



Investigation into English Grammar Proficiency of Teachers of English Language

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Declaration of originality

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Abstract

There have been many studies that have supported the teaching of grammar and many that have not, mainly because grammar teaching did not seem to have a marked improvement on students' writing. In English speaking countries, traditional grammar ceased to be taught in the late 1960s after the Dartmouth Conference of 1966, which proved to be a catalyst for change in government policy in those countries. As a consequence, grammar has been taught in a progressively attenuated manner since that time. Australia has now inaugurated a national curriculum requiring teachers to teach grammar. The question is whether, after almost 50 years of this situation, teachers are equipped to fulfil this requirement. As this policy has been instrumental in the preparation of teachers in different educational sectors (in domestic school settings and in international English teaching settings), this study was conducted with a group of teachers in an English language teaching centre attached to an Australian university, providing tuition for international students intending to pursue tertiary studies through the medium of English language.

The aim of this study was to discover whether teachers of English at the language teaching centre experience difficulties in their own understanding of English traditional grammar, and, if so, which aspects of grammar cause them particular difficulty. Those grammar items identified as problematic would be included in a professional development program specifically devised for teachers at that centre. Teachers' views on the importance of grammar were also canvassed. The study was conducted as an action research project, employing a mixed method approach with collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The study was carried out in three distinct phases. This study was a sequential one, with each phase analysed before the next phase began, and with each phase informing the subsequent one. Instruments used in the three phases were (i) inventories; (ii) surveys; and (iii) semi-structured interviews.

The study had five major findings, the first and most important of which was that many of the respondents showed a lack of understanding of certain aspects of grammar. There was also some evidence regarding lack of confidence in this area. Teaching grammar in context was the most preferred method among the respondents. The findings fulfilled the study objectives which included gaining teacher views on the significance and importance of grammar knowledge in TESOL teaching; discovering any gaps in the respondents' grammar knowledge; and devising a professional development program in grammar specifically tailored to their needs.

Some of the implications resulting from this study are that:

(i) universities should take a more visible and concerted lead in teaching grammar to student teachers to better prepare them for (a) teaching grammar in domestic schools to fulfil the aspirations of the new *Australian Curriculum*; and (b) teaching grammar to international students, who expect their teachers to impart sound grammar knowledge to them;

(ii) all teaching institutions (both schools for domestic students and English teaching centres for international students at tertiary level) should provide professional development in grammar for current teachers.

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Giuseppe and Nicolina Pignalosa, my parents,
who always encouraged me to get an education,
and who brought me to this country when I was a young child,
where it was a case of “sink or swim” in the unfamiliar milieu
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Deo Gratias

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1 Introduction

The English language can be considered the modern *lingua franca*, that is, it is widely used as a means of communication between people whose first languages are diverse. From the Middle Ages until recent history, Latin was used as the *lingua franca* (Powney, 2013); however, its place has now been taken by English, which is, at this time, commonly used in international communication between business persons from different language backgrounds, for whom English is a second or third language. Moreover, towards the beginning of the 21st century it was estimated that non-native speakers of English outnumbered native speakers by 2:1 (Rajagopalan, 2004) or even by 3:1 (Crystal, 2003). The Internet-based Ethnologue (2013) has given a later estimation of 4:1. This has implications for the teaching of English as the market continues to grow for effective English language teaching to international students, and for imparting effective knowledge about language to domestic students.

Historically, grammar and language structure were important parts of training in the study of English language. In recent decades, however, English grammar teaching has been given progressively less emphasis in English speaking countries (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005), as more emphasis has been placed on spontaneity and creativity, rather than on correctness of form. There now appears to be a realisation that grammar needs to be imparted even to native English speakers for the purposes of clear communication. Thornbury (1999) explains that, historically, no other issue has attracted the attention of researchers and teachers as much as the grammar debate. Moreover, he goes on to assert that the history of language teaching is really “the history of the claims and counterclaims for and against the teaching of grammar” (p. 14).

The inherent problem in the imparting of knowledge about grammar is that teachers have been increasingly poorly prepared for this task over the last 50 years (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005). As teachers have not been well prepared for the

teaching of grammar in their teacher education courses for such a long period of time (Mueller & Grant, 2011), the concept of grammar teaching has now become a challenge in Australia. This is all the more so since the new *Australian Curriculum* (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2012b) requires all school teachers to be responsible for the teaching of grammar, and also since international students expect their English teachers to be knowledgeable about grammar in order to effectively teach it in their English courses.

This introductory chapter consists of sections on both the theoretical and the contextual backgrounds to the stated problem of lack of grammar knowledge on the part of teachers of English language. This is followed by a section on the significance of this study. The research aim and objectives are given next, followed by originality of the study. It will then move to ethical issues and structure of the thesis. A concluding section then brings this chapter to a close.

1.1 Theoretical background

There are two aspects to the background of this research. One concerns teachers in general and the other concerns specialist teachers of English. In January 2008, the Australian Federal Government announced the introduction of a national curriculum (Gillard & Rudd, 2008). By February 2010, the federal Minister for Education at that time, Julia Gillard, was reported as saying “For the first time, grammar will be set out explicitly at every year level” (Rodgers, 2010). In the English strand of the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA 2012b), the teaching of grammar is to be included at all levels in both primary and secondary schooling; furthermore, all teachers will be responsible for this task, not only teachers of English. This could present a problem – the question needs to be asked as to whether current teachers in schools understand grammar concepts, be they teachers of English or teachers of other subjects, or indeed specialist teachers of English language to international students. Further to that question, another of even greater significance is whether current teachers have themselves been taught grammar. The new *Australian Curriculum* makes it clear that literacy knowledge and skills are developed progressively and are essential for student success in all learning areas. Therefore,

the imparting of literacy knowledge for the development of literacy skills is considered to be the responsibility of all teachers (ACARA, 2010). Grant and Mueller (2010) argue that there is a large gap between the training that current teachers have received and what they are now being asked to teach. In view of this, teachers may be able to instinctively model good English usage, but it might be difficult for them to offer advice and guidance on students' use of English and give reasons for such advice.

Specialist English language teachers, such as those employed in university English language teaching centres, are also largely products of the system which has not adequately prepared teachers to teach grammar. By their own admission, teachers feel that there are gaps in their knowledge, and they would like to be more adequately prepared to answer students' probing grammar questions. To this end, this study sought to identify what exactly these gaps are. This would then lead to a professional development program to help teachers to become more knowledgeable and confident about their ability both to teach grammar and to answer student questions about grammar.

The question of whether to teach grammar or not to teach it is a vexed one. The title of a recent publication, *My Grammar and I, or should that be 'Me'?* (Taggart & Wines, 2008), albeit tongue-in-cheek, serves to point out that grammar, including its place in clear communication, is poorly understood. Careless grammar can lead to misunderstandings in both oral and written English. Moreover, if students do not manage to internalise a certain amount of grammar, they will not understand some language structures (Northumbria University, 2010), which will then lead to a breakdown in understanding and communication even though they might be native English speakers. In some countries, for example Germany, students **are** taught grammar – German grammar. In that particular context, Germans do not just rely on grammar intuition that children develop in the first few years of life. As students grow into adulthood and deal with more complex issues, their knowledge of grammar, which has been actively taught to them, can subconsciously facilitate that communication.

Australia is a multi-cultural country where immigrants from many language groups are accepted. As well as adult international students, immigrants are yet another adult group who need to be taught English. The inclusion of effective grammar teaching would be very powerful for them, as grammar learning provides adults with a way of grouping grammatical information together, thus obviating the need to learn each utterance separately. Adults do not learn a second language in the same way that infants learn their mother tongue.

An educational weakness in Australia is that few people study a second language. Lo Bianco (2009) points out that despite government policy in this area, second language learning translates to “low school completion rates, high rates of attrition from university language programs and a decline in the number of languages taught, their duration, spread and level of seriousness” (p. 1). Lo Bianco recognises that Australia shares this situation with other English speaking nations, and gives as a possible reason “the perceived global domination of English” (p. 9). For this reason, students appear to think that learning other languages is unimportant. The few Australian students who do engage in serious study of a second language, including grammar, then have the benefit of understanding grammar structures in their first language – English. It is doubtful whether intuition alone is adequate even for monolingual people, and even more doubtful for those acquiring a second or further language.

1.2 Contextual background

Grammar cannot be considered as a static concept. Traditional grammar is grammar that has been inherited from studies of Latin and Latin-based European languages. Grammar can change and be modified. In the context of this study, grammar is defined as a modified version of traditional grammar. By way of clarifying this point regarding modification, all modern English grammar books refer to conditionals as zero, first, second and third conditionals. In traditional grammar, the only conditional is that which is now known in English grammar as the first conditional, as this is the only one that has a true condition inherent in the meaning, e.g. *If it rains tomorrow, I will stay at home*. The main clause *I will stay at home* is contingent

on the condition *if it rains tomorrow*. The zero conditional is not a true conditional (as implied by its name), e.g. *If water reaches 100 degrees, it boils*. The *if* can be replaced by *when or whenever* and is a statement that is always true, so there is not a real condition within the meaning. The second and third conditionals are known as present and past subjunctives in traditional grammar. These types of sentences do not display conditions as such, but rather introduce elements of doubt, desire, regret or even advice-giving. The following examples show these structures. (1) *If I were you, I would study hard* (second conditional / present subjunctive). There is no condition here; it is a piece of advice. (2) *If I had studied harder when I was a child, I would/could/ might have become a doctor* (third conditional / past subjunctive). There is no condition here either; it is a regret about a past situation that cannot possibly be changed because it is too late. Therefore, the second and third conditionals (present and past subjunctives in traditional grammar) relate to unreal situations, not conditions as such. This is one example of a difference between common modern English grammar understanding and traditional grammar understanding.

Recent research reported in *Science Daily* (Northumbria University, 2010) showed that there are questions about Chomsky's theory of universal grammar, which claims that all native speakers of a particular language have the grammar hard-wired into them because they speak that language (Munoz, 2011). The research was carried out by academics at Northumbria University (2010), who pointed out that, according to Chomsky, grammar is gained through intuition from infancy. In contrast to Chomsky, their thesis encompassed the idea that a significant number of native English speakers are unable to understand some basic sentences – the published report concentrated particularly on the passive voice in English grammar. This Northumbrian project assumed that every adult native speaker of English would be able to understand the sentence "The soldier was hit by the sailor." The respondents were adults and it was found that a high proportion of those adults who had left school at 16 were unable to identify whether the soldier or the sailor was the doer of the action in that sentence. This type of lack of understanding deserves some attention to be given to it by educators.

Equally significant is the impending disappearance of the English adverb, especially the comparative adverb. This demise has been noted and commented on by writers in disciplines as disparate as medicine (Henry, 2009) and management (Fagiano, 1992). It is not a question that concerns language teachers only. Henry (2009) writes regarding presentations given by medical personnel at medical conferences and comments on the standard of grammar, including specifically the failure to use adverbs. Fagiano (1992) writes about the disappearing adverb and how this impacts on marketing and management. Freeman (2006) writes on this topic from a journalistic point of view, and cites the very public example of the Apple computer company's slogan "*Think Different*" (rather than "*Think Differently*"). This is an example of marketers using language in a way that is unusual in order to attract attention. Although this particular example does not cause confusion as such, it is possible for confusion to be created, and this point will be further explored in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis as many more examples of the demise of the adverb can readily be found in the media.

1.3 Significance of the study

Research literature shows that teachers do indeed lack grammar knowledge because for the last 50 years grammar has not been given very much attention. There is ample evidence of this fact in Andrews (1999; 2007); Harper and Rennie (2009); Hudson and Walmsley (2005); Kömür (2010); Louden et al. (2005); Louden and Rohl (2006); and Rohl and Greaves (2005), as illustrated in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. Therefore, current teachers are likely to be unsure of their own level of understanding in relation to grammar. However, during the course of the review of the extant literature for the purposes of this thesis, no studies were found which led to the writing of a professional development program that specifically addressed the gaps in the respondents' grammar knowledge. It may be time to redress this problem and to give teachers of English language whatever help is required in order to allow them to fulfil their mission. The advantages of this study are that the teacher respondents will have the opportunity to improve and extend their knowledge of grammar through the professional development

program that will be devised and tailored specifically to their needs. This enquiry could be useful for other tertiary English teaching centres, as any other such centre could conduct this type of research to discover the grammar needs of their particular teachers and then implement a program to help them improve their knowledge of grammar.

The review of relevant literature for this research showed that studies which have already been conducted into teachers' grammar knowledge are based mostly on what teachers say they know or do not know about grammar in general. Only two studies were found which attempted to discover actual lack of knowledge of specific grammar items. These were Kömür (2010) and Andrews (1999) (refer to Literature Review chapter of this thesis). In the case of Kömür (2010), the study was conducted with non-native English speaker student teachers in Turkey and did not report on any list of grammar items, but rather on the respondents' intended strategies to overcome their individual grammar difficulties after their fourth year practicum. Andrews' (1999) study gave some actual items as examples; however, there was no definitive list of items in which teachers needed further professional development. Andrew's study took place almost 20 years ago, and the situation could have changed since then. Furthermore, Andrews' study took place in Hong Kong, and was more concerned with the differences between student teachers and teachers who were already practising at that time. It was also noted that some of the teachers in that study were native speakers and some were not. The aim of this current study is to investigate how prepared specialist teachers of English language (native or near native speakers) are to teach grammar, that is, to discover the specifics as they apply in a particular Australian university English language teaching institute. A related question is whether the preparation for teaching that those teachers have undergone impacts on their willingness to teach grammar.

Action research conducted in one particular language centre can be very useful for the teachers in that centre as it will result in a professional development program that is directly relevant to them. Such a course of professional development in grammar could also be significant for teacher training establishments in universities, because it would aid students studying to become teachers in Australian schools.

These student teachers need further grammar training in order to impart grammar to school students under the requirements of the new national curriculum (ACARA, 2012b). Further training in grammar would benefit future teachers in primary and secondary schools and also specialist English teachers in the tertiary sector who are responsible for linguistically preparing international students for their tertiary studies in universities which use the medium of English language. As well as providing actual items that teachers find difficult to understand (and therefore to teach), this study shows that teachers generally need more training in grammar in order to teach it effectively. For example, in the grammar review that was conducted as part of this study, more than half of the respondents showed that there was a need for the word *that* to be more clearly understood in all its various grammatical functions. Teachers demonstrated that there was confusion between the use of the word *that* as a conjunction or as a relative pronoun. If students were to ask about the grammar of that particular word, it would be reasonable to expect that they should receive from the teacher an answer that correctly identified the grammatical classification of the word.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research was to investigate how prepared teachers of English language are to teach grammar. In the context of this research project, grammar is defined as a modified version of traditional grammar which has been inherited by the English language from studies of Latin and Latin-based European languages. An example of this type of modification is to be found in section 1.2 above.

This study was conducted as an action research project, involving the co-operation of teachers employed at an English language teaching centre attached to an Australian university. Action research is defined as “research done *by* teachers *for* themselves; it is not imposed on them by someone else” (Mills, 2007, p. 5). This study followed the seven stages of action research as laid out by Burns (2000, pp. 445–449):

1. Problem identification (teachers’ grammar awareness or lack of it)

2. Fact finding (inventory keeping by 26 teacher respondents concerning difficulties encountered in their ability to understand and therefore teach specific grammar items)
3. Hypothesis formulation (reference to research)
4. Gathering further information and hypothesis testing (written surveys undertaken by 21 of the original respondents, followed by semi-structured interviews conducted with four of the original respondents)
5. Decision making regarding the type of action that needed to be taken (devising a professional development program)
6. Implementation of the action plan and possible further modification (delivery of professional development program, teachers' evaluations of various sessions of the program and possible re-working of the program)
7. Interpretation of data and evaluation of the whole project.

1.4.1 Research objectives:

The Research Objectives (RO) of this study are:

1. to examine teachers' views on the significance of grammar in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL);
2. to examine teachers' views on the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers in TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular;
3. to identify teachers' actual knowledge of grammar through inventory keeping and through a grammar review;
4. to determine variations between teachers' actual knowledge of grammar and expected knowledge of grammar for TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular;

5. to devise a professional development program based on the results of the study and on insights gained from theory and research on grammar teaching; and
6. to implement the professional development program and evaluate its effectiveness.

1.4.2 Elaboration of research objectives (RO)

The review of the extant literature for the purposes of this study gave rise to the above research objectives as follows:

RO 1: *To examine teachers' views on the significance of grammar in TESOL.*

Various authors consider that teachers' views are very important when discussing the significance of grammar. Among these authors are Borg (1999); Harper and Rennie (2009); and Lê et al. (2011). Borg (1999) discusses how teachers use various methods for teaching grammar depending on their own theories. Harper and Rennie (2009) are sympathetic to teachers who do not believe they are adequately prepared for teaching grammar. Lê et al. (2011) state that teachers' beliefs show that they want to have good linguistic awareness. Therefore, for this study, it was considered important to canvass the views of the teachers involved in this study regarding the significance of grammar in TESOL.

RO 2: *To examine teachers' views on the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers in TESOL teaching in general, and TESOL grammar teaching in particular.*

In two studies conducted by Andrews (1999; 2003), teachers were asked about their feelings regarding grammar in TESOL teaching and were tested with regard to their knowledge of grammar. Andrews found that more than half of his respondents were unenthusiastic about teaching grammar, and more than a quarter lacked confidence. Eison (1990) makes the observation that "in the classroom, an instructor's enthusiasm is often contagious; so too, is the lack of enthusiasm" (p. 24). It was therefore considered important to ask teachers in the current study to

provide their views on how important grammar knowledge is for TESOL teachers, particularly for their teaching of grammar.

RO 3: *To identify teachers' actual knowledge of grammar through inventory keeping and through a grammar review.*

Andrews (1999) and Lê et al. (2011) agree that there is a need for research to be conducted into the real grammatical awareness of teachers. Grant and Mueller (2010) illustrate the fact that teachers are being asked to teach grammar when their teacher training has not adequately prepared them to do so. Alderson et al. (1996) put forward the idea that teachers may well be able to use English effectively, but without metalinguistic knowledge, they are less effective in teaching grammar. Similarly, Wang (2010) believes that teachers' linguistic competence must be addressed first, before students can be adequately taught. For these reasons, initial inventory keeping and a subsequent grammar review were included in this study.

