i), who claims that, in addition to understanding

structures, grammatical skill is related to knowledge of the social functions of grammar, and also knowing how to use this knowledge.

In short, the definition of grammar might vary in terms of how form-focused it is, but the shared idea seems to be that grammar plays a key role in language and has thus earned its place in education. Shastri (2010: 109), for example, considers grammar to be "one of the most important aspects of language teaching and learning".

2.2 Ways of teaching grammar

During the course of time, various approaches to grammar teaching have emerged. Earlier approaches often focused solely on grammar, putting it in the center and building everything else around it (Nassaji and Fotos 2011: 2). With the emergence of communicative approaches the importance of grammar diminished and more emphasis was put on the actual communication with the target language (Hinkel and Fotos 2002). The pedagogics of today seem to balance between the traditional and the more recent ways of teaching grammar: it is a combination of explicit and implicit instruction.

2.2.1 A vast variety of methods

Straightforward lecturing does not need to be the only way of teaching grammar. As Dykes (2007: 10) well puts it, creative teaching methods both ensure that the teaching is beneficial to all students and also that the lessons are enjoyable to them. Thus, teaching grammar in various ways might change the way grammar is viewed by the students or even the teacher. Dykes (2007) presents several concrete grammar teaching methods and tools. These include the use of different mediums, kinesthetic activities, charts, posters and learning games. Through these examples it becomes clear that creativity can be expressed in grammar teaching as well. This idea is further established by Shastri (2010: 113), who argues that for example dramatisation and role-play are good ways of teaching grammar. In his view, "the learner should be allowed to absorb the language to internalise the rules and then the descriptive analysis of the language helps him to understand the system of the language".

In addition to the works already mentioned, Nassaji and Fotos (2011) discuss grammar teaching in

great detail and provide the reader with several grammar teaching options. These options are divided into separate parts in the book depending on whether they are based on input or interaction/output. As a whole, the book is a rather comprehensive illustration of the fact that grammar can be taught in a great variety of ways.

Other excellent books and other works can be found on the topic of grammar teaching methods, but for the present study it is not necessary to address them more extensively, as the focus will mostly be on communicative language teaching. For a broader study it could be useful to analyse these different methods in greater detail as well, but for the present study a briefer overview is considered sufficient.

2.2.2 Communicative language teaching (CLT)

Nassaji and Fotos (2011: 7) claim that communicative language teaching focuses mainly on meaning. This statement means that the aim of language learning is to be able to communicate. Communicative approaches do not necessarily omit grammar, but rather apply communicative contexts to the teaching of it. Here, communication is in the center, but grammar can still be seen as a separate part of language learning.

According to Hinkel and Fotos (2002: 119), "all naturalistic learning of first and second languages takes place in context and at the level of discourse rather than the abstract sentence level". This is a recurring idea when discussing CLT. It compares second and foreign language learning to how children learn their mother tongue. This differs greatly from traditional grammar-based approaches where language was seen as a set of rules, and where the studying of these rules was considered to lead to fluency in the target language (Nassaji and Fotos 2011: 2). In CLT, the idea is that the appropriate way of using the target language and its forms can be best acquired in real communication (Hinkel and Fotos 2002).

Another argument supporting CLT presented by Hinkel and Fotos (2002: 132) is the fact that contextual and discourse knowledge play a major role in language fluency, and these cannot be properly learned through artificial examples or sets of rules. Grammatical choices may vary greatly depending on the situation, and without the proper knowledge of these variations, misunderstandings may occur. By hearing and partaking in authentic discourse learners become familiar with the appropriate choices and forms in their appropriate contexts.

CLT has also faced criticism. As discussed by Nassaji and Fotos (2011: 8), communicative approaches that do not pay attention to grammar instruction are seen as inadequate, and a common opinion seems to be that some form of form-focused instruction is necessary. This instruction can, however, occur within communicative contexts, which provides a suitable middle ground for EFL classes. One reason for this criticism, provided by Hinkel and Fotos (2002), is that there is evidence that in order to achieve high levels of accuracy, learners need formal instruction. It is argued that this kind of instruction before meaning-focused exercises helps learners pay attention to the forms they are trying to learn, which then makes it easier to connect this new information to their previous knowledge. Especially in such EFL classes where access to authentic communication and other such material is clearly limited, a need for formal instruction arises. In these situations, the teacher provides the appropriate forms and creates awareness of different grammatical features that way.