RO 4: *To determine variations between teachers' actual knowledge of grammar and expected knowledge of grammar for TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular.*

Louden and Rohl (2006) employ a graph to show the discrepancy between beginning teachers' confidence about their preparation to teach grammar and senior staff members' confidence in the grammar knowledge of those beginning teachers. Andrews (1999) conducted investigations in Hong Kong where the government wished to benchmark teachers' language awareness. Andrews observed that there was cause for concern and concluded that teachers were poorly prepared for their task of grammar teaching. In the current study, comparisons were drawn between teachers' knowledge of grammar and the knowledge that is expected of them. In order to ascertain this information, respondents were asked to provide lists in the inventory keeping phase regarding grammar items that they found difficult to teach. The grammar items were those included in the course book used at the centre.

RO 5: *To devise a professional development program based on results of the study and on insights gained from theory and research on grammar teaching.*

Hudson and Walmsley (2005) are of the opinion that although there is now a rebirth of grammar teaching, there are still far too few teachers of English with an adequate grounding in English grammar. Lê et al. (2011) point out that grammar workshops should be provided for current teachers and grammar should be taught within teacher education courses. Through the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA 2012b) the Australian federal government has mandated that grammar will be formally taught at all school levels and by all teachers in their various teaching disciplines. As a result, Tucker (2011) reports that the University of Canberra has recognised the need for grammar to be taught to both current teachers and student teachers. For these reasons, the current study will inform a professional development program in grammar for the teachers at the language centre chosen for this study.

RO 6: *To implement the professional development program and evaluate its effectiveness.*

Based on the above research aim and objectives, an initial evaluation of the first session of the professional development program was devised, asking participants to provide feedback to the investigator through evaluation forms for the actual session. In the long term, it is anticipated that teachers should grow in confidence after attending such sessions. The professional development sessions should also be a forum where links can be established between the more confident and experienced language teachers and the not so confident and not so experienced ones. In other words, less experienced teachers could identify possible mentors through such sessions.

1.5 Originality of this study

Previous studies show that teachers are not well prepared to teach grammar (e.g. Alderson et al., 1996; Andrews, 1999; 2003; Lê et al., 2011; Wang, 2010). However,

no studies were found which identified specific shortcomings in grammar knowledge of any group of teachers, which then led to the writing of a professional development program that specifically addressed the gaps in respondents' grammar knowledge. Therefore, the current study brings a new element into the equation, in that respondents' specific needs were addressed within the course and definition of action research. The advantage is that the teacher respondents in this study will now have the opportunity to improve and extend their knowledge of grammar through the professional development program to be progressively devised and tailored specifically to their needs.

1.6 Ethical issues

This study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) on 6 November, 2011 (Minimal Risk Reference Number H0012170). Participation was entirely voluntary. Teachers at the chosen centre were invited to participate through an information sheet with the approval of the Director of the centre. Volunteers replying to the information sheet were issued a consent form to be signed. The information sheet informed participants that there was no foreseeable risk to them; however, they could withdraw from the study at any time (refer to Appendix 13 for these documents). As teacher numbers in the centre in any given teaching module could be between ten and 35, the first phase of the study was conducted in January and February 2012, a time in the year when student and therefore teacher numbers are usually higher.

Twenty-six respondents participated in the first part of the investigation (Phase 1), which involved each teacher keeping an inventory over a period of five weeks of all grammar items taught during that period with an indication of which ones were difficult to understand and therefore difficult to teach. The second phase of the study comprised a survey consisting of two sections: Section A, containing 10 questions (refer to Appendix 5) and Section B, comprising a grammar review (refer to Appendix 6). Twenty-one of the original 26 respondents completed the surveys. The third phase of the study consisted of semi-structured interviews, further exploring issues which arose from Section A of the surveys. In all, four interviews

were conducted. Confidentiality was assured as each of the original respondents was issued with a number, and these numbers were consistent throughout the whole study. The data collected during this study will be kept securely for five years and then destroyed as per HREC guidelines.

No ethical issues were identified in relation to the delivery of the professional development program. Attendance was purely voluntary, and all those attending were most enthusiastic at the prospect of professional development which took into account their own self-identified grammar needs.

1.7 Structure of thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters, the first of which is this introductory chapter comprising eight sub-sections. This is followed by a Literature Review chapter, which begins with a section on grammar definitions and theories. It then goes on to examine why English grammar began to be taught to an increasingly lesser degree in English speaking nations in the 1960s. This phenomenon was found to have dated back to teacher dissatisfaction with grammar teaching, culminating in the Dartmouth Conference of 1966, which caused English speaking countries to change their educational policies regarding grammar teaching. Whitehead (1966) and Marckwardt (1968) are the main authors who respectively delineate the situation before and after the Dartmouth Conference. This is followed by a section on the resurgence of grammar. Grammar teaching controversies are subsequently explored with an emphasis on the Northumbria University (2010) investigation as well as the *Coalface Grammar Dispute* (Huddleston, 2010). Some light is thrown on the situation by Mueller and Grant (2011) who argue that teachers are simply not sufficiently prepared to teach grammar (as they are now required to do by the new national *Australian Curriculum*) or to prepare school students for NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) testing.

Andrews (1999; 2007) sheds light on the role of grammar in TESOL teaching in Hong Kong, while Myhill et al. (2008; 2013) give an account of the British situation. Folse (2009b) refers to the circumstances in the United States of America, while Lê et al.

(2011) reveal the Australian situation. Teacher development in the teaching of English grammar in domestic schools is discussed by Harper and Rennie (2009); Loudon and Rohl (2006); and Rohl and Greaves (2005). Teacher development in TESOL grammar teaching is examined by Cullen (2008); Shin (2008); and Mumford (2009).

The chapter then moves on to examine the grammar component in the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b). With the advent of the *Australian Curriculum*, grammar teaching has been placed very much to the fore in the English strand. Myhill (2005; 2011) shows how a national curriculum in Britain opened up new possibilities for teachers of English. The theme of potentiality and possibility is explored by Johnston (2010); and Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004) with their respective ideas of deep literacy and deep grammar knowledge. The chapter then moves on to give an account of the relationship between the literature review and the thesis as a whole. A concluding section brings this chapter to a close.

The third chapter presents the methodology used in this study and begins with an introductory section followed by a segment on research paradigms and methodologies. This then leads into sections on mixed method approach and action research, both of which were employed in this study. The following sections will be dedicated to research aim, question and objectives; site, participants and sampling; research design and instrumentation; data collection; data analysis; validity and reliability; and triangulation. A concluding section brings the Methodology chapter to a close.

This study utilised a mixed method approach and comprised three phases. The first phase was conducted in early 2012 with respondents (teachers at an English language teaching institute at an Australian university) keeping a daily inventory of any grammar items taught while recording difficulties encountered. The second phase consisted of respondents completing a written survey with two distinct parts: Section A contained ten questions; Section B comprised a grammar review, which respondents were asked to complete without reference to any resources. The third phase encompassed four semi-structured interviews. The interview questions

further explored the answers that respondents had given to questions in Section A of the survey. The inventories in Phase 1 and the grammar review (Section B of the survey) in Phase 2 gave quantitative data, while Section A of the survey and the interviews provided qualitative data.

The fourth chapter presents the data analysis and results of the study, and begins with an introduction followed by a section on the different aspects of the data analysis and results. Then follows a description of the qualitative data categories and the quantitative data categories collected during the course of this study and the analysis of both types of data categories. The relevance of the analysis to the research aim, question and objectives is given next, while a concluding section brings this chapter to an end.

The fifth chapter is the discussion of the results. The results are presented and linked to their relevant Research Objectives for the study. The chapter ends with a concluding section.

The sixth chapter is the thesis conclusion. It begins with an introduction to the chapter followed by a summary of the findings and the significance of this study. Next is given a personal reflection on the writer's research journey, followed by the research strengths and limitations. Educational recommendations are made and possible future research directions are discussed. The final section is a conclusion to this chapter and the entire thesis. A reference list of all references quoted during the course of the thesis follows, and the final section comprises 13 appendices which are referred to in the various chapters of this thesis.

1.8 Conclusion

Sound grammar instruction given by teachers with a strong foundation in grammar would begin to redress the problems mentioned above and could improve communication, both oral and written, for future students. If grammar were presented not as an end in itself but as a means to an end, that is, in order for students to learn to impart their thoughts clearly and succinctly in both oral and written communication, it is possible that they would accept grammar instruction

more readily. Students should be shown that neither fear nor dislike of grammar would improve their chances of communicating effectively, and teachers should lead the way by teaching grammar in ways that appeal. There is also a need to explain to second language learners that a sound understanding of grammar is a shortcut to learning a new language as people do not learn further languages as adults in the same way that they learn their mother tongues as infants. This study was conducted with the idea that a solid understanding of grammar structures results in effective communication with less scope for misunderstandings. English language teachers need to be at the forefront of strong grammar understanding in order to be able to impart effective grammar teaching to students, whether they be domestic school students or international students about to enter tertiary courses.

The next chapter will report on the review of the current literature relevant to this study. It takes into account publications relating to the “grammar wars” (Myhill & Watson, 2013) leading up to the Dartmouth Conference of 1966 and culminating in recent publications including the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b). The chapter includes sections on the demise and resurgence of grammar teaching, definitions and theories of grammar and controversies encountered in the teaching of grammar. It also takes into account the role of grammar in TESOL teaching as well as teacher development in the teaching of English grammar in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of this review is to examine the current literature regarding the grammar knowledge of teachers of English, specifically in terms of their own personal grammar understanding and their consequent confidence or lack of confidence to teach grammar to students, both domestic and international. The chapter begins with a presentation of various definitions and theories of grammar. There is a general awareness of the difficulties facing teachers who have not had a strong background in grammar acquisition either in their own school days or in subsequent courses of teacher preparation. Therefore, general reading around the topic of grammar preparation for teachers was undertaken for the purposes of this literature review. The emerging theme of the general reading was summarised by Hudson and Walmsley (2005) who explained that schools in English speaking countries virtually stopped teaching grammar by the late 1960s. The reasons for this course of action also came to light during the literature search. As a result of this cessation, current teachers seem to be poorly prepared for the task that is now required of them, that is, to teach grammar as required in the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA 2012b). It was found that there appears to be renewed interest in the area of grammar at the current time. The direction of the reading then turned to controversies surrounding the teaching of grammar. The focus then shifted to the role of grammar in second language teaching and learning as well as teacher development in both schools for domestic students and in university settings where international students are prepared for tertiary study via the medium of English language. This was followed by a focus on grammar in the English strand of the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b). Each of the above has a discrete section allotted to it within this chapter. Finally, there is a section on the relationship between this literature review and the current study, and a concluding section brings this chapter to a close.

The literature review was the guiding factor in shaping this research, that is, a gap was found in the literature which this study aims to fill. Within the literature about teacher knowledge of grammar, no studies were found that gave a definitive list of items that teachers found difficult to understand, nor were there any studies that attempted to compile a professional development program for teachers, given the fact that grammar has been taught in a progressively reduced way in English speaking countries for the past fifty years, and Australian teachers are now required to teach grammar at all school levels. The study also sought to examine teachers' views on the significance of grammar, specifically in TESOL teaching, and to identify their actual knowledge of grammar, which would then inform a professional development program to redress this seeming lack of knowledge. This lack of knowledge has not come about through any fault on their part, but rather from the direction that education in general has taken over the past 50 years or so in English speaking countries.

2.1 Grammar: definitions and theories

Grammar is very difficult to define. One could consider the systematic features of a language or one could consider the study of those language features. One could go further and look at types of grammar, for example, traditional grammar, formal grammar or functional grammar. A simple definition of grammar does not exist. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) define grammar as serving two purposes, that is, structure and communicative use. Their definition is based on three levels, which all revolve around sentence structure as the basic unit of meaning in English. The three levels are (a) the "subsential or morphological level"; (b) the "sentential or syntactic level"; and (c) the "suprasentential or discourse level" (p. 2). Thornbury (1999) defines grammar as existing on four levels, that is, "text, sentence, word and sound" (p.1). He continues by illustrating two main purposes of language, the "representational" and "interpersonal" functions (p. 5). The two purposes are further respectively defined as "representing the world as we experience it" and "influencing how things happen in the world" (p. 5). These two studies both give two purposes, yet the purposes are not the same. The number of

levels also differs. Another grammar researcher, Halliday (1994), prefers the term “lexicogrammar” (p. xiv) because his definition includes both syntax and vocabulary. These authors all show similarities in their definitions; however, they do not operate from a common defined explanation. *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2009b) gives the following explanation: “Grammar refers both to the language we use and the description of language as a system. In describing language, attention is paid to both structure (syntax) and meaning (semantics) at the level of the word, the sentence and the text” (p. 5).

In the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, Hornby (2000) defines grammar variously as “1 the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences”; “2 a person’s knowledge and use of a language”; “3 a book containing a description of the rules of a language”; and “4 a particular theory that is intended to explain the rules of a language or of language in general” (p. 586). Leaving aside the second and third meanings, definitions one and four are important to consider, as “grammar” is generally understood either as rules governing language or as linguistics which encompass theories giving explanation to those rules. “Linguistics” is further defined as “the scientific study of language” (Hornby, 2000, p. 781). The Webster (American) and Macquarie (Australian) dictionaries both support the above meanings given by the Oxford (British) dictionary. Hornby’s first and fourth definitions provide the conceptual underpinning for this study.

Noam Chomsky is generally considered to be the father of modern linguistics, having begun his contributions to this science in the 1950s. Chomsky developed his original theory of generative grammar, which could be described as rules that show the structure and interpretation of sentences which are accepted by native speakers of a language as the features of that language. Eventually, Chomsky revised this theory and came to a set of universally shared language principles which became known as universal grammar. By the late 1950s he had moved on to syntactic structures from which he developed transformational grammar, which, as a theory, can be described as a method of constructing language by making linguistic transformations including transformations within phrase structures

(Seaton, 1982). It can therefore be seen that, in effect, Chomsky began with sentence structure as the basic unit of grammar (generative grammar), but revised his thinking to the smaller unit of phrase structure as the basic grammatical unit (transformational grammar). Chomsky's (1957) transformational-generative grammar research illustrated the fact that learners were capable of creating an infinite number of syntactic combinations.

Among theories of grammar appear descriptive and prescriptive grammars, make believe grammar, mental, pedagogical, reference, theoretical, traditional, transformational and functional grammars and many more. Descriptive grammar can be termed simply as an objective, non-judgmental description of the grammatical constructions of a language, whereas prescriptive grammar lays down the law and brooks no interference in how grammar should work (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002). Therefore, descriptive grammar contains theories which explain in a scientific way how language works without assuming correctness, while prescriptive grammar is thought of as the type taught by high school English teachers (at least of the past), who might have prescribed how one ought to speak in much the same way as a doctor might prescribe medicine.

Make-believe grammar was brought to the fore by Gertrude Buck in the early twentieth century. The definition given by Buck (1909) of make-believe grammar is "the application of rules modelled upon those of the highly inflected Latin language to the facts of the English tongue, which is almost wholly uninflected" (p. 21). Buck rejected the notion of make-believe grammar as she considered that English was not an inferior kind of Latin. Dr Buck taught grammar, composition, rhetoric, and literary theory at Vassar College in New York from 1897 until her death in 1922. During her 25-year teaching career, she promulgated her idea that English was not a degenerate form of Latin (with its inflected forms of verbs, nouns and other parts of speech), but should be considered as a language in its own right without having to depend on another language for its grammar. She was particularly strong in making it clear that English grammar should be built upon how the language was actually spoken. Buck did not believe that language could be divorced from life by teaching mechanical grammar drills. Therefore, her aspiration was that grammar should be

based on actual speech, which would be informed by the scientific study of language. Without this, she believed that grammar instruction did not deserve to be included in the curriculum. Nowadays, this approach would be termed teaching grammar in context.

Mental (or competence) grammar is generally understood to mean the type of grammar possessed by native speakers, that is, the ability to recognise whether a sentence is correct or not without necessarily being able to give a reason. When considering a person's linguistic competence, a native speaker's grammar is regarded as a mental system, which, if acquired as an infant, does not need any specific instruction. This is supported by Chomsky (1957), who asserts that all human beings are born with the ability to construct a mental grammar, provided they have adequate linguistic experience; he terms this ability for language the language faculty. Culicover and Nowak (2003) develop this further by claiming that if a grammar is formulated by a linguist, then it is an idealised description of such a mental grammar. Pedagogical grammar can be termed a language teaching methodology for second language students involving grammatical analysis of elements of the target language. Reference grammar is used when describing the grammar of a language, while explaining the principles that govern the construction of words, phrases, clauses and sentences, in other words, grammar as explained in grammar reference texts.

Theoretical grammar is the study of language components. It makes explicit the forms of grammar and provides scientific explanations in favour of a particular grammar over another. Traditional grammar involves prescribing rules and concepts regarding language structure; it can therefore be termed prescriptive. As can be gleaned from the term "traditional", it seeks to perpetuate a historical model of what is considered proper language according to rules and it relies heavily on language analysis (Seaton, 1982). Seaton goes on to explain that the grammatical term "rule" is not an external precept, but is a principle that is followed unconsciously and regularly in order to produce utterances at sentence level. Furthermore, this type of "rule" applies to how native speakers form sentences.

Halliday (1994) defines his systemic functional grammar as having three components, that is, it is functional in three senses: “in its interpretation of texts, of the system and of the elements of linguistic structures” (p. xiii). This perspective on grammar addresses the semantic and functional aspects of the language system, and emphasises the close connection between syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Halliday’s work has significantly impacted current pedagogy concerning English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language.

In conclusion, there are many theories of grammar, some of which have been listed and described above. Various ones have come to the fore at different periods in the history of grammar teaching. The only certainty that can be concluded from this situation is that there are various definitions and many theories of grammar. All are valid, but none takes absolute precedence over the others.