Despite this criticism, there seems to be an agreement that grammar should not be completely separated from other areas of language, but rather, it should be taught within communicative contexts and thus connected to real life communication. As early as in 1937, Neuvonen (1937: 231) wrote that instead of teaching children strict rules and forms, teachers should build bridges from these rules to children's lives. It can thus be argued that communicative approaches still play an important role in current language teaching, even if the degree to which their features are applied varies.

2.3 Research on grammar teaching in Finland

Grammar teaching in Finland has been studied quite widely during the past decades. Some of these studies include teaching experiments that focus on such things as learning outcomes. There are also studies that are concerned with textbooks used in schools, specific grammar rules and other such aspects that are not, however, useful for the present study, since the focus is on the actual grammar teaching methods that take place in language classes. In other words, these studies do not directly answer the question of how widely different grammar teaching methods are actually used, especially when it comes to communicative approaches.

Sormunen (2014) studied the opinions of Finnish upper secondary school students on English grammar learning and teaching. The study also observes what the typical grammar lesson is like and what students would like to change in grammar teaching. Again, this study is related to grammar

teaching in general, whereas the present study focuses mostly on one approach, and does so from the point of view of teachers. However, comparing the present study with Sormunen's findings could lead to some interesting results.

Even though grammar teaching in Finland has been studied rather extensively in many respects, there does not seem to exist studies focusing especially on communicative approaches. The present study aims to address this field, as it is an important part of modern grammar teaching. The previous studies and other works form the base for this study, as they provide crucial information on the situation of grammar teaching in Finland in a more general sense.

3 THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Research question

The main research questions of the present study are as follows:

1. How has grammar teaching developed in the past 20 years in terms of communicative methods?
2. What kind of attitudes do teachers have towards grammar teaching?

Shastri (2010: 109) argues that, as communicative language teaching (CLT) gains ground in second and foreign language teaching, the whole concept of grammar teaching along with its objectives and methods are changed. The goal of the present study is to take a look at how English grammar teaching has developed in Finland and whether or not these developments involve communicative approaches. Teachers' attitudes towards grammar teaching will also be observed, as they may affect the choice of teaching methods.

Very little information is found on the actual developments that have taken place in Finnish schools in terms of communicative grammar teaching. When beginning to conduct the present study, the presupposition was that there are great differences between schools in how grammar is taught and how openly new methods are taken into use. Information is provided on new teaching methods and innovations, but it is unclear whether and to what extent this information is actually utilised in

schools around Finland.

3.2 Data

The data for the present qualitative study was collected by distributing a questionnaire (see Appendix) to English teachers around Finland via email and the mailing lists of the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland (SUKOL). The first two questions were closed, as they were related to the length of the teachers' teaching careers and to the grades in which they have taught. The rest of the questions were open-ended so as to provide qualitative data for the study. There were eight (8) questions in total and they fell into each of the three categories presented in Dörnyei (2009: 5): factual, behavioral and attitudinal. The questionnaire was pilot tested in December 2014 and the questions were revised accordingly.

The open-ended questions were divided into two sections: "grammar teaching before" and "grammar teaching now". The questions in the former section were related to the beginning of the teachers' careers, asking what the basis of their grammar teaching was and what types of grammar teaching methods they preferred at that time. The second section consisted of questions related to the respondents' current methods of teaching grammar: whether they have noticed any developments or adopted any communicative methods into their grammar teaching and what are three of their most used grammar teaching methods presently. This division into two sections was chosen in order to gain data that best answers the research question(s) of the present study.

A questionnaire was chosen as the data collection method for the reason that within the boundaries of a BA thesis it is the best way to gain data from all over Finland. Interviewing would have been possible only in a smaller area, which would not have served the purpose of the present study. It is worth noting, however, that questionnaires have their limitations, as some respondents may not be willing to spend time in forming well-structured answers (Dörnyei 2009: 12). It is also possible for a respondent to misunderstand a question and provide an unsuitable answer, as the researcher does not have a possibility to clarify what is asked, as is possible during interviews. This is why the questions have to be formed, pilot tested and then revised carefully.