2.2 The demise of grammar teaching

The decline in the teaching of grammar in English speaking countries can be traced back to the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English, commonly known as the Dartmouth Conference of 1966, convened by the Modern Language Association and the National Conference of Teachers of English, which brought together British and American researchers and teachers to discuss the issue of grammar (Myhill & Watson, 2013). This conference prompted a turning point regarding the inclusion of formal grammar in school curricula. Prior to 1966 there had been a growing dissatisfaction with grammar teaching in schools with a general consensus that it was a “waste of time” (Muller, 1967, p. 68). Many teachers were dissatisfied because they saw no educational relevance in the types of drills and exercises that were part of grammar teaching, and they considered this had no impact on the development of language (Myhill & Watson, 2013). Teachers of English in domestic schools in English speaking countries generally considered that the teaching of grammar took time which could have been spent on other activities. There were a number of arguments put forward against grammar teaching, such as: (i) that children disliked it; (ii) that children under 15 years of age were unable to learn grammar; and (iii) that grammar was useless. Whitehead (1966) enumerates

these and other arguments that were put forward against the idea of formal grammar teaching. Whitehead claims that many of the arguments were illogical, yet they were put forward as ideas that were “enlightened” and “progressive” as opposed to ideas that were “bigoted” and “ignorant” of those who thought that grammar should be taught (p. 16). In Britain there was also growing pressure to place more weight on literature than on grammar. Hudson and Walmsley (2005) make the comment that “from the teachers’ point of view, there was increasing uncertainty as to the purpose and use of grammar” and also that grammar analysis “baffled not just the pupils but many of the teachers, too” (p. 598).

From these underlying currents in the 1960s, it can be seen why the Dartmouth Conference moved to recommend the exclusion of grammar teaching from the curriculum. As a consequence of the Dartmouth recommendation, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand changed their educational policies and no longer mandated the teaching of formal grammar in schools (Myhill & Watson, 2013). In the Dartmouth Conference papers, Marckwardt (1968) traces the history of grammar books, beginning with one published in 1671. Interestingly, he mentions a 1795 British grammar book as the preferred model (even in 1966), commenting that it reflected the “authoritarian tradition characteristic of the eighteenth century grammarians” (p. 8). He goes on to say that one hundred years later, at the 1899 Modern Language Association meeting, prescriptive attitudes towards grammar were still evident; however, by then, there was a recognition that the grammatical authority of great writers (past or present) should not be overrated. There was also recognition of the importance of spoken language. Gertrude Buck (1909) who taught in the very late 19th century and early 20th century, agreed with the notion that grammar should reflect the spoken language. Marckwardt (1968) also points out that prior to 1927 teachers had little professional training, and school teaching was generally regarded as a step upwards in the social sense. As a result, teachers were not adequately prepared to teach, and because of this inadequate preparation, there was difficulty in coming to agreement about standards and attitudes regarding the teaching of English.

Trimbur (2008) examines the Dartmouth Conference from the point of view of the native speaker being the paragon of correct grammatical usage. Trimbur takes this further to examine the geohistorical location of native speakers by ascribing differences on three levels: (i) between native and non-native speakers; (ii) in the metropolis (originally Britain) and the colony (originally North America); and (iii) in the centre (where English is the first language) and at the periphery (where English is not the first language). Trimbur shows how the English language had been uneasily settled in the United States due to the influence of other languages at the time of colonisation. Trimbur continues by stating that for the British, the English language is the deeply rooted mother tongue going back many generations, while for the Americans, even if monolingual, English is fragile, and they lack the easy familiarity with it, as experienced by the British. Trimbur also notes that the spread of English began in North America in the 17th century with the teaching of English as a second language to indigenous Americans. This teaching of English as a second language eventually became a worldwide phenomenon, and at that time, it was put in place by the British whose language of colonisation of the British Empire was English.

Phillipson (1992) gives an account of a language alliance that was formed between Britain and America to promote English as an international language. Phillipson adds credence to Trimbur's (2008) assertion of colonisation using English, by pointing out that a significant development in teaching English as a second language in the colonies was the replacement of missionaries and colonial officers with linguists and English teachers. In relation to Trimbur's ideas above, Phillipson points out that the English language teaching industry exported not only the English language but also English teaching methods, all of which were discussed at the Makerere Conference of 1961 in Uganda (Phillipson, 1992), five years before the Dartmouth Conference.

Phillipson identifies a series of fallacies associated with the beliefs surrounding English language teaching coming from the Makerere conference. One of these fallacies was that English is best taught by native English speakers who can maintain the standard of English (that is, correct grammar). First, this undermines the efficacy

of the non-native speaker from the periphery and ensures the market is cornered for the native speakers from the metropolis or the centre. Second, it guarantees the market for publishers in the metropolis, enabling the production of books in accepted, standard English only. Third, it undermines local forms of English and upholds the native speaker from the metropolis as the gold standard for English language proficiency.

Hudson and Walmsley (2005) point out that since Chomsky's (1957) landmark publication, there has been much research into English grammar. However, there was little connection between the research that was done and courses that were taught in schools (Paterson, 2010). The research, which culminated in the publication of various grammar books, involved a heavy capital investment on the part of publishers, who were driven by the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) industry. This development is beneficial for both strands of English teaching and could benefit both teachers of international students and teachers of domestic school students.

In addition to Trimbur's and Phillipson's ideas above, regarding the situation in the 1960s, there was, at least in America, a sense of falling standards in schools and a push to modernise the curriculum. All of the above ideas were the background setting to the Dartmouth Conference, whose final report makes the following statement: "instead of liberating the child as a native speaker" schools have attempted to turn that child into a "stultifying concept of correctness" (Marckwardt, 1968, p. 56). The same final report illustrates the idea that when children start school,

... they have already formed most, if not all, of the intuitive generalisations about the structure of their mother tongue which enable them to use it productively. There is little room for expanding their repertory of linguistic resources at the structural level; and since they have already learned so much intuitively simply by using language (as listener and speaker) in situational contexts, it seems probable they will learn the remainder just as efficiently by the same means as they

would by deliberate and conscious instruction. (Marckwardt, 1968, p. 69)

This is consistent with the thinking of Chomsky (1965) whose original research on universal grammar revolved around the idea that native speakers had the grammar hard-wired into the brain and did not need formal teaching about its structures. It would appear, therefore, that these “grammar wars” (Myhill & Watson, 2013), which were raging prior to the Dartmouth Conference, were centred mainly on whether grammar was worth teaching at all, given the pervading idea of the time that children learn grammar naturally as part of their first language acquisition. It is not surprising, then, that the Dartmouth Conference of 1966 made recommendations that resulted in educational jurisdictions in English speaking countries altering their policies regarding the teaching of formal grammar in schools, which would ultimately lead to the demise of the teaching of formal grammar. As a result, “the disappearance of grammar from schools - and most teacher education faculties - for decades means many of today’s teachers have no subject knowledge of grammar, nor any idea of how to teach it effectively” (Adoniou, 2014, Section 3).

It cannot be denied that grammar changes over time. If one examines Shakespearean English, this becomes obvious. Other not so obvious changes also occur, for example, Okrent (2013) gives a list of four subtle changes that are difficult to detect. The most interesting change that Okrent illustrates is the rise of what she calls the ‘get-passive’. She gives the example of how the passive voice in English is usually formed with the verb “to be”, as in “they were fired” or “the tourist was robbed”. However, the “get- passive” also exists, as in “they got fired” and “the tourist got robbed”. Okrent points out that the get-passive dates back at least several hundred years; however, its use has risen exponentially during the past 50 years. Although the “get-passive” is used more in spoken English, Okrent observes that the restrictions on its use may be relaxing over time, and could, therefore, be more acceptable even in written English in the future. In this case, there is no change to clarity; it is simply a more colloquial way of expressing the passive.

Other changes in grammar, such as the replacement of adverbs with adjectives can cause a great deal of confusion. The demise of the adverb in English was first presented in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Some further examples of this phenomenon emanating from the Australian ABC news channel (ABC4) and *The Australian* newspaper are as follows:

“Whoever behaves more **angry**, more **outrageous** ...” (*News*, 1 Sept, 2012); “That part of the economy needs to grow twice as **quick** ...” (*The Business*, 3 Oct, 2012). Yet another example, this time from the print media: “There is nothing ‘crazy’ in asking if broadband could be installed **cheaper** ...” (*The Australian* editorial, 19 June, 2013). The above adjectives **angry**, **outrageous**, **quick** and **cheaper** should actually have been the adverbs **angrily**, **outrageously**, **quickly** and **more cheaply**, because they give further information about the verbs **behaves**, **needs to grow**, and **could be installed**.

Another example from the media, which could actually cause confusion, is the following: “broadband could be installed **cheaper** ...” (*The Australian* editorial, 19 June, 2013). The confusion arises because the adjective **cheaper** could refer to the noun **broadband** in the sentence; however, because of the position of the word **cheaper** in the sentence, it is more likely to fulfil an adverbial function referring to the verb **could be installed**. If so, then the comparative adjective **cheaper** should be the comparative adverb **more cheaply**. As English is largely a non-inflected language, word order is very important. Consequently, when there is confusion between adverbs and adjectives, it has the potential to cause readers or hearers to misunderstand the intention of the sentence. Another point to consider is that such use of comparative adverbs is in the process of being lost. Not many people use the comparative adverb, preferring rather the comparative adjective (as in the above sentence **cheaper**).

Language does change, but the question that needs to be addressed is whether such changes make meaning clearer, or whether they make meaning less clear. If the answer is less clear, teachers should take care to educate students for the sake of clarity. These differences should be actively taught in order to make

communication clear. Also common are misunderstandings in the writing of homophones, e.g. *Expressions of interest* **sort** (rather than **sought**). Errors of this type often appear in advertisements. Although it may be a trend to simplify spelling, with all such changes, the question regarding whether the change makes communication clearer or less clear needs to be understood. British linguist David Crystal supports this notion with: “It’s about meaning and clarity. Clarity unites us” (Brown, 2014, Paragraph 4).

There is also anecdotal evidence of English teachers in both high schools and in centres of English instruction to international students who ask for repeated help because they are unsure of how to teach particular grammar points, usually arising from a self-confessed lack of understanding on their own part. Such teachers express a desire to learn and are regretful that they themselves were not recipients of good grammar instruction during their own school days. This desire of teachers to be more knowledgeable is supported by Lê et al. (2011). The examples discussed above would seem to have come about because of a lessening of focus on grammar, which could then cause an approach to communication borne out of a lack of knowledge about how to communicate clearly.

2.3 The resurgence of interest in grammar

At the current time there appears to be a general resurgence of interest in grammar (Myhill & Watson, 2013). When grammar is viewed as theory or system to enable understanding of how language works for the sake of gaining clarity of expression, it can become more attractive for students.

Lewis (1986) argues that there are only three simple paradigms to grammar: facts, patterns and primary semantic distinctions (pp. 9 – 12). As an example of facts, he shows that there are only 12 nouns in English that end in **-f** or **-fe** and which change the **-f** or **-fe** to **-ves**. He then gives the list of 12. This list does not include, for example, the word **roof**. Many Australian native English speakers make the plural of **roof** as **rooves**. Lewis’ list of factual information precludes **roof** from this list, and therefore, the plural, perforce, must be **roofs**. There would be many other

words ending in **-f** or **-fe** that would follow the pattern of **roof**. His point is that if students were made aware of this list of 12 nouns, errors such as **rooves** would not be made. Lewis makes three points regarding this aspect. These are that it is simply a matter of fact; it is non-generative; and it attempts to be comprehensive. In his second aspect, concerning patterns, Lewis says that this is generative. Whereas facts require memory, patterns reduce the memory load. One example he gives of patterns is that of question tags. The pattern can be given in a formula such as:

Positive sentence – negative tag; negative sentence – positive tag.

Use the same auxiliary in the tag (except for *I* and the verb *to be*, e.g. *I am, aren't I?* Use the appropriate pronoun. (Lewis, 1986, p.10)

This pattern is generative, because it can be used to apply to multiple situations. In his third aspect, Lewis mentions that languages make basic distinctions, which he terms dichotomies, which divide an area of meaning into two parts. He goes on to give the example of the distinction between personal and impersonal usage such as *he/she/it* (personal, singular) and *somebody/something* (impersonal, singular). He then explains that the plural of both is *they*, which can be either personal or impersonal. Lewis considers these divisions to be essentially semantic, in other words, they are concerned with meaning. These distinctions are not for memorisation, as facts are, but more for understanding. He is adamant that if grammar were to be taught according to these three paradigms, understanding of grammar would increase.

2.4 Grammar teaching controversies

The Northumbria University study (2010) was mentioned in the introductory chapter to this thesis. The fact that a significant proportion of adults who had left school at age 16 were unable to properly comprehend sentences in the passive voice is a regrettable situation. However, when English textbooks fail to give clear grammar explanations, it perpetuates the notion that the teaching of clear communication may not be a priority.

An example of this is an English textbook for the 1998 academic year for the Australian state of Victoria (McRoberts, 1997), which deals with “Common Assessment Tasks” (including Writing Folio and Written Examination), and which makes no reference to grammar. The closest it comes to mentioning grammar is in a checklist. This list contains eight items, the last of which reads: “Are all (... pieces of writing ...) well expressed and free from errors?” (p. 97). Later in the same text, a short essay is supplied for the benefit of student to point out examples of typical problems. Some of the problems identified include “abusive response”, “slang”, “clumsy language” et cetera, yet no mention is made of grammar structures. One sentence in this essay reads “*Why doesnt she say what about the jobs that would be created or better shopping for the people of Paradise?*” (p. 129). The critique, given in the book for the benefit of students using this publication, allows this sentence to pass without comment on either the punctuation or sentence structure. The grammar problems regarding clarity of expression are not specifically mentioned. It is unclear whether this was deliberate, or whether the author of the publication had insufficient knowledge in this regard. Such ignoring of grammar causes confusion for the receiver, no matter whether reader or conversation participant.

In the writing and language sections of the Australian schools NAPLAN tests, assessment is carried out on students’ knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Fiona Mueller and Elizabeth Grant (2011) have criticised these sections of the NAPLAN tests mainly because of the “longstanding failure to train teachers” (Paragraph 5). As a result, students do not have the tools to deal with such tests (Paragraph 6). Moreover, students progress through school and enrol at university. When they are asked to proofread their own work, they do not have the tools to recognise problems in their writing (Paragraph 11). Examples of such problems in student writing include sentence fragments, run-on sentences and comma splices. Knowledge of language structure should be akin to any other life skill, that is, basic skills need to be given to students in order for them to deal with situations such as proofreading their own writing. As far as this is concerned, teachers should model best practice; however, this could be problematical. The majority of teachers who

have trained for their chosen profession in the last fifty years or so have themselves been given progressively fewer tools to deal with grammar teaching and learning.

In an interview with Ryk Goddard (2011) on ABC Local Radio Breakfast Program, Mueller and Grant discussed the need for basics to be drilled, so that one has the ability to retrieve those basics from the brain when they need to be applied. For example, the metalanguage of mathematics is required in the study of that subject; however, in recent years the metalanguage for language learning has ceased to be taught in favour of creativity. The question that needs to be addressed is about the usefulness of language creativity if it cannot be expressed in a way that is clearly and unambiguously understood by other speakers of that same language. That is where the study of grammar frees people to be creative and to be able to pass on to others the results of their creativity in ways that will be clearly understood. The issue of grammar teaching for the sake of clarity and confidence is amply supported by Myhill et al. (2008).

On the other hand, Hartwell (1985) seems to be one author who is opposed to any form of grammar teaching. He asserts that it is a total waste of time at best, and that teaching it to students can actually be harmful. The harm would ensue because the time spent on grammar would displace some other instruction or practice, thereby robbing students of time that would be better spent on another important skill. He bases his ideas on various studies that had been completed before the publication of his paper in 1985, and even describes those who support the teaching of grammar as people who engage in “magical thinking” (p. 105). Another example from Hartwell is the following:

Those of us who dismiss the teaching of formal grammar have a model of composition instruction that makes the grammar issue uninteresting ... Those who defend the teaching of grammar tend to have a model of composition instruction that is rigidly skills-centred and rigidly sequential. (p. 108)

From these quotations it appears that this author might not wish to even entertain the idea that teaching grammar may have some positive results, no matter how

small. His analogies would seem to criticise the beliefs of those who think that grammar instruction could be beneficial. Among his analogies are that teaching grammar would be like “asking a pool player to master the physics of momentum before taking up a cue”; or “making a prospective driver get a degree in automotive engineering before engaging the clutch” (p. 115). He appears to prefer the theories of Chomsky and Krashen: “Some adults (and very few children) are able to use conscious rules to increase the grammatical accuracy of their output, and even for these people, very strict conditions need to be met before the conscious grammar can be applied” (Krashen, 1983, cited in Hartwell, 1985, p. 118). Hartwell goes on to define grammar teaching as “worship of formal grammar study” (p. 121) and posits the idea that most students are capable of self-correcting “all errors of spelling, grammar, and, by intonation, punctuation” (p. 121). Hartwell’s attitude appears to be entirely dismissive of grammar teaching.

Samantha Maiden (n.d.), reports on an interactive CD program called *Better Writing: Better Grades*. She claims that student teachers need remedial classes because “their literacy skills are so poor, they struggle with basic grammar”. The general view seems to be that teachers are in need of help in order to be able to teach literacy and grammar skills to the current and future generations of Australian students and teachers.

Rosemary Johnston (2010) develops the idea of “deep literacy” which she defines thus:

This is a conceptualisation of literacy that goes beyond the actual skills and tools of language – reading and writing, speaking and listening – and shifts to the idea of where those skills take us, the worlds they open, the different perspectives they disclose and with which they invite engagement, the thinking places they not only enrich but construct. Deep literacy offers skills and tools not only for effective communication but for an evolving and thickening fullness of communication as well. (p. 49)

Later in the same publication, Johnston goes on to say:

So the capacity for, and of, deep literacy affects how the world is viewed, how we see our place in it, and how we think about and deal with others. It affects not only thinking, but attitudes and behaviours. It nurtures the minds that generate civil and creative societies because it encourages that subjunctive generosity of spirit that is respectful of others. It connects and ethically considers options. It recognises but negotiates differences. Deep literacy is change-making. (p. 50)

It would appear that most students and teachers at this time might not even know the meaning of the word “subjunctive”. In using the subjunctive, when people can think in terms of “Were this me, were this my loved one, how would I feel? – this in turn breeds a sense of civility, social justice, kindness, generosity and compassion” (Johnston, 2010, p. 51). Thus, from Johnston’s argument, deep literacy not only involves a sense of grammar in one’s ability to express oneself accurately, but also produces a sense of humanity and imagination. This idea of accuracy combined with imagination and embedded in humanity should be the aim of education in general.