3.3 Methods of analysis

The data was automatically stored into a computer file by the program used to conduct the questionnaire. Due to the large number of responses gained, and the limitations of a BA thesis, methods of random sampling were used to reduce the data to 20 responses. As Dörnyei (2009: 61) describes it, in random sampling the responses are selected on a random basis, which should then result in a sample that somewhat represents the data as a whole. The data was then processed according to the methods of content analysis. According to Dörnyei (2009: 99), in content analysis "the pool of diverse responses is reduced to a handful of key issues in a reliable manner". He divides this process into two phases: "1. Taking each person's response in turn and marking in them any distinct content elements, substantive statements, or key points" and "2. Based on the ideas and concepts highlighted in the texts (see Phase 1), forming broader categories to describe the content of the response in a way that allows for comparisons with other responses". For the present study, it was not necessary to code the data, as the sample was rather small.

4 DEVELOPMENTS IN GRAMMAR TEACHING

The questionnaire yielded 106 responses, of which 20 were selected by means of random sampling to be analysed. The majority (59%) of the respondents had been working as teachers for 16 years or more, whereas only 9% had been in the field for five years or less. Responses came from all across Finland and from all the different levels and institutions mentioned in the questionnaire: primary school, junior high school, high school, vocational school, folk high school, university of applied sciences, university and "other" (such as private teaching, teaching in a company and volunteering). As the objective of the study is to give a more general overview on grammar teaching in Finland, and also due to the small sample, the levels at which the respondents have taught are not separately mentioned.

4.1 Views on grammar teaching

The respondents' attitudes towards grammar teaching varied, but there were several similarities as well. A number of teachers described grammar teaching as being challenging or sometimes even unpleasant. In Examples 1 and 2, Teacher 9, who has been in the field for 1-5 years, discusses his/her feelings and attitudes towards grammar teaching.

(1) Olen vasta urani alkuvaiheessa. Meitä on täällä lukiolla tällä hetkellä kaksi vastavalmistunutta enkunopettajaa. Olemme usein yhdessä pohdiskelleet kieliopin opettamista. Se tuntuu olevan yksi haasteellisimmista opetettavista asioista kieltentunnilla. Miksi? Siksi, että se tuntuu helposti opettajastakin tylsältä, saatika sitten oppilaasta. (T9)

I am only at the beginning of my career. There are two of us newly graduated English teachers here at the upper secondary school. Together we have often contemplated grammar teaching. It feels like one of the most challenging things to teach in a language class. Why? Because it easily gets boring even for the teacher, let alone the student.

(2) Tunnen, että kieliopin opettaminen on hyvin haasteellista, eikä useinkaan lähtökohtaisesti kauhean mielenkiintoista oppilaan näkökulmasta. Kuitenkin koitan pitää aina kannustavan ja innostuneen asenteen, jospa se vaikka tarttuisi. (T9)

I feel that teaching grammar is very challenging, and often not very interesting from the student's point of view. Still I try to have an encouraging and enthusiastic attitude, maybe it will spread.

In these examples, a connection is made between how interesting and how challenging grammar teaching is. In other words, if the teacher is not particularly interested in teaching grammar, the actual teaching might then feel difficult. Another connection is made between the attitude of the teacher and the attitudes of the students in Example 2, where Teacher 9 hopes that his/her attitude will have a positive effect on his/her students. It can thus be summarised that, according to Teacher 9, attitudes play a great role in both teaching and learning.

There were also other examples of how the attitudes towards grammar teaching might have affected the respondents' teaching. The following example is the brief response of Teacher 8 to question 6: *Do you feel your ways of teaching grammar have changed during the course of your career?* He/she had been teaching for 11-15 years.

(3) Eipä juuri [ole muuttunut], pakollista pullaa (T8)

Not really [any changes], it is just something I have to do.

In Example 3, Teacher 8 claims that his/her grammar teaching has not changed remarkably, and then continues to describe grammar teaching as a necessity that cannot be avoided. Though not directly indicated, it could be argued that his/her lack of interest in grammar teaching might have affected the development of it, or the lack thereof.