The theme of “depth” is also explored by Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004), whose Israeli study discovered a distinct difference in how teachers go about teaching according to the level of their grammar knowledge:

The teaching orientation that characterizes teachers with deep grammar knowledge organization emphasizes conceptual understanding, higher order thinking and elaboration of the content of instruction ... to enable pupils to conceptually understand aspects of the target grammar forms. The learner is perceived as an active participant in the teaching and learning process. (p. 871)

The same study shows a direct contrast to this situation when the authors observe that teachers with shallow grammatical knowledge tend to place more emphasis on rehearsing and practising grammar by careful monitoring and with relatively limited, superficial analyses of language forms. The authors go on to state that the main instructional goal seems to be the transmission of knowledge in an uncomplicated and direct fashion. Such teachers seem to view knowledge as

transferable; therefore, they tend to impart information directly to students and tend to seek generalizations, while the learner is seen primarily as a receiver of information, rather than a discoverer of knowledge.

Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004) and Johnston (2010) have a common thread running through them, that is, that depth of knowledge on the part of both teacher and student is highly desirable. In other words teachers should be able to go beyond the mechanics of language and students should be able to take an active role in the teaching and learning process.

The English Journal devoted an entire issue in November 1996 to the grammar debate. Vavra (1996) writing in that same issue uses the image of horses and carts, and divides his paper into three sections. The first section is entitled: *The problems of anti-grammarians: A horse without a cart?* In this section he debunks the theory that writing will overcome grammar problems. The second section is entitled: *The problems of the pro-grammarians: The cart before the horse*, in which he asserts that grammar teaching often does not work since instruction based on rules, exceptions and drills is not connected with the reality of students' actual writing. The third and final section is entitled: *If not grammar, then what should we teach? Putting the horse in front*. In this third section he expounds his own theory, that is, that students need to be taught how to recognise grammatical constructions in their own writing. Vavra bases his theory on the idea that the brain processes sentences by chunking words together within short-term memory and at the end of a main clause "the meaning of a chunked sentence is dumped into long-term memory and short-term memory is cleared for another sentence" (Vavra, 1996, p. 35). Vavra teaches that grammar divorced from the reality of students' own writing is, therefore, useless.

Petruzzella (1996) interviewed 25 teachers regarding their views on grammar teaching and found that there was disparity in what student teachers are taught in their training courses, and what is then expected of them when they are employed as high school English teachers. She found that high school English teachers continue with some level of grammar instruction in their classes. None of her

respondents defended the teaching of grammar for its own sake, but all 25 believed that grammar conventions should be taught at least for the sake of good writing. The strongest comment recorded by Petruzzella reported how one of her respondents described as a fad the idea that grammar is not taught, and that beginning teachers are shocked to discover that they need to teach grammar when their own knowledge in this area is so poor. The same teacher commented: “Even if *everybody* doesn’t need to know what a participle is, *English teachers* certainly should know” (p. 71). This teacher also expressed strong disappointment in the fact that she herself had been permitted to graduate as an English teacher, even though her background in grammar had been weak.

Petruzzella shows that the teachers in her study were generally in favour of teaching grammar, not for its own sake, but certainly for the sake of accuracy in writing. Her respondents made comments such as: “The guidelines ... require no formal grammar study, but do require mastery in terms of writing skills” (p. 69); “a set of prescriptive rules ... is not useful, ... grammar as a description of what a writer does ... is very useful” (p. 69); and “rules don’t mean anything unless students see how they can apply them in their own writing” (p. 70). Petruzzella concludes that teachers are more concerned with the mechanics and usage of language, whereas researchers have not often made the distinction between formal study of grammar for its own sake and the practical application of grammar.

Furthermore, Petruzzella worked for a time as a supervisor of student teachers during their practice teaching periods. During one such period, she recorded the journal entry of one of those student teachers who had received little grammar instruction, but who was, however, placed in a school where it was part of the curriculum. This student teacher expressed his displeasure with his university training course claiming that all his education courses had given him the distinct impression that grammar was not important, but he was subsequently discovering that it was indeed important. The student teacher’s supervising teacher in the school commented that he needed to work on his grammar basics, that his spelling was weak and that he needed to improve his standard of spoken English. In this case the student teacher realised his limitations, as opposed to the beginning

teachers in the study conducted by Louden and Rohl (2006) (refer to Section 2.6 of this chapter below). Petruzzella's findings are supported even from the distant past, for example by Elley et al. (1976) who quote a 1947 study:

Grammar not merely has a use in the English classroom, but is indispensable. It is not, and never should be taught as an end in itself. Its value is that it provides part of the technique for good writing (Gordon 1947, cited in Elley et al. 1976, p. 5).

The notion of poor teacher preparation followed by teacher uncertainty and lack of confidence is adequately covered in the relevant literature, for example Beard (1999); Cajkler and Hislam (2002); and Shuib (2009).

When considering controversies in grammar teaching, there are several types of controversy that can arise. One controversy would be that different professionals have different ideas about whether grammar should be explicitly taught or not. This has been dealt with above (Grant & Mueller 2010; McRoberts, 1997). Another controversy would be that teachers themselves feel that they are doing a good job and that they understand grammar well, whereas student outcomes might not support this view. A point to be considered in conjunction with this is that senior teachers do sometimes disagree with beginning teachers' confidence in their own abilities and self-evaluation. This will be dealt with below in section 2.6 of this chapter when the findings of Louden and Rohl (2006) will be discussed.

Yet a third controversy is epitomised in the recent *Coalface Grammar Dispute* (Huddleston, 2010). This dispute began in 2007 with the publication of several articles by the English Teachers Association of Queensland in their journal *Words'Worth*. The articles were given the general title of "Grammar at the coal-face" and were presented as teaching resources. Some of these articles were found to have very basic errors such as confusion about parts of speech. After being alerted by a Queensland teacher, Huddleston identified over 60 errors in fifteen pages. The controversy was perpetuated as the author of the articles in question replied, defending the errors, and so it has continued, and to date appears to be still unresolved.

In Britain, the first National Curriculum emerged in 1989 and sought to reinstate the formal teaching of language. However, Wales (2009) points out that because of the great lack of knowledge among practising teachers at that time, the government commissioned a resource in 1992, known as *Language in the National Curriculum*. Similar to the above-mentioned “Grammar at the Coalface” articles in Australia, some of the materials in the British resource were found to contain flaws in both grammar definitions and in examples. Wales (2009) cites the example sentence ‘*The butler was dead*’, which was given as an example of the passive voice (p. 524). Other inaccuracies occurred in respect to word class, tense, clauses, sentence types and other grammar items. Lê et al. (2011) identify a lack of professional development opportunities in the grammar field for practising teachers. Generally, there is a dearth of such opportunities; however, where they do exist, it would be reasonable to expect credibility through accuracy.

Likewise, the teaching of grammar is a controversial topic in the literature surrounding second language acquisition. Some researchers display negative attitudes regarding the effectiveness of grammar instruction, for example Krashen (1985), who claims that extensive and conscious use of grammatical rules is not required for language acquisition. However, Folse (2009a) argues that grammar is the backbone of language. His argument embraces the idea that English language learners must reduce their error rate. “A paragraph that has at least one error in every sentence is not good writing, just as a conversation that has an error in every sentence does not represent good speaking” (p. 57). Myhill and Watson (2013) characterise these controversies as “grammar wars”:

For most Anglophone countries, the history of grammar teaching over the past 50 years is one of contestation, debate and dissent: and 50 years on, we are no closer to reaching a consensus about the role of grammar in the English / Language Arts curriculum. The debate has been described through the metaphor of battle and grammar wars, frequently pitting educational professionals against politicians, but also pitting one professional against another. At the heart of the debate are differing perspectives on the value of grammar for the

language learner and opposing views of what educational benefits learning grammar may or may not accrue (p. 41).

Controversies surrounding grammar teaching are many and varied and no doubt will continue to be points of disagreement among stake-holders in the education of not only domestic school-children but also in the teaching of English to international students.

2.5 The role of grammar in second language learning and teaching (TESOL)

TESOL teaching has encompassed many methods of teaching grammar over the years. Richards and Rodgers (2001) have studied this issue from the perspective of historical periods when such methods gained popularity. They also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each method as it applies to grammar teaching. Each of these methods has its own perspective on the role of grammar and how it should be addressed, and each one has advantages and disadvantages. The main teaching approaches in TESOL, set into their historical periods, are given in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Advantages and disadvantages of various grammar teaching methods in TESOL

(adapted from Richards & Rodgers, 2001)

Approaches / Methods	Advantages	Disadvantages
Grammar-Translation Method (19 th – mid 20 th centuries)	Attention given to language forms by explicit teaching of grammar rules.	Absence of communicative practice. Reliance on translation impractical for classes with students from different language backgrounds.
Direct Method (early 20 th century)	Speech before reading. Use of visuals to convey meaning.	Grammar taught through practice in target language only. Minimum reading and writing.

Audio-lingual Method (1950s – 1970s)	Emphasis on speaking. Pronunciation modelled by teacher. Use of drills to reinforce grammatical patterns. Useful language learned from outset.	Rote exercises can reduce cognitive engagement. Reading and writing postponed. Time lag between oral and written work.
Cognitive Approach (1970s)	Grammar teaching considered very important.	Emphasis on analysis of structures rather than communication practice. Less emphasis on pronunciation.
Natural Approach (1980s)	Language presented in a 'natural' sequence, i.e. listening, reading, writing, speaking.	Grammar not overtly taught Focus on input (listening) can delay output (speaking)
Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (1970s – current time)	Communication is goal of instruction. Emphasis on meaningful interaction. Use of authentic texts and contexts.	Focus on communication can result in ignoring of grammar. Emphasis on fluency at the expense of accuracy could result in many students not attaining sufficient grammar.

Other methods or approaches have also come to the fore in more recent times. Sugiharto (2006) has introduced “grammar consciousness raising (C-R)” (p. 144) and explains that it is a middle-ground approach between two extremes in second language grammar teaching, and is therefore a compromise between the grammar-translation method and the communicative method. However, this method does not ask the learner to use a grammar structure correctly, only to be aware of it. It therefore results in delayed language production. In this way, it takes the emphasis away from correct learner production in the immediate sense. The C-R method helps students to develop their understanding of grammatical features, rather than to use it as soon as it has been noticed. C-R can therefore be considered as a facilitator, which in the long term can convert explicit knowledge into implicit knowledge, which is the ultimate goal in language teaching. This method would

constitute a new way for teachers to present grammar, but could also cause a certain sense of frustration for the teacher, because there would be no immediate evidence of students' ability to use the new grammar aspect that had been presented. The ideas of Ellis (2002) and Noonan (2004) preceded those of Sugiharto, and although not using the C-R label, these two authors propose the same method of encouraging students to notice the grammar by becoming aware of the target structure, but not necessarily to produce it.

Teaching grammar in context can mean using situations that students find relevant for themselves, and can also mean integrating grammar into the four macro-skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. Pekoz (2008) illustrates the ways in which to teach grammar in context through a series of electronically published grammar lessons. He mentions specifically that teacher input should be meaningful and that the grammar should relate to real life situations and be integrated into one or more of the four macro-skills. He comments that grammar teaching, like teaching the four skills, should involve three stages – before, during and after stages – in order to provide integration in the learning environment. In the pre-grammar stage, Pekoz recommends that the teacher should bring grammar to life, stimulate interest in the particular item and raise awareness by giving reasons for learning. In the while-grammar stage, the teacher should give students the opportunity to notice the new grammar point and should provide them with meaningful input through contextual examples, texts and pictures. Finally, the post-grammar stage should provide opportunities for students to use the grammar, and should relate grammar instruction to real life situations. The main distinction between the while- and post-stages is that during the while-stage there should be clarification of the meaning, whereas the post-stage should focus on the productive aspects of the new grammar structure that has been taught.

Pekoz (2008) also refers to teaching grammar in context as “integrated grammar teaching” (section 2). This is amply supported by Myhill and Watson (2013), who explain that the British National Curriculum has attempted to contextualise the teaching of grammar since 1998 with varying degrees of success. These authors also remind readers of the “inseparability of language study from reading, writing,

speaking and listening contexts” (p. 43). Grammar teaching in context is supported by a number of authors, including Bae (2000); Metin (2000); Saricoban (2000); and Vavra (1996). Teaching grammar in context is further explored by Myhill et al. (2012) who insist that learning English involves language study as a vitally important component. They go on to explain that grammar is one aspect of language study, and it therefore needs to be taught and assessed in context, both because of its own interest and because of the way it contributes to communication and meaning making. They point out that grammar should not be taught or assessed as a list of facts.

The United Kingdom Literary Association (UKLA) Statement on Teaching Grammar (2013) supports all of the above with the following:

Language study is a vitally important aspect of learning in English, and ... grammar is an important strand of language study, for its own intrinsic interest and for its contribution to communication and the making of meaning. However, if grammatical knowledge, spelling and punctuation are to make positive contributions to children’s writing, they need to be taught and assessed in the context of writing meaningful texts, not as sets of ‘facts’ or ‘rules’. (p. 1)

Teaching grammar in context has emerged as a prime concern of teachers and researchers in recent times. It is also a strand that emerged from the current study, as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

A related topic that emerged from the review of the extant literature is that grammar should be regarded as a tool for communication and not as an end in itself. Lopez Rama and Luque Agullo (2012) trace the three broad general ways of approaching grammar throughout the varied history of language teaching: (i) traditional grammar teaching; (ii) communicative language teaching; and (iii) post-communicative approaches. Traditional grammar teaching relied on the notion of knowledge of rules which would produce grammatical competence. The study of grammar rules was considered to be an end in itself. CLT was influenced by the functional language theories of Halliday (1976). These theories were instrumental in

causing language performance to become more important than language competence. Thornbury (1999) explains that there emerged two schools of thought within CLT. Both of these schools of thought placed a high premium on using language in a communicative way. However, they disagreed as to when one should do this. The first – or shallow-end approach – might be thought of as the view that one learns a language in order to use it. That is, one should learn the rules and then should apply them in life-like communication. The more radical view, however, is that one uses a language in order to learn it. Supporters of this other approach – the deep-end approach – take an experiential view of learning: one learns to communicate by communicating. They argue that, “by means of activities that engage the learner in life-like communication, the grammar will be acquired virtually unconsciously, and that studying the rules of grammar is simply a waste of valuable time” (pp. 18-19).

This deep-end approach is directly contradicted by Fraser and Hodson (1978). Even at the shallow end, grammar is considered as a means towards communication, not as an end in itself. At the deep end, communication is the sole consideration and grammar should be acquired unconsciously. Lopez Rama and Luque Agullo (2012) claim that the deep-end approach has proved to be inadequate. Post-communicative approaches have shifted the emphasis from teaching to learning, from results to processes, and deem knowledge not to be learned but constructed in a collaborative way.

Foppoli (2008) has a nine-step approach to teaching. The first four steps truly correspond with a communicative approach with a focus on understanding the message. The final five steps, however, focus on grammar, but only after the meaning has been completely understood. This could be termed an eclectic method. Foppoli states that the advantage of this approach is that while students are dealing with the grammar, they will have a clear idea of the context in which the grammar item was used and the communicative need it fulfilled.

Nassaji and Fotos (2004) point out that there is a body of research showing that teaching approaches, where the main aim is meaning focussed communication,

have proven to be inadequate. They contend that where grammar is not adequately addressed, learners do not achieve accuracy, even if they have been exposed to long-term input. They conclude, therefore, that if learners are to develop high levels of accuracy, then focussing on grammar is necessary. They further conclude that CLT without grammar input is totally inadequate. Even more forthright is Ellis (2002), cited in Noonan (2004) with the statement that data from recent studies suggest that students who have received explicit grammar instruction arrive at a higher level of accuracy in grammar than those who have not received such explicit instruction.

Ur (1988) very skilfully points out the difference between first language grammar acquisition (as an infant) and second language grammar acquisition (as a school child or as an adult). For an infant, there is no need for conscious planning of learning because absorption takes place naturally. However, when considering formal learning in a school or college situation, time is of the essence. Therefore, grammar needs to be presented systematically for gradual absorption. Ur also goes on to say that grammar should be the main learning objective of any lesson only temporarily, as grammar acquisition is merely a means of gaining mastery of the target language and should not be an end in itself. If grammar exercises are employed in the early stages of learning, these should be replaced by fluency practice as time progresses, so that in the long term the emphasis is on successful communication, and with the passage of time, grammar learning becomes incidental rather than the main objective. In order for this to happen, teachers need to be very skilful in how they approach the situation; this kind of grammar skilfulness is very much associated with instinctive knowledge and confidence in their own abilities in this area.

Teacher knowledge and confidence are important issues when considering the teaching of grammar. Some East Asian countries, which previously had an emphasis on grammar and translation rather than on communication, have taken the step of introducing English at elementary school level. In Butler's (2004) study conducted in Korea, Taiwan and Japan, it was reported that teachers perceived substantial differences between their own proficiency and the minimum proficiency level

needed to teach English. The teachers themselves identified the widest gaps to be in the productive skills and in grammar in particular. An opposite view is to be found in the work of Belchamber (2007), who highlights the difference between accuracy and fluency, and recommends CLT without an emphasis on grammar for fluency to occur. She also suggests that CLT is more efficient in the mixed ability classroom, as it is a more creative approach to teaching and can be an aid for student motivation. Teaching institutions are able to choose their teaching methods although in all likelihood choices will be made according to the prevailing method or methods in the period of history in which they are operating.