Another recurring topic in the responses was electronic teaching materials. Five of the 20 selected respondents reported electronic materials as having made grammar teaching easier, more diverse and more interesting, as seen in Examples 4-6. Several other respondents mentioned using electronic materials as well, but did not comment on them in more detail. None of the respondents reported any negative effects of using electronic teaching materials.

(4) Sähköisten aineistojen avulla saatu paljon lapsia kiinnostavia pelejä ja monipuolisia, visuaalisesti kiinnostavia harjoituksia (T19)

Electronic materials have brought about a lot of games and diverse, visually interesting exercises that are of interest to children.

(5) Tikulla oleva harjoitusmateriaali & tietokone on tietysti muuttanut kaiken omista kouluajoistani! (T5)

The exercise materials on thumbdrives and the computer have, of course, changed everything since my own schooldays!

(6) Avuksi tulleet esim.nykyiseen kirjasarjan powerpoint-opetusdiat (joita tosin tekee mieli muokata). (T2)

As an aid I have received some teaching slides for the current book series (though I am tempted to edit them).

All three of these examples contain the same idea: electronic teaching materials have changed grammar teaching to some extent. The issue of interest is brought up again in Example 4, where Teacher 19 describes the materials as being interesting to children. It could be argued, then, that these materials could be a tool for addressing the issues brought up by teachers in Examples 1-3. In other words, electronic teaching materials might be of use when trying to plan grammar lessons that are interesting both to the teacher and to the students.

It is also worth mentioning that there were several teachers who wanted to be creative in their grammar teaching, using as many different teaching and learning methods as possible. One example of this is Teacher 19, who described his/her teaching as shown in Example 7.

(7) Kaikki aistit mukaan: laulaen, pantomiimein, kirjoittaen, kuunnellen ja piirtäen. (T19)

Engaging all the senses: singing, miming, writing, listening and drawing.

Here, the ways of teaching grammar seem to be boundless. If the previous observations of the present chapter are taken into account, it could be argued that Teacher 19 has a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards grammar teaching, which has then resulted in diverse teaching methods.

4.2 Personal development in grammar teaching

In the questionnaire, teachers could also comment on how they have developed as grammar teachers during their teaching career. Some saw positive developments in their teaching, while others felt that they had not developed noticeably as grammar teachers. Some even thought that their teaching had deteriorated in some ways: Teacher 1, who had been in the field for 6-10 years, felt that he/she might be lazier now as a grammar teacher than at the beginning of his/her career, as seen in Example 8.

(8) Ehkä vähän on laiskistunut vuosien mittaan, jokaista tehtävää ei enää jaksa suunnitella ja muokata jonkin tietyn ryhmän tarpeita vastaavaksi. Menetelmät sinänsä eivät ole muuttuneet, mutta paljon enemmän tulee käytettyä samoja matsuja ja ideoita kuin edellisenä vuonna tai edellisen ryhmän kanssa. (T1)

Maybe I have got a bit lazier in the course of the years, I do not always plan and adapt every exercise according to a certain group's needs. My methods have not changed per se, but I tend to use the same materials and ideas as I did the previous year or with the previous group.

A few teachers could not comment on their personal development in more detail. Some had been in the field for such a short period of time that such developments were hard to observe, while others simply did not feel that they had developed as grammar teachers during their career or could not recall any clear changes. Examples 9-11 below are from the answers of such respondents.

(9) Ei ole juurikaan muuttunut käytännössä [kieliopin opetus], mutta olen kyllä pohtinut asiaa paljon ja tullut siihen tulokseen, että mitään aukotonta "hyvää" ratkaisua ei ole. (T3)

It [grammar teaching] has not really changed practically, but I have thought about it a lot and I have come to the conclusion that there is no watertight "good" solution.

(10) Olen tehnyt vasta vuoden töitä valmistumisen jälkeen. (T9)

I have only worked for a year after my graduation.

(11) En juurikaan [huomaa muutoksia]. Käytän yhä samoja muokattuja kielioppikalvoja Powerpointilla.

(T14)

I do not really [see any changes]. I still use the same edited grammar slides with PowerPoint.

There were, however, several respondents who saw clear development in their grammar teaching. These developments included changes in attitudes towards grammar teaching, adopting new teaching techniques and also the actual teaching getting easier, as illustrated in Examples 12-14.

(12) Ydinasiat itselle helpompi poimia eli pyrin tarjoamaan ns. rautalankaa perusasioista, mutta syvemmällekin toki tunneilla mennään. (T2)

It is easier for me to pick the central points, i.e. I try to provide the so called core of the basics, but we do of course also go into more depth in the lessons.

(13) Yritän visualisoida kielioppia väreillä, alleviivauksilla, nuolilla jne, kehittää muistisääntöjä (T4)

I try to visualise grammar with colours, underlinings, arrows etc., to develop mnemonics.

(14) Olen itse tykästynyt kielioppiin yhä enemmän ja enemmän. (T13)

I myself have grown to like grammar more and more.

12 of the 20 respondents reported similar developments as Teachers 2 and 4 in the examples above. Teacher 13 was, however, the only one to mention a positive change in his/her attitude in particular. He/she had been working as a teacher for 11-15 years. A common change in the respondents' teaching seemed to be a shift from teacher-centered methods to learner-centered ones. This means that instead of constantly giving direct instruction, the teacher gives more room for the learners to discover things and learn on their own, thus making the learners more actively involved. In Examples 15 and 16, Teachers 12 and 15 discuss this shift in their own teaching.

(15) Käyn enemmän sääntöjä yhdessä läpi opiskelijoiden kanssa eli pohjustan aiheen ehkä paremmin kuin alussa. En kirjoituta vihkoon sääntöjä, vaikka opiskelijat toivovat sitä. Toivon, että he oppisivat itse poimimaan tärkeimmät asiat kirjan säännöistä. Kaikki eivät pysty siihen. (T12)

I go through the rules with the students more, so maybe I lay the ground for the topic better than before. I do not make the students write down the rules in their notebooks, even though they wish for it. I hope they will learn to pick the most important things from the book's rules for themselves. Not everyone can do it.

(16) Ylipäättään oppilaat miettivät ensin itse sääntöä. Sitten vasta yhdessä. Paljon suullista harjoittelua. (T15)

In general, the students think about the rule first for themselves. And after that, together. A lot of oral exercises.

In both of these examples a central idea seems to be that students should be able to find grammatical elements on their own. As mentioned above, this was a recurring aspect in the responses, which could indicate a wider trend in grammar teaching or teaching in general.

4.3 Different grammar teaching methods

The data for the present study shows a vast variety of grammar teaching tasks and methods. In the present chapter, some common noncommunicative methods are addressed first, as it is necessary to observe the alternatives for communicative tasks as well in order to get a comprehensive idea of what the common grammar lesson in Finland is like. After this, the focus is shifted to communicative methods and teachers' experiences with them.

4.3.1 Noncommunicative methods

Naturally, all of the respondents used noncommunicative methods in their grammar teaching as well. These methods included individual work, such as gap-fill exercises and silent reading, drills, teacher-centered learning and translation tasks, to mention a few. Two of the respondents, Teachers 1 and 13, referred to such teaching methods as being "traditional", as shown in Examples 17 and 18.

(17) jonkin verran myös **perinteisiä** täydennys- ja käännöstehtäviä - opiskelijoissa on melko paljon sellaisia, jotka haluavat tiettyjä rakenteita käydä vähän drillityyppisesti (T1)

*Some **traditional** gap-fill and translation exercises as well – there are quite a few students who want to do drills with certain structures.*

(18) [...] joten opetan ihan aika **perinteisesti** (ehkä perinteisemmin kuin alussa) mm. aikamuotoja, sanajärjestyksestä opetus-tehtävä-opetus-tehtävytyylillä. (T13)

*[...] so I teach in a rather **traditional** way (maybe more so than at the beginning), including tenses, word order with a teaching-exercise-teaching-exercise method.*

In these examples, noncommunicative methods are seen as a traditional way of teaching grammar, whereas communicative methods are something new. However, as is stated in Example 17 by Teacher 1, these traditional methods are still useful to several learners and should not be underrated. This idea can also be seen in Example 15 above, where the students wanted to write down grammar rules in their notebooks, even though it can be seen as a "traditional" noncommunicative method.