2.6 Teacher development in the teaching of English grammar

For this part of the literature review, five journal papers were consulted. Of these, four referred to the Australian context and the fifth was British. The latter gives a history of the teaching of English grammar in England during the 20th century. This paper points out that “the ‘death of grammar-teaching’ was a feature of most English speaking countries at about the same time” (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005, p. 593). It can therefore be safely assumed that the history of grammar teaching or the lack of it would apply equally well to the Australian situation. As well as these journal papers, an Australian government publication (Louden et al., 2005) was included. Its aim was to investigate teachers’ preparation to teach both literacy and numeracy, particularly to educationally disadvantaged students in the early and middle years of schooling.

Harper and Rennie (2009); Louden and Rohl (2006); and Rohl and Greaves (2005) all deal with student teachers’ and beginning teachers’ knowledge and ability to teach literacy and grammar. Macken-Horarik (2009) investigates the issues facing adaptations of grammatically informed metalanguages in English. Hudson and Walmsley (2005), as previously mentioned, give a history of the teaching of English grammar in the 20th century. Louden et al. (2005) identify key areas to improve student teachers’ preparation to teach literacy and numeracy.

The three papers dealing with student and beginning teachers all agree that their preparation is inadequate. Louden and Rohl (2006) show in graphic form that 42% of primary beginning teachers and 35% of secondary beginning teachers were positive about their preparation to teach grammar. These figures show that well below half of beginning teachers felt positive. Furthermore, the opinion of senior staff assisting the beginning teachers was even lower, in fact much lower at 22%. The senior teachers' rating of the beginning teachers might point to the fact that some of the beginning teachers were unaware of the extent of their lack of knowledge. The senior teachers were the mentors for the beginning teachers and would have had to help those teachers with their queries regarding how and what to teach. It is important to note that the senior teachers' viewpoint was vastly different from the beginning teachers' ideas about their own capabilities. Rohl and Greaves (2005) quote the same figures and conclude that "there is need for ongoing professional development for teachers" in this endeavour (p. 7).

The title of the paper by Harper and Rennie (2009), although humorous, shows the unenviable situation in which student teachers find themselves in respect to their preparedness to teach grammar. The paper's title is *'I had to go out and get myself a book on grammar': A study of pre-service teachers' knowledge about language*. This study found that student teachers' knowledge about language (KAL) was "fragmented and lacked depth" and they "did not feel adequately prepared to use their knowledge in their future teaching" (p. 22).

In a recent British newspaper article reporting on an event named British Grammar Day sponsored by Oxford University, Lindsey Thomas, a school improvement consultant with the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust, put forward the suggestion that teachers should replace the word "grammar" with "understanding language" (Brown, 2014, paragraph 2). The idea behind this proposal was that the word "grammar" is perceived with negative connotations, while "understanding" or "knowledge about language" immediately sounds more positive. Similarly, Macken-Horarik (2009) acknowledges that "teachers' knowledge about language is an issue for the profession" (p. 56) and proposes that the term "grammar" is problematic and would like to see the term "grammatics" introduced in order to separate

language use and the study of language use (p. 59). The Australian Government publication by Loudon et al. (2005) advises that student literacy teachers need to be engaged with their programs, need personal competence in literacy and need to be knowledgeable about literacy teaching, which includes grammar. A change in terminology could be beneficial for the purposes of perceptions of both students and teachers in this regard. It is possible that the negative press associated with the word “grammar” could be improved if such a change were implemented.

The recent history of grammar teaching is given by Hudson and Walmsley (2005). This is a very informative paper, because from it one can see why current teachers are under-prepared to teach grammar effectively. However, the authors are convinced that there is now a “rebirth of grammar teaching” (p. 594). Despite this rebirth, the authors are of the opinion that there are still “far too few teachers of English with an adequate grounding in the linguistics of English” (p. 609). Lê et al. (2011) point out that workshops on grammar should be provided for current teachers and that grammar should be taught within teacher education courses. Hudson and Walmsley (2005) also propose that grammar should no longer be taught prescriptively, as it used to be in the past, but should allow for variation or dialects. They suggest that students should be taught standard English for official use, but should not be told that their dialect variations are grammatically wrong. This would constitute grounds for a paradigm shift in the minds of those few teachers who are still teaching and are old enough to remember the way they were taught grammar in the years prior to the 1960s.

In a British study, Hudson (1998) poses the question: “Is grammar teachable?” His answer begins as follows: “First, it depends on the teacher's own knowledge. A teacher who knows very little about grammar can obviously teach very little, compared with one who knows a lot” (p. 3). He goes on to look at the historical background, that is, that current teachers have very little grammatical knowledge because grammar has not been adequately taught since the 1960s. The problem, as identified by Hudson, is that the British National Curriculum sets various targets for grammar teaching and the teachers do not possess enough knowledge to meet those targets. Hudson set out to determine whether any countries did actually

teach formal grammar and he discovered that grammar was indeed taught in France, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Russia and Germany as it pertains to those national languages. He continues with:

In all these places every primary child learns to classify words both in terms of word classes and in terms of an elementary list of functions; so for example a child could presumably take the first clause of the present sentence and tell you that child was a noun and that it was the subject of learns, with the noun words as the object of classify. (Hudson, 1998, p. 6)

Hudson concludes that in all those countries the teachers are already well grounded in grammar from their own schooling and can therefore pass on the elements of grammar to their pupils, whereas in Britain this is not the case. In an Australian study, Lê et al. (2011) show that there are currently no mechanisms to assess the linguistic knowledge of teachers in Australia.

In an even earlier study, Fraser and Hodson (1978) assert that simply because something (in this case, grammar) has not been learned, it should not be assumed that it is without value, since any number of problems could arise, such as teaching method, learning material, environment, time of day, and so on. Therefore, simply because students fail to learn grammar, these authors are of the opinion that it does not follow that grammar is useless.

In a later study, Hudson (2001) examines the relationship between grammar teaching and students' writing skills. By this time (three years after his previously mentioned study), Hudson states that the British National Curriculum's prescriptions are an attempt to change the practice of the time, that is, by reintroducing the teaching of grammar. One of the reasons given for changing this teaching policy is the "beneficial effect of grammar teaching on children's writing" (p. 1). Hudson examines the evidence for the effects of grammar teaching and finds that there is evidence from developmental psychology which shows that metalinguistic awareness starts to develop between the ages of five and seven. Therefore, very early at primary school level, students have the capacity to begin

learning about grammar in a simple way. However, this, too, is contingent on teachers developing their own knowledge. The Coalface Grammar problems, as highlighted by Huddleston (2010) and as discussed in section 2.4 of this chapter, show that even well-meaning attempts to help teachers in this regard can be problematic. Therefore, teacher trainers should take the lead and ensure that student teachers are given sufficient grammar knowledge to equip them for the task ahead, particularly in relation to the requirements of the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b).

Hudson (2001) summarises many authors by saying that, in the past, it was considered that grammar teaching did nothing to improve students' writing and that, therefore, it was of no value. However, he goes on to show that the pendulum is beginning to swing in the opposite direction and that it is time for a reintroduction of grammar teaching in general. Ultimately, in Australia, the federal Government has made a decision that formal grammar will be taught at all levels of primary and secondary education and that it will be taught by all teachers, not just specialist English teachers. This may be part of the reason why a resurgence in grammar interest has taken place in Australia and should certainly be a reason for the nation to contemplate more advanced and more intensive grammar training for both current and new teachers.

2.7 Teacher development in TESOL grammar teaching

Controversy still exists around the question of whether grammar is necessary in TESOL teaching, although the pendulum is beginning to swing towards necessity. McKenzie-Brown (2006) shows that Krashen's theory of second language acquisition reflects Chomsky's notion that language is acquired in much the same way as a first language. These two influential authors' ideas helped in the development of CLT, which paid scant attention to grammar. It is possible that this idea could lead to a further notion that if students do not need grammar, then teachers might not need to know the finer intricacies of grammar either. This is now being challenged.

Some testing of teacher grammar knowledge has already occurred. For example, Kömür (2010) reports on fourth year student teachers' strengths and weaknesses in grammar knowledge in Turkey. This researcher used the Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT - part of the Cambridge suite) to test the grammar knowledge of those student teachers. Kömür found that the student teachers scored above average on the TKT; however, a questionnaire given to those teachers after a 14-week practicum did not show the same level of competence. This links in with Andrews' (2007) finding that knowledge is not enough, but that teachers should be able to "provide the precise amount of knowledge the learner needs at a given point and to convey that knowledge in a form that creates no barriers to comprehension" (p. 7). This provision of the precise amount of knowledge would be very difficult for teachers if, in the first place, they themselves did not have adequate grammar knowledge.

The view of Hudson and Walmsley (2005) (refer to section 2.6 of this Literature Review) that grammar should not be taught prescriptively is supported in the TESOL arena by Rühlemann (2008) who writes about language that is "standard-conformant or standard-non-conformant" (p. 86). Cullen (2008) talks of grammar as being "liberating" rather than "constraining" (p. 221). In response to Cullen, Bruton (2009) asserts that "the more the shared knowledge and context, the more redundant or superfluous is grammar" (p. 383). Shin (2008) further refines this idea by saying that "grammar correction is ineffective and can even be harmful" (p. 358). Later in the same article, this same author says that teachers should give "indirect rather than direct error feedback" (p. 362).

Similarly, Mumford (2009) argues that, for ESL purposes, English should be based on intelligibility, "where the learner's aim is to speak in a way that can be understood, rather than precisely following native-speaker norms, with the result that minor grammatical inaccuracies and some variations are accepted as long as mutual intelligibility is maintained" (p. 138). There is growing interest in allowing ESL students to aim for intelligibility rather than strict correctness, although Ur (2009) believes that "correct, standard grammar remains ... a valid, if politically incorrect, concept, and a legitimate objective of teaching" (p. 2).

Ho (2003) gives an account of a method of helping teachers to identify students' grammar errors. She mentions that the student teachers in her study had previously been sensitised to grammar problems; however, during the course of her intervention with them, they welcomed the attention paid to the specific identification, analysis and explanation of grammar errors. The teachers themselves were keen to receive more time and practice so that they would learn to apply this method to their students' written texts. The title of Ho's paper is *Empowering English Teachers to Grapple with Errors in Grammar*. The word "empowering" is a very evocative term. When teachers feel they are in control of their material, it is indeed an empowering notion. This idea of teachers welcoming development in their grammar will be further discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

In consideration of English teachers working in overseas environments where English is not the language of communication, Long (1999) warns against leaving beginning teachers to their own devices with the following:

Changes that do occur at this time are a result of teachers understanding their professional identity and overcoming their doubts about professional competencies. If teachers are left to learn by trial and error, they will often develop 'survival techniques' that may close off other options, and they may crystallize and harden into teaching styles that ultimately prevent them from becoming effective teachers.
(p. 2)

In order to develop confidence in their work, beginning English teachers need professional development in the company of their peers. Long (1999) warns that if teachers are unable to increase their competencies at an early stage, this will inevitably lead to frustration and stagnation. He is very clear on where teachers can find support: "university or college courses, seminars and workshops, and peer support from within the teaching profession" (p.3). Apart from the first one (university or college courses), the other two are workplace-based. Teachers need workshops on the material they use as teachers, and they also need the support of their peers.

Teachers of English need to have heightened awareness of language. Andrews (2007) issues a reminder that Teacher Language Awareness (TLA) is both art and science, as follows:

TLA is in one sense science, in that it is dependent upon the teacher's possession of an appropriate base of knowledge and understanding about language (in particular, the target language) and how it works. At the same time, however, TLA, when it is demonstrated in good classroom practice, is much more than the direct application of science, i.e. the teacher's knowledge of linguistics. It involves a complex blend of learning and learner-related understanding and sensitivity, such that the teacher is able to provide the precise amount of knowledge the learner needs at a given point and to convey that knowledge in a form that creates no barriers to comprehension. (p. 7)

This is so for all teachers of English, but even more so for teachers of English as a second language, because these teachers are dealing with students who have not grown up since infancy listening to the grammar of the language from their parents. Lê et al. (2011) explain that teachers' own beliefs show that they want to have good linguistic awareness and that they have a desire to improve their linguistic knowledge. As there have now been several generations of teachers who have rarely been given the benefit of on-going grammar instruction themselves, this has become a complex situation for both teachers and students. Hudson and Walmsley (2005) outline the reasons why British schools, and schools in other English speaking countries, had stopped teaching grammar by the 1960s.

Andrews (1999) conducted important investigations into practising second language teachers' metalinguistic awareness, especially as it relates to grammar. Andrews' study is particularly interesting because he actually tested teachers rather than relying on their subjective perceptions. Andrews' study was undertaken in Hong Kong, whose government, at that time, wished to introduce benchmark qualifications for all language teachers, and language awareness was one of the competencies to be benchmarked. The study also compared teachers of English

who were native or non-native speakers of English. Interestingly, the native speakers did not fare as well as the non-native speakers. One observation made by Andrews is as follows:

Given that the subjects in this group are all serving teachers and that the ... tasks did not involve complex metalanguage or obscure rules of grammar, this is a cause for concern, particularly since their classroom practice typically involves rule explanation. (p. 156)

Andrews' native speaker respondents' poor performance seems to have been due to three factors, namely that (i) the sample was small; (ii) the subject title 'English Studies' covers a wide range of differing programmes in different institutions; and (iii) explicit knowledge of grammar and grammatical terminology is only one aspect of teachers' metalinguistic awareness. Nevertheless, these findings do show that teachers may be poorly prepared for their task.

Myhill et al. (2008) articulate the situation in Britain by commenting that for many teachers of English, who attended school during the time when grammar was not part of the English curriculum, there is an issue of lack of assurance in subject knowledge regarding grammar, which then leads to difficulties in addressing grammar in the classroom in a meaningful way. Myhill et al. stress that effective teaching requires secure personal comprehension not only of grammatical terminology, but also of applied linguistics and an awareness of how grammatical constructions are used in various texts for different purposes in communication.

Furthermore, in relation to the British situation, Myhill, Jones and Watson (2013) are very clear that teachers' grammar knowledge influences student learning in this regard. If teachers' grammar knowledge is limited, it can have serious implications, which can then lead to student misconceptions regarding grammar. More specifically, students' writing is influenced by teachers' metalinguistic knowledge. What is needed is robust grammatical content knowledge confidently communicated by the teacher. This offers the potential of helping students to increase their language repertoires.

When considering the situation in the United States of America, Folse (2009b) says that teachers of K – 12 have studied extensively in the fields of mathematics, language arts, science as well as other areas, and that they have been trained to teach elementary, middle and secondary students. However, none of this is sufficient in the preparation of teachers to deal with the large numbers of English language learners (ELLs) in schools from K – 12. Current teachers in the U.S. have added responsibilities, that is, teaching ELLs through the medium of English. This really means that all teachers in the United States should understand various aspects of the English language, including grammar; otherwise this might hinder ELLs from progressing in their studies. If teachers are to model good use of English, then they must be familiar with the types of language problems encountered by ELLs and also have the ability to address these problems. Folse's (2009b) article goes on to present information on English grammar that ELLs need to be taught—by default—by their non-ESL-trained teachers. From the above summary of Folse's depiction of the U.S. situation, he says that all teachers in U.S. schools should know about aspects of English. This is similar to the new requirements of the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b), that is, that **all** teachers will now reinforce the learning of English grammar in schools.

Also in the Australian context, Lê et al. (2011) argue that more serious research is needed into teachers' actual grammar awareness. In the Lê study, 67% of teacher respondents rated their understanding of grammar terms and syntax as very good or excellent (p. 21). Therefore it appears that Lê et al. (2011) would disagree with Andrews' (1999) findings. Perhaps this disagreement might arise from the fact that the respondents in the Lê study assessed themselves, while Andrews administered a test "in order to explore ... the teachers' explicit knowledge of grammar and grammatical terminology" (Andrews, 1999, p. 143).

In a later study by Andrews (2003), also undertaken in Hong Kong, teachers were asked about their feelings regarding grammar teaching, and they were tested with regard to their explicit knowledge of grammar "via tests of the recognition and production of grammatical terms, and the correction and explanation of grammatical errors" (p. 355). The findings show that "the majority of the subjects

(nine out of 17) appear to feel as unenthusiastic about teaching grammar as their students do about studying it” (p. 362) and that “more than one-quarter of the subjects reveal a marked lack of confidence in their ability to handle grammar adequately” (p. 363). Furthermore, he goes on to say that “in some cases, this lack of confidence is reinforced by a sense of inadequacy in dealing with something as important as grammar” (p. 363). From these findings, it is reasonable to conclude that if teachers feel inadequate about their grammar knowledge, they might be unenthusiastic about teaching it, and the teachers’ lack of enthusiasm might well be passed on to their students.

Alderson et al. (1996) point out that “whatever explicit knowledge consists of, it must include metalanguage, and this metalanguage must include words for grammatical categories and functions” (p. 2). If students are to be taught metalanguage, it would follow that teachers need to have mastered it first. Lê et al. (2011) point out that there is a difference between our ability to use grammar effectively and our knowledge of it. Therefore, even without metalinguistic knowledge, teachers can still use language effectively, but are likely to be ineffective in explaining grammar to their students. Nassaji and Fotos (2004) examined the role of grammar instruction in second language teaching and learning, and found that in the 1970s it was thought to be unhelpful and perhaps even detrimental; however, recent research shows that in order to reach high levels of accuracy, formal grammar instruction is necessary. These authors further show that “explicit instruction ... results in substantial gains in the learning of target structures in comparison to implicit instruction ... alone, and that these gains are durable over time” (p. 129).

Wang (2010) goes further and insists that the teaching of grammar is an essential component of language learning. He states that “without grammar, language does not exist” (p. 78). Wang gives the impression of desperation in the Chinese context, using such expressions as “grammar teaching is in a state of crisis”; “it is essential and imperative to arouse teachers’ attention to grammar” (p. 78); and “grammar teaching cannot be diluted” (p. 80). The whole paper centres around the idea that grammar in English teaching in China has been abandoned in the last 30 years or so,

and this situation must be redressed. Interesting to note is Wang's comment that teachers' attention to grammar must be aroused: this shows he believes that teachers' linguistic competence must be addressed first before students can be assisted. Andrews (1999) goes so far as to suggest that if teachers do not have explicit knowledge of grammar and grammatical terminology, then they could be severely disadvantaging their students.