4.3.2 Communicative methods

Several communicative methods and tasks could be found in the responses. Some teachers, however, stated directly that they do not use communicative methods in their grammar teaching or at least do so rarely. Teacher 17, for example, who had taught English for 6-10 years, did not report any regular use of communicative methods in his/her grammar teaching, as seen in Example 19, which is his/her response to question 7: *Have you adopted communicative grammar teaching methods into your teaching?*

(19) Enpä juuri. Joskus voin esim. katsoa johonkin tilanteeseen liittyvän videoleikkeen ja siitä ottaa lauseita, jotka liittyvät nimenomaan siihen tilanteeseen. (T17)

Not really. Sometimes I might, for example, watch a video clip related to the situation and, from it, pick sentences that are related to that situation exactly.

Several teachers did, however, report a regular use of communicative grammar teaching methods. A very common way of doing this seemed to be going through grammar rules orally and then using these new rules in oral tasks. As shown in Example 16 above, some teachers also introduce new rules by giving the students an opportunity to discover them by observing texts and sentences for themselves. In addition to training speaking skills, several teachers saw another benefit in the use of oral tasks, as can be seen in Examples 20 and 21.

(20) Kielioppitunnilla pyrimme harjoittelemaan kielioppia pääasiassa suullisesti, koska kirjassa on malliratkaisut valmiina, on turha tuhlata aikaa kirjoittamiseen, suullinen on nopeampaa, tehtävä saadaan tarkistettua heti, eli väärä vastaus korvataan heti oikealla [...] (T4)

In grammar lessons we try to go through grammar mainly orally, because the book has prepared examples of answers in it, it is unnecessary to waste time on writing, oral is faster, the exercise gets checked right away, i.e. a wrong answer is instantly replaced with the correct one [...]

(21) Open Road sarjan kielioppitehtävät ovat pitkälti suullisia tehtäviä. Ne säästävät aikaa, niitä ehtii tehdä enemmän. (T9)

Grammar exercises in the Open Road series are mainly oral exercises. They save time, you have time to do more of them.

In these examples, oral tasks are seen as more time-efficient than those that involve writing. It could thus be argued that using such methods could actually make grammar teaching easier, even though some might find them difficult to implement. Knowledge of some of the simpler ways of using communicative tasks in grammar teaching could encourage teachers to take them into use.

A few teachers also reported that new English books and the electronic materials that come with them have brought additional communicative tasks into their grammar lessons. Example 22 is an illustration of this.

(22) Open Road-kirjasarjassa on valmiit Power-point -diat, jotka perustuvat siihen, että opiskelijat parin kanssa keskustellen oppivat asiat. (T18)

The Open Road series has prepared PowerPoint slides, which are based on the idea that students learn through discussions with their partners.

It seems, then, that new English teaching materials also emphasise communicative methods at least to some extent. As some teachers reported that they rely heavily on exercises in the books, this communicative trend might affect their teaching as well, even if they do not intentionally adopt communicative methods into their grammar teaching. However, this change could only occur if new books were taken into use, which sometimes takes some time in certain schools.

Many teachers gave concrete examples of the communicative tasks they use or have used in their grammar teaching. Some of these tasks are presented in Examples 23-28.

(23) suulliset tehtävät (vaihtelee opiskelijoiden tason mukaan, mutta voi olla esim. kysymyksiä, joiden vastauksissa tulee käyttää jotakin rakennetta, tai lappuja, joilla sana, joka tulee taivuttaa ja käyttää lauseessa) (T1)

Oral tasks (vary according to learners' skills, but can be for example questions that have to be answered by using a certain structure, or notes with words that have to be inflected and used in a sentence).

(24) suullinen harjoittelu pareittain: koska väärä vastaus saadaan heti korjattua ja se jolla on malliratkaisu voi auttaa (T4)

Oral practicing in pairs: because a wrong answer is instantly corrected and the one who has the examples can help.

(25) jokin laulu "I'm getting married in the Morning" My fair ladystä aluksi ja sitten pohditaan ing-muodon roolia siinä, ja sitten voikin selittää kieliopillisen faktan. (T7)

Some song, "I'm Getting Married in the Morning" from My Fair Lady in the beginning and then thinking about the role of the -ing form in it, and then the grammatical fact can be explained.

(26) Erikseen ovat tehtävät, joissa pyydetään sanomaan jostakin asiasta jotain vapaasti. Tällöin oppilas välittää viestiä omilla taidoillaan ja omalla sanastollaan. (T9)

There are separate exercises, where you are asked to say something about a subject freely. This way the student conveys a message by the use of his/her own skills and vocabulary.

(27) Sanajärjestys: sanoja lapuille, oppilaat kokoavat ryhmissä lauseen ja tulevat luokan eteen

Epäsäännölliset verbit: yhdessä samalla taputtaen käsiä yhteen, polviin ja tömistäen sen mukaan ovatko verbit samanlaisia vai erilaisia (T15)

Word order: words on notes, students form sentences in groups and come in front of the class.

Irregular verbs: together by clapping hands, knees and by pounding according to whether the verbs are similar or different.

(28) Haastattelutehtäviä kysymyslauseen rakenteita harjoitellessa, ostostilanteita harjoitellessa kauppaleikki, adjektiivien vertailussa esim levyraati jne

Smartboard: olen rakentanut paljon pelejä älytaulua käyttäen. esim prepositioharjoituksia (taululla siirretään koiranpennun kuvaa huoneessa sen mukaan, mitä toinen oppilas sanoo, put the dog on the chair, put the dog under the desk jne.) (T19)

Interview exercises when practicing the structure of an interrogative clause, a shop game when practicing shopping situations, for comparative adjectives, for example, a music contest etc.

Smartboard: I have made a lot of games with the smartboard. E.g. preposition exercises (on the board, a picture of a puppy is moved around a room according to what the other student says, put the dog on the chair, put the dog under the desk etc.)

By observing these examples, it becomes very clear that it is, indeed, possible to bring CLT in grammar lessons, and that this can be done in a number of creative ways. It also seems that these methods are used by several teachers all across Finland, even though the degree to which grammar teaching is communication-based varies.

5 CONCLUSION

The main research question of the present study aimed at discovering how English grammar teaching has developed in the past decades in Finland, especially in terms of communicative methods. The goal was to see if the trend of CLT has reached grammar teaching as well, or whether so-called traditional methods are preferred instead. Another goal was to observe the attitudes of teachers towards grammar teaching in general. As the results in the previous section show, teachers differ greatly in their ways of teaching grammar and also in their attitudes towards it, but some shared ideas occur as well. The majority of the respondents used communicative methods in their grammar teaching at least to some extent, and several teachers used them regularly, whereas few teachers reported that they use such methods in their grammar classes hardly at all. However, all of the teachers used noncommunicative methods as well, some arguing that there is still a need for such instruction alongside communicative teaching. In addition, some teachers reported that their students had directly stated a desire to study grammar in these traditional ways. It could thus be argued that CLT is not replacing traditional grammar teaching methods, but rather working beside them.

The results also show that electronic teaching materials have had a clear impact on grammar teaching, as teachers reported them having made their teaching easier and more diverse, and also more interesting to young students. This might also create some challenges for teachers who have been in the field for a long period of time, as they have to learn to use these new tools and devices and adapt to the constant changes. However, as stated in the results, none of the respondents of the present study reported any negative effects when discussing electronic materials.

In terms of attitudes towards grammar teaching, there were teachers who truly enjoyed it, but also teachers who thought it was a rather unpleasant part of their job. The results seemed to show a connection between the attitude of the teacher and those of the students. In other words, if the teacher is not interested in teaching grammar, it is unlikely for the student to be interested in learning it. Bringing new ways of teaching into the classroom might, then, help both of these parties to find new motivation to work with grammar. As stated above, some new tools for teaching grammar have emerged, which, according to some teachers, are appealing to young people. Using such tools could make grammar lessons more pleasing for the teachers as well.

The views presented in the previous works on communicative grammar teaching are reflected in the responses of the present study as well. Shastri's (2010: 113) idea of first absorbing language and then learning the theoretical framework is a method that several of the respondents used in their grammar teaching. In addition, there were teachers who agreed with Hinkel and Fotos (2002) in that there is indeed a place for formal instruction in grammar classes, even when communicative methods are used on a regular basis. It seems, then, that these ideas and discourses are present in Finnish schools as well, and that knowledge on CLT is rather wide-spread, even though all teachers do not apply it to their grammar lessons.