In addition, as it is imperative for teachers (of all disciplines) to be highly literate, university personnel are becoming increasingly concerned over the numbers of prospective student teachers who are presenting for teacher training courses and who could be termed "sub-literate", which is a broad category, but would include those who are sub-grammar-literate. Walker and He (2013) put forward the idea that if teacher trainers persist in a "just do it" attitude towards potential teachers' literacy, then there is a risk of "accrediting sub-literate teachers" and this, in turn, would "compromise the literacy levels of their future students" (p. 191). Walker and He (2013) have developed an 80-hour high support course delivered over 26 weeks by applied linguistics faculty at the Hong Kong Institute of Education in an attempt to lift the literacy levels of their student teachers.

There seems to be agreement about the idea that teachers need a solid grounding in literacy in general and in grammar in particular in order to be able to teach it. Wang (2010) makes a rather desperate pitch for the teaching of grammar; Alderson et al. (1996) are more measured in their indication that teachers need to learn the metalanguage for their task; Andrews (1999) is fearful that teachers without this metalanguage could be doing more linguistic harm than good to their students; Walker and He (2013) have gone much further in creating a course to deal with the poor levels of literacy and grammar among prospective teachers. From these authors, it would seem that teachers of English as a second language need a solid grounding in grammar themselves in order to teach their students to communicate successfully in English.

In general, teachers need to show that they are confident about what they are doing. Welker (1996) encourages teachers to have confidence in their own ability,

because students need the teacher to be confident in order to be inspired to become confident themselves. His advice to teachers is to relax and enjoy themselves. Playing grammar games is another way to boost confidence for both teachers and students, as is shown by Jones (2005), who has listed ten games that can be used or adapted for any grammar review lesson. The respondents in this study also favoured games as a teaching resource and a confidence booster.

In recent times, the University of Canberra (Tucker, 2011) has recognised the changed paradigm as set out in the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA 2012b) and has made arrangements for grammar to be taught to teachers who are already practising and to student teachers, in order to give them confidence in their knowledge and in their material. In time, at the University of Canberra this may also translate into more grammar learning for those training as specialist TESOL teachers.

Although there are many pathways into TESOL teaching, one of the most popular is the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) course. This is a four-week full-time course covering many aspects of English language teaching. Most Australian universities require teachers in their English language teaching centres to have a degree (in any discipline) plus the CELTA certificate as the basic or minimum entry requirement into TESOL teaching. This could mean that before taking the CELTA course, a prospective teacher may have had very minimal exposure to language structures.

The *CELTA Trainer's Manual* (Thornbury & Watkins, 2007) contains 40 chapters grouped into four distinct sections. The third section, entitled "Language awareness" contains 13 units, five of which relate to verbs and two relate to language functions and noun phrases. The other six units refer to an introduction to language; sounds; stress; pronunciation; vocabulary; and sentence cohesion. These 13 units comprise about 30% of the course spread out over four weeks. Most days also have a practical teaching component (or observation of either currently practising teachers or other CELTA trainees). The introduction to the Manual clearly states that the CELTA is an introductory course, and therefore needs to be very

practical. It does not necessarily avoid theory, but it claims to be “firmly grounded in classroom practice” (p. 5). Therefore, for prospective English teachers who have not been previously schooled in English grammar, this is a very rudimentary introduction to grammar and insufficient preparation for teachers to be able to give plausible explanations to grammar inquisitive international students. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the CELTA is a rudimentary course as far as grammar training goes, it provides a common entry point for prospective teachers of English into tertiary level English language teaching centres.

At the English language teaching centre of an Australian university where this study took place, there had been no recent official professional development opportunities for teachers to increase their grammar knowledge. Mostly it was done in an ad hoc way by teachers asking questions of other teachers when a little-understood grammar item needed to be presented as and when it might appear in the textbook used at that centre. There did not appear to be a systematic approach to grammar improvement or grammar confidence for teachers who needed to give both prepared grammar explanations in grammar lessons and unprepared grammar explanations when students asked for them. It is for this reason that this study attempted to discover which grammar aspects were missing from teachers’ knowledge, and, in turn, this would lead to a professional development program aimed at redressing this lack of knowledge or lack of confidence.

2.8 Grammar in the *Australian Curriculum*

The introduction of an Australian national curriculum was first announced in January 2008 (Gillard & Rudd, 2008). By December of that year, the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* (2008) was published by the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, in which it was stated that the national curriculum would engender “deep knowledge, understanding, skills and values that will enable advanced learning and an ability to create new ideas and translate them into practical applications” (p. 13).

In the same section, the *Melbourne Declaration* outlined that young people would gain the ability “to think flexibly, to communicate well” and that they would “develop the capacity to think creatively” (p. 13). These ideas all conform to the writings of Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004); Johnston (2010); and Myhill (2011), who have very strong ideas about the possibilities of solid grammar instruction being able to produce the results mentioned in the *Melbourne Declaration*.

In May 2009, two further papers were released: one was the *Framing Paper Consultation Report: English* (ACARA, 2009a) and the other was *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum: English* (ACARA, 2009b). The *Framing Paper* comprised a report on a series of questions that had been answered as the result of a consultation process among the teaching profession and the public. One question particularly concentrated on the teaching of grammar within the English strand of the national curriculum. It was reported that 96% of respondents “strongly and enthusiastically endorsed the inclusion of the teaching of grammar” (ACARA, 2009a, p. 22). The *Shape* paper presented a section entitled “Knowing about the English Language”, in which it was stated that:

Students will learn how language enables people to interact effectively, to build and maintain their relationships, and to express and exchange their knowledge, skills, attitudes, feelings and opinions. A consistent way of understanding and talking about language enables students to reflect consciously and precisely on their own speaking and writing, its efficacy, fluency and creativity, and to discuss these matters productively with others. (ACARA, 2009b, p. 6)

By January 2012, the *General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012a) had been published, in which was given the reason for including grammar knowledge in the curriculum. The reason was shown to be for students to understand “the role of grammatical features in the construction of meaning in the texts they compose and comprehend” and to understand “the grammatical features through which opinion, evaluation, point of view and bias are constructed in texts” (p. 16). Some of the above-mentioned documents preceded the actual curriculum,

while the last-mentioned one was developed at the same time as the curriculum. All these documents point to a very positive idea of grammar teaching; however, as will be pointed out later in this section, the review of the curriculum (Australian Government, Department of Education, 2014) paints a picture that is less glowing, because of the perceived lack of grammar knowledge on the part of current teachers.

The English component of the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA 2012b) has three distinct strands: (i) language; (ii) literature; and (iii) literacy, which are interwoven to make one complete whole. An examination of the language to be taught at each year level yields the following grammar items:

Table 2.2 Year level grammar items from the *Australian Curriculum*
(extrapolated from the *Australian Curriculum*, ACARA 2012b).

Year Level	Grammar to be explicitly taught
Foundation Year	Difference between spoken and written language; Alphabet: upper and lower case; Punctuation: capital letters and full stops; Idea of sentences as key units for expressing ideas.
Year 1	Nouns; Pronouns; Verbs; Adjectives; Adverbs.
Year 2	Synonyms & Antonyms; Further punctuation work; Compound sentences & coordinating conjunctions; Nouns: common and proper; Noun groups; Prefixes & Suffixes.
Year 3	Formality & informality in language; Verb tenses anchored in time; Apostrophes of contraction; Clauses with subject – verb agreement; Modal verbs.
Year 4	Linking devices; Quotation marks; Direct & indirect speech; Noun phrases; verb phrases; prepositional phrases; adverbial phrases.
Year 5	Possessive apostrophe; Complex sentences: main & subordinate clauses; Uncommon plurals.
Year 6	Cohesive links; Commas to separate clauses; Use of complex sentences.

Year 7	Initial & concluding paragraphs; Topic sentences; Use of punctuation to support meaning in complex sentences with prepositional phrases and embedded clauses; Use of punctuation to support meaning in complex sentences with prepositional phrases and embedded clauses; Achievement of modality through discriminating choices in modal verbs, adverbs, adjectives and nouns; Abstract nouns; Word origins, for example Greek and Latin roots, base words, suffixes, prefixes, spelling patterns and generalisations to learn new words and how to spell them.
Year 8	Use of rhetorical devices to persuade; use of metaphor, irony and parody to develop different layers of meaning; Text cohesion to strengthen internal structure of paragraphs through use of examples, quotations, etc.; Creation of coherence in complex texts through devices such as lexical cohesion, ellipsis, grammatical theme and text connectives; Use of punctuation conventions, including colons, semicolons, dashes and brackets in formal and informal texts; Use of a variety of clause structures, including embedded clauses within the structure of a noun phrase; Nominalisation.
Year 9	Evaluation expressed directly and indirectly using devices, for example allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor; Use of cohesive devices in texts, focusing on how they serve to signpost ideas, to make connections and to build semantic associations between ideas; Use of certain abstract nouns to summarise preceding or subsequent stretches of text; Use of vocabulary choices contributing to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness.
Year 10	Citation conventions; Wide range of sentence and clause structures; Vocabulary choices to discriminate between shades of meaning; Spelling unusual and technical words accurately, for example those based on uncommon Greek and Latin roots;

Table 2.2 has been formulated for the purposes of this thesis and has been included here, because in Chapter 5 of this thesis a comparison will be made between expected grammar knowledge and actual grammar proficiency of teachers who took part in this study. Although respondents in the current study are not bound by the *Australian Curriculum*, the areas to be covered in teaching international students to become proficient users of English are similar. It is assumed that domestic school students (as fluent English speakers), especially in the early years,

would know how to use the listed items in the above table. However, they would also need to learn the metalanguage, in order to be able to discuss the items or to learn from correction (Alderson et al., 1996). Therefore, the teaching of grammar, perforce, includes teaching the ability to discuss grammar terms. With progress through the year levels, it can be seen that the emphasis moves towards more formal writing aspects.

Some researchers have already conducted studies into the implications of the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b) since version 3 was published in 2012. The Knowledge about Language strand will, in all likelihood, require much more expertise on the part of teachers than most currently possess. Jones and Chen (2012) have identified the need for professional development programs for domestic teachers of English. This curriculum, for the first time in Australia, charges **all** teachers with the “responsibility for explicitly teaching their students about conventions of language and text patterns within their own learning area” (ACARA, 2009b, p. 14). This goes much further than expecting teachers of English language to impart English skills to students: **all** teachers will be responsible for use of English within their own discrete discipline areas. As grammar teaching was virtually abandoned in the 1960s, this new edict will cause potentially serious ramifications for teachers who have not been taught grammar themselves. Australia is not the only country now requiring explicit grammar instruction. Other countries also require such instruction.

Myhill (2005) reports that Britain has also mandated the teaching of grammar in its English curriculum. In fact, grammar is now a central part of its literacy policy. In a later publication, Myhill (2011) continues with: “the potentiality of grammar lies not in crude applications of prescriptive rules to correct children’s writing but in opening up possibilities, making tacit patterns and ways of meaning-making explicit” (p. 92). Myhill’s mere mentioning of terms such as “potentiality” and “possibilities” shows that she is thinking along the same lines as Johnston (2010); and Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004) with their respective notions of deep literacy and deep grammar knowledge. This kind of depth is a laudable aim; however, it will take considerable time to implement, because teachers will need much support and

development to help them to arrive at a conceptual situation of such depth as envisioned by the above authors.

It is generally accepted that students' knowledge about language is closely influenced by their teachers' knowledge and teaching effectiveness (Andrews, 2007; Myhill, 2005). It can therefore be safely assumed that students' knowledge of grammar will only improve with an improvement in teachers' knowledge of the same. If the *Australian Curriculum* (2012b) is to be effectively implemented, teachers will need much support and development. The idea of considerable support for teachers can be gleaned from Jones and Chen's (2012) study, which indicated that there were considerable deficiencies in teachers' knowledge and confidence regarding grammar terms: "Generally speaking teachers were most comfortable with commonly used terms such as nouns, verbs and adjectives" (p. 152). This idea will be further explored in the Discussion chapter of this thesis. Jones and Chen also reported that teachers in their study felt "anxious, overwhelmed and confused" (p.157) by the new grammar requirements of the *Australian Curriculum*.

However, despite such concerns, there is cause for optimism because the *Australian Curriculum* is at the beginning of its life. Derewianka (2012) discovered that "teachers are finding that the Language strand offers a sound, theoretically coherent foundation that they and their students can draw on as the basis for lively exploration of language and how it works" (p. 144). Derewianka (2012) also states that the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority itself views the Curriculum as a document that is evolving and that will be constantly refined as teachers work with it in the classroom.

On the other hand, an opposing view can be found in the final report of the review into the national curriculum commissioned by the federal government and published in 2014. Concerns were expressed in the area of

... teacher knowledge and expertise, the quality and effectiveness of teacher education courses and the extent to which the National Professional Standards for Teachers ... ensure that English teachers, and teachers in general, are best able to implement the curriculum in

classrooms across Australia. (Australian Government, Department of Education, 2014, p. 164)

The review continues with the concern that no matter how laudable the curriculum's emphasis on the teaching of grammar might be, many classroom teachers simply lack the knowledge and skills to teach it. This concern is expressed very strongly as follows:

This admirable aspiration in the curriculum raises a fundamental issue: how are teachers who may be themselves untrained and unskilled in grammar (having come from a system in their own schooling where it was not taught) to be educated and supported in achieving the projected 'sophisticated understanding of grammar'? (Australian Government, Department of Education, 2014, p. 165)

The reality that most current teachers are under-prepared to teach grammar is difficult to minimise in view of the fact that several generations of Australian teachers have engaged in little or no formal study of foreign languages, as this is an area of the curriculum that requires a focus on metalanguage and knowledge of grammar conventions. The same teachers are also likely to be the products of some decades of English teaching that showed little or no emphasis on grammar and punctuation. For these reasons, it is essential that the new curriculum should have support for teachers built into it (Australian Government, 2014, p. 165). Without this support, it is doubtful that the requirements of the national curriculum will be able to be effectively implemented.

2.9 Relationship between the literature review and this study

Most of the literature concerning teachers' preparedness to teach grammar seems to be centred on student teachers and beginning teachers. However, student and beginning teachers go on to become established and long-term teachers. There is little indication in the literature about whether, with time, teachers of English learn more grammar, or whether, after years of teaching practice, they are still unsure of

their personal grammar knowledge and their confidence to teach grammar effectively.

Deficiencies pertinent to this study have been identified in the literature as follows:

- There is a lack of professional development and a lack of effective resources for teachers, and even where these exist, there is little information available to currently practising teachers (Andrews, 2003; Huddleston, 2010; Lê et al., 2011; Wang 2010). This study will culminate in a professional development program for both current teachers and for new teachers beginning work at the English teaching institute involved in this study.
- There are currently no mechanisms to assess the linguistic knowledge of teachers (in Australia) (Hudson, 1998; Kömür, 2010; Lê et al., 2011). This study will ascertain the specifics that are lacking in the grammar knowledge of a group of teachers from an English language teaching centre within an Australian university.
- There is a difference between our ability to use grammar effectively and our knowledge of it (Alderson et al., 1996; Andrews, 1999; Lê et al., 2011; Louden & Rohl, 2006). The professional development program resulting from this study will address teachers' lack of grammar knowledge and their ability and confidence to teach grammar effectively.
- One of the respondents in the Lê study suggested that one-off methods do not work and that someone should come to the school for a period of six months or so to promote whole school involvement (Lê et al., 2011). These prolonged periods would result in the development of skilfulness among teachers (Ur, 1988). The professional development program resulting from this study will provide exactly that kind of sustained on-going in-house professional development.
- More serious and substantial research to investigate the real grammatical awareness of teachers is needed (Andrews, 1999; Lê et al., 2011). This study is one vehicle to ascertain actual awareness or lack of awareness of specific grammar items among teachers at the English teaching centre chosen for this study.
- Workshops should be provided for current teachers and grammar should be more explicitly dealt with in teacher education courses (Hudson & Walmsley,

2005; Lê et al., 2011). Running of workshops or professional development is the aim of this study. If professional development can be demonstrated to be successful, teacher education professionals could be encouraged to provide more sustained grammar teaching or to increase grammar awareness as part of their courses.

- Teachers believe that they should have good linguistic awareness, and that grammar is an important segment of literacy teaching; teachers are keen to learn more about grammar and grammar teaching strategies (Andrews, 2007; Johnston, 2010; Lê et al., 2011). The professional development program resulting from this study will give teachers ample opportunity to develop good linguistic awareness.

Research conducted by Lê et al. (2011) consisted of an investigation into primary school teachers' grammar awareness, whereas this study specifically included specialist English teachers working within the context of an English language teaching centre embedded within an Australian university. The teachers in the current study dealt with adult international students, whereas the respondents in the Lê study were teachers of primary school children. Although the populations of Lê's study and this study were not the same, and entry requirements into the two areas of the profession are different, there is a certain similarity between the two, as, in Australia, both populations have been subject to a dearth of grammar in their own personal schooling and in their preparation programs to become teachers. The current study sought to build on the findings of Lê et al. and some of the other authors examined in this review. The literature does not show that any professional development program has been produced for teachers based on the gaps in their personal grammar knowledge. This is the ultimate aim of the current study.

2.10 Conclusion

The surveyed literature leads to the conclusion that over the past fifty years or so, in fact since the Dartmouth Conference of 1966, teachers have not been well prepared for the teaching of grammar in English programs aimed at domestic students or in TESOL programs aimed at international students. Furthermore, academics are advocating for the teaching of grammar which would not be as

prescriptive as it was in times past, but would be more accepting of variations. Nevertheless, current teachers actually need to be taught grammar in more in-service programs if the Australian Federal Government's desire to include serious grammar study in the new *Australian Curriculum* is to be successful. Furthermore, specialist TESOL teachers would seem to be in a similar situation to teachers of children in regular schools as far as grammar knowledge is concerned, as the CELTA course (basic entry requirement into TESOL teaching) does not provide depth of knowledge regarding grammar. TESOL teachers need much more knowledge and confidence to impart the grammar required for international students to learn English effectively in order for them to become successful communicators in English, and in order for them to feel confident in their teachers' grammar knowledge.