As such, the present study answers the main research question rather well, as it brings up several developments in grammar teaching. It also shows the different attitudes that the selected respondents have towards grammar teaching in general. There are, however, aspects that could be improved, if similar studies were to be conducted in the future. First, instead of a questionnaire, interviews could be used for data collection, as they might result in more detailed data. The use of interviews would also make it possible for the researcher to ask for clarification, which was not possible in the present study. Some additional questions could also add some interesting perspectives to the study, such as the respondents' gender or age. In addition, the respondents' location and the levels at which they teach could be incorporated into the analysis. Second, a more thorough review of existing material on communicative grammar teaching could provide the researcher with useful information that might have been neglected in the present study. Due to the limitations of a Bachelor's Thesis, the present study is a rather narrow representation of CLT in general. Third, the present study discusses communicative grammar teaching solely from the point of view of teachers. It could naturally be useful to take the students' point of view into account as well, as it could then be compared with the views of the teachers in order to find differences and similarities. Such comparison would give an even clearer image of the grammar lessons in today's Finland.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *Questionnaires in second language research: construction, administration, and processing*. New York; London: Routledge.
- Dykes, B. (2007). *Grammar for everyone: practical tools for learning and teaching grammar*. Camberwell, Vic.: ACER Press.
- Hinkel, E. and Fotos, S. (2002). *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms*. Mahwah, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Huttunen, I. (1986). *Kommunikatiivinen kieliopin opetus: On communicative teaching of grammar*. Oulu: Oulun yliopisto.
- Nassaji, H. and Fotos, S. (2011). *Teaching grammar in second language classrooms: integrating form-focused instruction in communicative context*. New York (NY): Routledge.
- Neuvonen, K. (1937). *Kieliopin opetuksen elävöittämisestä*. Helsinki: Kotikielen seura.
- ”Grammar”, Oxford University Press 2015. *Oxford English Dictionary* [online]. <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/>. (26.04.2015)
- Shastri, P. (2010). *Communicative approach to the teaching of English as a second language*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.
- Sormunen, M. (2014). Opinions about EFL grammar learning and teaching: a study of Finnish upper-secondary-school students. Unpublished Pro Gradu Thesis. University of Jyväskylä, Department of Languages.

APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Millä asteilla olet opettanut? Voit valita useita.

Vaihtoehdot: alakoulu / yläkoulu / lukio / ammattikoulu/-opisto / kansanopisto / ammattikorkeakoulu / yliopisto / muu

1. *What grade levels have you taught? You can choose more than one.*

Options: primary school / upper comprehensive school / upper secondary school / vocational school / folk high school / university of applied sciences / university / other

2. Kuinka kauan olet ollut opetustyössä? Kaiken tekemäsi opetustyön määrä vuosina.

Vaihtoehdot: 1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 21-25 / yli 25 vuotta

2. *How long have you been teaching? Your whole teaching career in years.*

Options: 1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 21-25 / over 25 years

3. Millä asteella/asteilla ja missä oppilaitoksessa/-laitoksissa opetat tällä hetkellä?

3. *What grade level(s) and in which school(s) do you teach currently?*

4. Mihin perustit kieliopin opetuksesi urasi alkuvaiheessa? (Esim. oppikirjoihin, samaasi koulutukseen, kokemuksiisi jne.)

4. *What was the base of your grammar teaching at the beginning of your career? (E.g. textbooks, your education, your experiences etc.)*

5. Millaisia kieliopin opettamisen metodeja suosit urasi alkuvaiheessa? Anna konkreettisia esimerkkejä.

5. *What kind of methods of grammar teaching did you favour at the beginning of your career? Give concrete examples.*

6. Koetko kieliopin opetuksesi muuttuneen jollain tavalla urasi aikana? Kuvaile lyhyesti, miten.

6. *Do you feel your ways of teaching grammar have changed during the course of your career? Describe briefly how.*

7. Oletko omaksunut opetuksesi kommunikatiivisia kieliopin opetuksen metodeja? Anna konkreettisia esimerkkejä.

7. *Have you adopted communicative grammar teaching methods into your teaching? Give concrete examples.*

8. Anna kolme (3) konkreettista esimerkkiä nykyään ENITEN hyödyntämistäsi kieliopin opetustavoista.

8. Give three (3) concrete examples of the methods you currently use the MOST.