Furthermore, no studies were identified which showed exactly which grammar items teachers have difficulty understanding and therefore teaching. It is this gap in the literature that this study addresses, at least with regard to a particular group of teachers at an English teaching institute attached to an Australian university. These gaps in teacher knowledge will be translated into a tailored professional development program in grammar for teachers at the English teaching centre chosen for this study.

The next chapter will examine the methodology that was employed in this study and will indicate how the methodology, approach, design and methods that were used complement the research aim and objectives of this study.

3 Methodology

Within the context of this thesis, the role of this chapter is to show how the actual study was conducted in order to bring about an understanding of the very purpose of the entire study. Therefore, the purposes of this chapter are: (i) to describe the research methodology used and to show how it complements the research aim and objectives of this study; (ii) to examine the research approach, design and methods; and (iii) to briefly explain how the data were collected and analysed.

The chapter will begin with a short discussion of the various paradigms and the methodology that can be applied to this study, followed by a discussion of the mixed method approach that was used. It will then move to focus on action research and its importance in this type of study and will discuss how action research was used in this investigation. The research aim, question and objectives will follow, as will a section comprising the research site, participants and sampling. After this, there will be a section on research design and instrumentation, followed by data collection and data analysis. The validity and reliability of the study will then be presented followed by a section on triangulation. Finally, a concluding section will draw this chapter to a close.

3.1 Research paradigms and methodologies

Methodologies for research are born out of paradigms or world views which can be considered as models or frameworks for observation and understanding, and which shape both what is seen and how it can be understood (Babbie, 2008). When considering macrotheory and microtheory, this study cannot be termed macrotheory as it does not deal with large entities of society. Rather, it supports Babbie's (2008) explanation of microtheory in that it "deals with issues of social life at the level of individuals and small groups" (p. 35). Babbie outlines several paradigms for understanding research which can be applied to this study, for example symbolic interactionism, structural functionalism and rational objectivity.

Symbolic interactionism applies to small societal units where individuals can reach a “common understanding through language and other symbolic systems” (Babbie, 2008, p. 37). According to this explanation, the current study could be thought of as an example of symbolic interactionism because it examines how a particular group of people, in this case, the English language teachers at the centre chosen for this study, reach a common understanding of grammar in order to be able to teach it more effectively. Scarince (2003) defines symbolic interactionism as a way of understanding how the world works and gives the example of viewing the world through lenses in a pair of eyeglasses. In this way, as people interact with the world, they change their behaviour based on the meaning given to those interactions. The current study gives the participants lenses through which to view grammar in association with interactions with the world (the proposed professional development program and other more knowledgeable teachers). Therefore, they can change from being unsure of their knowledge to gaining confidence as a result of their interactions. It is possible for teachers to shape their world so that they do not have to consign themselves to a position of lack of knowledge. This is a powerful paradigm, as individuals (in this study, the teachers) can choose to shape their world rather than be at the mercy of the status quo.

Structural functionalism (or social systems theory) could also apply to this investigation, as this paradigm views an organisation as an organism made up of different parts where each part contributes to the functioning of the whole organism (Babbie, 2008). In this study, the teachers at the selected English language teaching institute are the different parts, and each of them contributes to the functioning of the institute or the organism as a whole. Fisher (2010) explains that structural functionalism began to make its mark at the time when Darwin’s theory of evolution began to influence how human behaviour was viewed. The idea of survival was conceived in functional terms in that each function was crucial to the survival of the whole system. This definition, too, can apply to the current study. The survival, that is the flourishing of the teachers and their confidence, permeates the entire organism, which constitutes the language teaching centre where the teachers work.

Rational objectivity is a philosophical term. Babbie (2008) states that all experiences are subjective, yet humans tend to seek agreement on what is real or objective. He defines objectivity as a conceptual attempt to move beyond individual views. In the final analysis, it is a matter of communication as human beings attempt to find common ground or agreement regarding their subjective experiences. Whenever this search for common ground succeeds, it can be said that objective reality has been reached. Therefore, rational objectivity can also be applied to the current study, since there was an attempt to help respondents reach objective rather than subjective conclusions about how grammar can be understood in order to teach it more effectively.

The current study embodies both qualitative and quantitative data. Babbie (2008) explains various types of research paradigms that apply specifically to qualitative research, namely: naturalism, grounded theory, institutional ethnography, case studies and participatory action research. Naturalism is an early method of field research originating in the 1930s, where observers went to neighbourhoods simply to understand how local communities worked. This study cannot be termed by this description as there was no observation based simply on understanding teachers' knowledge or lack of knowledge of grammar, but rather there was an attempt to ameliorate the situation where teachers lacked knowledge or were unsure of their knowledge. Grounded theory is an approach that attempts to generate a theory from the "constant comparing of unfolding observations" (Babbie, 2008, p. 327). This differs widely from a system of hypothesis testing, in which "theory is used to generate hypotheses to be tested through observations" (Babbie, 2008, p. 327). As this study was based upon hypothesis testing, it does not comply with grounded theory. Babbie (2008) defines institutional ethnography as a research technique in which the "personal experiences of individuals are used to reveal power relationships and other characteristics of the institution within which they operate" (p. 331). As power relationships were not examined in this study, it does not comply with this model either.

The description that is given by Babbie (2008) of participatory action research as an approach in which "the people being studied are given control over the purpose

and procedures of the research” (p. 333) supports this current study. Therefore, from the above, this investigation can be termed as action research which embodies aspects of symbolic interactionism, structural functionalism and rational objectivity.

3.2 Mixed method approach to research

Quantitative and qualitative methods are the main means available for use by researchers. Quantitative data form the “numerical representation and manipulation of observation for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect” (Babbie, 2008, p. 527), whereas qualitative data become the “non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships” (Babbie, 2008, p. 527). In a quantitative study, the researcher might use a standardised questionnaire and measure the results quantitatively to test a hypothesis, whereas in a qualitative study the researcher needs to be more subjective and be much more involved in the phenomenon being studied (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The present study made use of a qualitative approach in Section A of Phase 2 (the survey questions) and also Phase 3 (the semi-structured interviews). However, Phase 1 (the inventory keeping phase) and Section B of Phase 2 (the grammar review) were more quantitative in nature. Therefore, this study can be legitimately termed a mixed method approach. It was considered that using only one of these approaches would be too restrictive. The use of qualitative data only would not have given the measurable data that was gained from the grammar review, while the use of quantitative data only would not have given the insights gleaned from comments in the survey questions or in the interviews.

The classic definition of mixed method research comes from Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) who define this method as including “at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words)” (p. 256). The current study produced two qualitative data categories and two quantitative data categories. This perspective is described in an article on the definition of mixed methods by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) who state that mixed method research combines qualitative and quantitative aspects in

viewpoints, data collection, analysis and inferences. The decision to use mixed method in the current study is ably supported by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), whose definition of mixed method is as follows:

Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (p. 5)

It was considered necessary to use both qualitative and quantitative methods in the current study for a more complete understanding of the situation. While the qualitative data that were collected gave a more rounded aspect to the viewpoints, the quantitative data gave a numerical value which could more easily be analysed from the point of view of devising the professional development program. The quantitative data collected in Phase 1 (listing of grammar problems by teachers as they taught various grammar items) gave rise more readily to the points to be covered in the grammar review (Phase 2, Section B). Collection of these data in a qualitative way, for example through interviews, would have been too time-consuming and unwieldy. It would also have been difficult to use for the purposes of devising a professional development program. The quantitative data from Phase 1 (inventories) was analysed and this analysis gave rise to the grammar items included in the grammar review, which was then further analysed into a compilation of items that would be suitable for inclusion in a professional development program on grammar for the teachers at the centre where the study was undertaken. Analysis was also undertaken in a qualitative way. Phase 2, Section A (survey) consisted of 10 questions where teachers could give as much or as little information as they wished. When these data were analysed, it gave rise to the formulation of Phase 3 (interviews) which was the final qualitative part of the data collected. From the qualitative data, inferences were more easily made about

participants' words regarding their thoughts and feelings. The quantitative data from this study was more clear-cut than inferential.

Creswell and Tashakkori (2007) claim that the mixed method approach has been evolving over the last few decades, and although there appears to be some disagreement regarding whether mixed method is possible, they examine this approach from the method, methodological, paradigm and practice perspectives and conclude that "these perspectives may become less distinct over time as the field matures" (p. 306). More recently, mixed method research has been defined as "the research paradigm that encourages the combined use of qualitative and quantitative research elements to answer complex questions" (Heyvaert, Maes & Onghena, 2013, p. 2) when the use of only one method would not give a complete explanation. These authors define a primary level mixed methods study and a synthesis level mixed methods study and then show the difference between them. The definition given of a primary level mixed methods study relates to the current research:

In a primary level mixed methods study a researcher collects qualitative and quantitative data directly from the research participants, for example through interviews and questionnaires, and combines these diverse data in a single study. (p. 3)

The current study used mixed methods in the way described above to gain a rounded view of the research question, which was "How prepared are teachers of English to teach grammar?" The qualitative data and analysis gave a rounded view of teachers' thoughts on the matter, while the quantitative data and analysis gave the hard facts on which grammar items were lacking in teachers' knowledge. Therefore, the complex question of how prepared English teachers are to teach grammar was given a fuller treatment by employing a mixed method approach.

3.3 Action research

There are many ways in which this study could have been approached, for example it could have been conducted as pure research, which Babbie (2008) describes as

gaining knowledge for its own sake; this type of research could have been conducted with large numbers of teachers from various institutions. However, given the pressing need at the English language teaching institute where this study took place, applied research, described by Babbie (2008) as knowledge gained and subsequently put into action in the form of action research, was considered to be the most appropriate.

It appears that the term *action research* was coined in the 1930s by Kurt Lewin (Adelman, 1993). The contribution of Lewin to action research is also acknowledged by McNiff and Whitehead (2006) in their observation that Lewin's belief was that people would be more motivated in regard to their work if they were permitted to be more involved in making decisions about how their workplaces were run. The term *action research* incorporates the idea of "reflective thought, discussion, decision and action by ordinary people participating in collective research on 'private troubles' that they have in common" (Adelman, 1993, p.8). The idea of a cyclic method of research also originated with Lewin (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). Therefore, it can be thought of as a form of applied research rather than pure research, which is justified in terms of "gaining knowledge for its own sake" (Babbie, 2008, p. 25). In action research, the gaining of knowledge is only for the purpose of formulating an action plan to improve the situation in which the researchers and colleagues find themselves. Action research is also conducted in cycles which can continue indefinitely for constant improvement and refining, with critical reflection occurring after each cycle. The idea of action research as a democratic process is addressed by various authors, for example Elliott (1991); and Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008). Use of the term "democratic" implies collaboration, participation and ownership on the part of all those involved in the process.

Action research has been variously defined. McNiff and Whitehead (2006) examine various definitions, for example "Unlike traditional social science, action enquiries do not aim for closure, nor do practitioners expect to find certain answers" (p. 30). They go on to state that it is "frequently untidy, haphazard and experimental" (p. 30). Another definition shows that action can be integrated with research

(Department of Education and Training, NSW, 2010). These definitions move attention away from the idea of academics working to prove theories, but rather move attention towards practitioners investigating their own practice in order to improve it. At the same time, the practitioners work collaboratively with other practitioners in an ongoing way to provide long-term monitoring and improvement in their practice. McNiff and Whitehead (2006) point out that action research may be conducted by individuals, but it is always “a participative and collaborative exercise, not individualistic” (p. 39). These authors also show that action researchers “aim to investigate their practice with a view to improving it” (p. 32). This idea fits precisely with the current study.

Mills (2007) defines action research as “research done *by* teachers *for* themselves; it is not imposed on them by someone else” (p. 5). Mills goes on to talk about action research as a four-step process which includes (i) area of focus identification; (ii) data collection; (iii) data analysis and interpretation; and (iv) action plan development. Yet another definition is provided by Stringer (2008) as “a distinctive approach to inquiry that is directly relevant to classroom instruction and learning, and provides the means for teachers to enhance their teaching and improve student learning” (p. 1). This study was undertaken to discover to what extent English language teachers are prepared to teach grammar and to subsequently improve their knowledge of grammar for the purposes of enhancing their teaching and making better provision for student learning. The definition of purpose which best befits the current study is that of Burns (2000), which states:

In action research, theories are not validated independently and then applied to practice. They are validated through practice. Action research is a total process in which a problem situation is diagnosed, remedial action planned and implemented, and its efforts monitored, if improvements are to get underway. It is both an approach to problem-solving and a problem-solving process. (p. 443)

These various definitions all show that action research is best conducted by those people involved in the particular situation rather than by outsiders observing

without being involved. The other aspect shared by all the definitions is that a plan must ensue to improve the situation, that is, it is not research simply to add to the body of knowledge, but rather research to bring about changes designed to progress and enrich practice.

Stringer (2008) illustrates how action research broadens the nature and function of research. This author juxtaposes validated knowledge as a way of increasing understanding against a way that ensures democratic and humane processes. Action research brings together these two approaches (the qualitative and the quantitative) in order to validate information and to bring about effective educational practices which have the power to make a difference to people's work and lives. Thus, action research is a most suitable methodology when using a mixed method approach.

The use of action research was central to this study as it applies to education. It specifically aimed to bring about improvement in teaching practice, and also aimed to change attitudes as shown by Burns (2000). In this way, there would be an improvement in the quality of teaching based on improvement in teacher understanding and confidence. Action research was also most applicable in this instance, in that virtually all the teaching staff members were involved in the data collection, and all participants felt that they were contributing to something that was much needed. All staff members agreed that a professional development program in grammar specifically tailored to their needs was of vital importance to them. Therefore, they entered into the study in a spirit of co-operation, cognisant of the fact that their own data collection would inform the professional development program from which they would all benefit. The remainder of this section will illustrate how action research was specifically used in this study.

Burns (2000) shows that action research consists of seven stages (listed in the introductory chapter of this thesis). Burns lists the first stage as the identification of the problem followed by a period of fact-finding (second stage). At this point the research literature can shed light on what can be learned from comparable studies and this would then lead to the formulation of a hypothesis (third stage).

The fourth stage, according to Burns, is gathering further information relevant to the identified problem. This further information can also test the hypothesis. As Burns (2000) suggests, “this ‘testing’ of the hypothesis is not a statistical testing; it is seeing whether the evidence is congruent with the hypothesis” (p. 446). Burns then follows this by a fifth stage – a period of decision-making regarding what kind of action might need to be taken. It may also involve negotiations with senior staff. Implementation of the action plan is the sixth stage in Burns’ seven-stage program. This could see further modifications depending on how well the action plan is implemented. Burns’ seventh and final stage involves interpretation of data and evaluation of the whole project.

This study can be classified as action research, which, in a tertiary context, is not confined to the classroom, but to an educational discourse which could be a course, unit or teaching service. In this investigation, the discourse was an English language teaching centre at an Australian university. Essentially, it was a problem-solving process which defined the scope of this investigation, where teachers were given the opportunity to take part in a study of their own grammar knowledge, to be followed by professional development to redress any deficiencies in that area. This would then lead to more confidence on the part of teachers in the teaching of specific grammar items in the classroom. After one complete cycle, reflection would show whether the professional development needed further refining, so that the end of the cycle could be repeated. It is not envisaged that the entire cycle would be repeated from the beginning. All participants were involved in the data collection, so they all had a very useful and important role to perform from the very beginning of the study.

In accordance with Burns’ (2000) seven stages of action research, the problem identified at the language centre in the current study was that a proportion of teachers, by their own admission, tended to feel insecure about their grammar knowledge. The period of fact-finding took place when participants were each asked to keep an inventory over a five-week period about which specific grammar items they experienced as difficult when teaching grammar in their classes. The next phase of gathering further information was hypothesis-testing, that is the

administering of a survey including a grammar review, to see whether teachers' perceptions were borne out by the testing, or whether teachers were merely insecure and / or anxious about their knowledge. This was followed by semi-structured interviews (four in total). The result would be the progressive devising of a professional development program based on teachers' inventories and grammar review results. Senior staff members were consulted about the delivery of the professional development program. Teachers would be asked to evaluate each session of the professional development program in order to ascertain whether they were more confident after undertaking professional development sessions, or whether further work needed to be done in this area. It is envisaged that the program would be administered over the course of an entire year. The final stage was interpretation of the data and a final evaluation of the whole project (refer to Figure 3.1 below).

Examples of action research conducted in schools include the following studies: Patarroyo (1998) analyses how a strong linguistic heterogeneity and a large class can affect the everyday development of the learning and teaching processes within a classroom. Maguire (2005) examines the introduction of information technology into a primary school context.

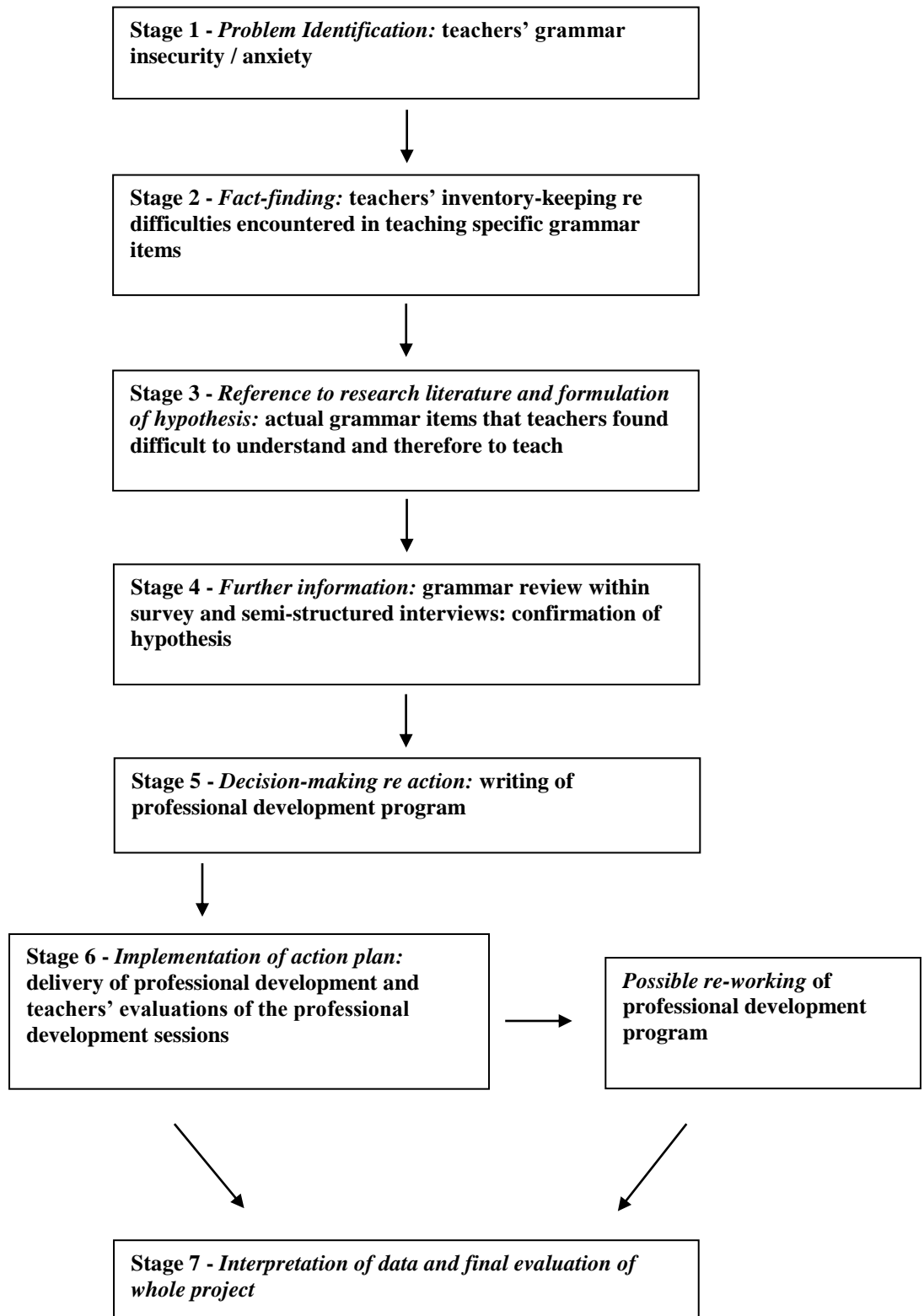


Figure 3.1: Seven stages of action research
(adapted from Burns, 2000)

3.4 Research aim, question and objectives

The aim of this study was to explore the extent of grammar understanding possessed by teachers of English language in relation to expected knowledge required for grammar teaching, and then to devise a professional development program based on the findings of the study. Expected grammar knowledge was taken to be the knowledge required to cover those grammar items appearing in the course book used at the English language teaching centre where this study was conducted. The overarching research question in this study was whether teachers of English language experience difficulties in their own understanding of English grammar, and, if so, which items of English grammar cause particular difficulty. As stated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the study had the following Research Objectives:

Table 3.1 Research Objectives (R.O.) for this study

R.O. 1	to examine teachers' views on the significance of grammar in TESOL
R.O. 2	to examine teachers' views on the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers in TESOL teaching in general, and TESOL grammar teaching in particular
R.O. 3	to identify teachers' knowledge of grammar through inventory keeping and through a grammar review
R.O. 4	to determine variations between teachers' actual knowledge of grammar and expected knowledge of grammar for TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular
R.O. 5	to devise a professional development (P.D.) program based on results of the study and on insights gained from theory and research on grammar teaching
R.O. 6	to implement the P.D. program and evaluate its effectiveness

3.5 Site, participants and sampling for this study

3.5.1 Site

The site chosen for this study was an English language teaching institute at an Australian university. Students at this centre are all full fee paying adult learners, aged 18 and over, who come from various countries, such as Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, Libya, India and many others. They are all full-time students, receiving 20 hours of face-to-face teaching per week in a class of students of a similar level. In this institute, maximum class size is 18; in fact the average number per class should not exceed 16, as laid out by the accrediting body, the National English Language Teaching Accreditation Scheme (NEAS). The majority of students study English to improve their language skills in order to enter an English speaking university. For this reason, grammar is of vital importance to them, as they will be expected to produce written assignments and to participate in tutorials. This means that they will be required to write and to speak in as fluent and grammatically correct English as possible, so that they can be easily understood by both lecturers and fellow students.

3.5.2 Participants

3.5.2.1 Phase 1 – Inventories

All teachers (total of 28) at the chosen centre were invited to participate, as all could benefit from the resulting professional development program. Obviously, some teachers had more grammar knowledge and more confidence than other teachers, even before the study began. As previously mentioned, teachers at the centre chosen for the study could number from ten to 35, since teacher numbers fluctuate according to numbers of students in any given five-week module. The teachers employed at this centre range from young graduates to those who have been teaching for over 30 years. The ratio of females to males is roughly 6:1. All teachers at this centre have first degrees in various disciplines, ranging from education to dentistry. Furthermore, teachers must also hold a qualification to enable them to be specialist English teachers: some teachers have a Master's

degree in linguistics, but the majority have entered the profession through completion of a CELTA course. The CELTA is a four-week course (120 hours) which provides a very practical pre-service qualification for aspiring English language teachers. However, it is not a four-week crash course in English grammar. Among the group of teachers, nine have ongoing status, and they are 60% or 100% full time equivalent. The remainder are termed “casual”, but a better appellation might be “sessional”. In the first phase of the study, 26 teachers volunteered to participate in keeping inventories. This number represented virtually all of the teaching staff, which at that time totalled 28.

3.5.2.2 Phase 2 – Written survey

In Phase 2, the number of participants was 21. The reason for the decrease in numbers was that by the time Phase 2 was conducted, the number of students had decreased. Student numbers tend to vary from one five-week module to the next. Coupled with this situation, the number of teachers had also commensurately declined. Five of the original volunteers were not at the centre when Phase 2 was implemented.

3.5.2.3 Phase 3 – Interviews

In Phase 3, four interviews were held. The backgrounds of the four interviewees are given below:

Respondent 8 was male. In the past he had worked as a bus driver and tour guide. As such, he had previously worked with people of many nationalities, and this drew him to teaching English to international students. When he was tour guiding, he found he could communicate with his clients very well, so it seemed to him to be a logical progression to move into teaching English. He had had very little education, but used to love travelling which led to jobs as a tour bus driver in Europe. He often made quizzes for his tour groups, and he found himself teaching English informally in those situations. He came into English teaching by completing a CELTA course in 2002. This was followed by a Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education degree (BAVE) in 2006 and a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in 2010. He began teaching

English after obtaining the CELTA qualification and before completing the BAVE qualification.

Respondent 10 was female. She came to English teaching after working in office administration. A visit to Japan led her to develop an interest in teaching English to international students. She completed a Bachelor of Arts degree (B.A.) in 1997 and a CELTA in 2005. The CELTA enabled her to enter the profession of teaching English to international students at tertiary level.

Respondent 17 was female. She had been an English language teacher for over 20 years. Her first qualification was a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and she completed a Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics in 1989. Her career in teaching English to international students has spanned more than 20 years and her experience has been Australia-wide.

Respondent 23 was female. Her original qualifications included a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) and a Diploma of Education (Dip.Ed.). She had been a long-term teacher of high school mathematics and science. She completed a CELTA in 2009 and entered the English teaching profession at tertiary level shortly after that time. In addition, at the time of interview, she was studying for a Master's degree in Linguistics. This teacher, although not very young, was very new to the area of English language teaching.

3.5.3 Sampling

When information about the study was advertised and teachers were invited to participate, 26 out of a possible 28 teachers volunteered for the study. Many of them articulated their realisation that this study was very much needed, and that they were very eager to participate in it. Therefore, the sampling for Phase 1 was 93% of the total number of teachers at the time the study took place. For Phase 2, 21 of the original 26 completed the survey.

It could be said that both of these phases employed convenience sampling, which has been termed by Babbie (2008) as “easy, but not representative” (p. 212).

However, because the number of respondents to Phase 1 was 26 out of a possible 28, it is almost a complete enumeration. In this action research case study, only the teachers at the centre where the study took place could have been considered as respondents, and the number who volunteered was a very high percentage. Therefore, the “non-representativeness” aspect of convenience sampling can be said to be not applicable in this instance.

For Phase 3, four participants were invited to take part in the interviews. Invitation to take part is known as purposive sampling, which, according to Babbie (2008), is the selection of participants based on the researcher’s judgement of “which ones will be the most useful” (p. 527).

3.6 Research design and instrumentation used in this study

3.6.1 Design

Isaac and Michael (1995) give the purpose of action research as the development of “new skills or new approaches ... (in order) ... to solve problems with direct application to the classroom” (p. 46). In light of this definition of purpose, it was decided to design a study which would indeed involve new skills and solve problems. The skills which needed to be developed were more advanced grammar skills, and the problem to be solved was how to give teachers more knowledge, expertise and confidence in their own personal understanding of English grammar. To this end, the design of this study included three distinct phases with four sets of data.

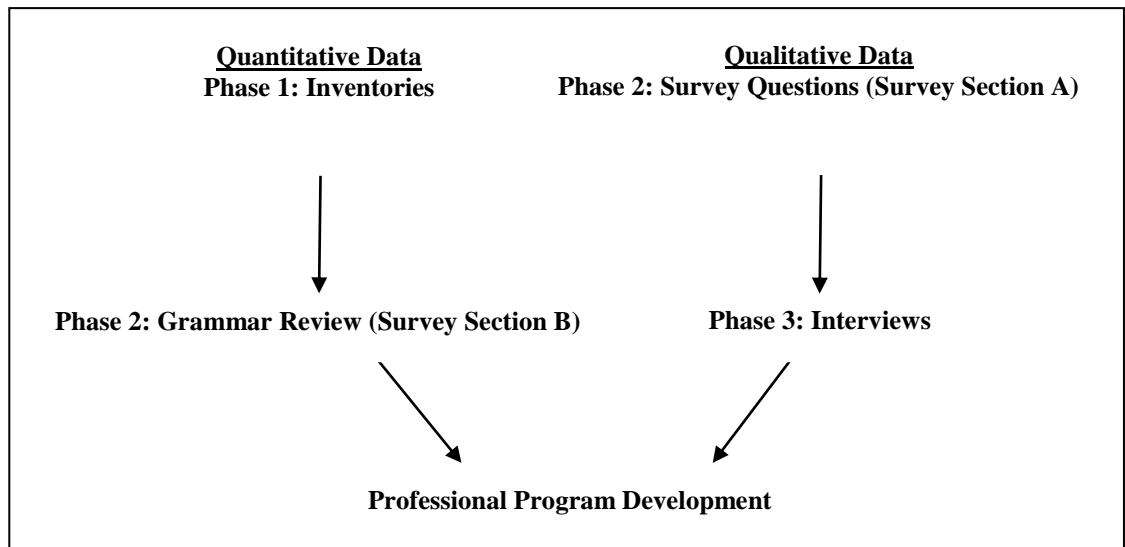


Figure 3.2 Relationship between the 3 phases of the research project and the resultant PD program

Figure 3.2 shows the relationship between the various phases of the project and shows how all phases eventually led to the Professional Development program. The three phases of the study, each using its own research instrument, will be introduced in this section. This study used a mixed method approach, that is, qualitative and quantitative methods were employed for the different parts of the research. Section A of the survey (written questions), as well as Phase 3 (the semi-structured interviews), provided the qualitative data for the study. Quantitative methods were used for the data collected from the inventories (Phase 1) and also from the grammar review (Phase 2, Section B) as results of both of these components could be analysed quantitatively.

During the first phase, respondents were each asked to keep an inventory of grammar taught during the five-week period. In addition they were asked to list which of the items caused them difficulties. It was decided to begin the study in this way to give all the teacher participants the opportunity to gather data individually regarding their own understanding of the grammar they needed to teach. This phase provided quantitative data. The inventories were designed with the idea that teachers would simply list grammar taught on any particular day and from this list to identify difficult items. They were not asked to give reflections.

The second phase comprised a survey. The survey was cross-sectional in design, rather than longitudinal, that is, it collected information from respondents at one point in time (Stringer, 2008). The survey comprised two distinct sections. In Section A, respondents were asked to provide information about themselves in the first four questions, specifically their number of years of teaching experience and their qualifications. The remaining six questions asked respondents to give their personal views on the significance of grammar in TESOL as well as the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers in TESOL teaching in general, and TESOL grammar teaching in particular. The data in Section A of the survey were qualitative. The respondents were able to give as much or as little information as they wished to the open-ended questions (refer to Appendix 5).

Section B of the survey consisted of a grammar review. This review was based on the lists of items in the teachers' inventories of difficulties encountered in their understanding of grammar that they needed to teach. The reason for the inclusion of such a review was to ascertain whether teachers' grammar knowledge was actually deficient or whether they had simply been under-confident in their inventory listings. The grammar review provided quantitative data. Stringer (2008) refers to various types of evaluation. One of these is audit review, and he points out that the word "audit" means "to check". The grammar review was precisely a checking mechanism, where teachers' grammar knowledge was checked against their own reported difficulties (refer to Appendix 6). Therefore the grammar review can be termed an audit review.

The third phase was the inclusion of semi-structured interviews. The interview questions grew out of the responses to Section A of the survey and sought to gain further insight into the teachers' ideas regarding such questions as, for example, the role of grammar in teaching and learning, and preference for grammar teaching approaches (refer to Appendix 9). In total, four interviews were conducted, which produced qualitative data.

These three phases in the study will lead to the writing of a progressive professional development program, of which the first session only had been designed and

delivered before the end of this study. This program will consist of a series of workshops designed to show teachers how much they already know, that is, their strengths, and to give them help and confidence in how to improve their own knowledge of grammar, that is, work on their weaknesses. This professional development program will be based on teachers' perceived weaknesses (Phase 1 – inventories) and also on the objective testing (Phase 2 – Section B of the survey – grammar review). The frequency of the workshops will be worked out in consultation with senior staff. As Stringer (2008) states, action research “provides the means for formulating relevant and effective professional development programs” (p. 167). The need to provide and improve professional development for teachers has been clearly stated in the literature, e.g. Andrews (2003), Huddleston (2010), Lê et al. (2011) and Wang (2010).

3.6.2 Instrumentation

3.6.2.1 Inventories

This first phase of the study was not about whether students understood the grammar that was taught, rather, the emphasis was on the teachers' understanding. It was decided to call this phase of the research “inventory keeping” rather than “journal keeping”, as the idea of journals in research methodology is usually associated with reflective writing. Participants were asked not to write reflective pieces, but simply to record the grammar they had taught and indicate any items they had found difficult to teach according to their own understanding and knowledge. The data collected in this phase were considered to be quantitative rather than qualitative. Teachers were given a notebook in which to keep their daily records. At the end of the five-week period, teachers were also asked to write down as a separate entry at the back of the notebook any grammar items that they would like included in a professional development program, but which they had not had the opportunity to teach during that same module. It was thought that in this way, teachers would have ample opportunity to express uncertainty about actual grammar items taught and also about those items that caused them stress but

which they did not need to cover during the module in which this phase of the study took place.

At the end of the five week module, the notebooks were collected, and the noted grammar items were tabled into categories (refer to samples in Appendices 1 & 2). These grammar points formed the basis for the items that were included in the grammar review. It was decided to include a grammar review within the survey in Phase 2 of the study because teachers might simply be under-confident about their knowledge, and it was thought that a grammar review would either confirm the data from the inventories, or demonstrate lack of confidence. The keeping of grammar inventories would begin to address Research Objective 3 (identify teachers' knowledge of grammar) and Research Objective 4 (identify variations between actual and expected knowledge of grammar).

3.6.2.2 Surveys

Burns' (2000) stage 4, which consisted of gathering further information and hypothesis-testing, formed the second phase of the study. This phase consisted of a written survey which comprised two distinct parts: Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of ten questions which sought background information about the participants and their attitudes to grammar. This would begin to address Research Objective 1 (teachers' views on the significance of grammar) and Research Objective 2 (teachers' views on the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers). Section B comprised a grammar review based on items teachers had identified as causing them difficulties in the inventories that had been kept in Phase 1 of the study. This would further develop understanding of Research Objectives 3 and 4 (which had begun with the inventory keeping in Phase 1).

The first four questions in Section A sought personal information about the participants, such as educational background, courses specifically taken to prepare them for teaching English, as well as where and when their English teaching qualifications had been obtained. These questions were analysed along with the results of the grammar review, as it was hoped to discover whether qualifications or length of teaching service had any bearing on the review results for each individual

participant. Therefore, Questions 1 to 4 further developed understanding of Research Objectives 3 and 4. Questions 5 to 8 sought views on the role of grammar, preferred teaching approach, role and helpfulness or otherwise of grammar exercises in class, issues of interest and motivation in grammar for students. These questions referred back to Research Objectives 1 and 2. Questions 9 and 10 asked teachers whether they felt adequately prepared to teach grammar and then to give reasons for their answers. Thus, Questions 9 and 10 would again reinforce understanding regarding Research Objectives 1 and 2.

The grammar review in Section B of the survey consisted of 20 questions (refer to Appendix 6). These questions arose from the items identified by teachers as difficult in the grammar inventories they had kept in Phase 1. For the first five questions, participants were asked to do three things for each question: (i) state whether the given sentence was correct or incorrect; (ii) identify the grammar item in the sentence; and (iii) give a correct version of the sentence if the original had been incorrect. The grammar items in these questions covered conditional sentences, embedded question word order, punctuation with *however*, and sentence fragments which had all been listed by teachers as causing them some difficulties in the inventories. Of six teachers who taught conditionals, one found this a difficult item and four other teachers (who had not taught it) had requested this item to be included in a professional development program. Of three teachers who taught embedded question word order, one reported difficulty with this item. Of two teachers teaching punctuation with *however*, one reported difficulties and four other teachers (who had not taught this item) requested it. Of three teachers teaching about sentence fragments, one reported difficulties and two teachers (who had not taught this item) requested its inclusion in a professional development program.

Questions 6 to 11 asked participants to make a choice between one of two easily confused words in the sentences. The words tested in this section included *effect* and *affect* as well as *it's* and *its*. From the inventories, five teachers taught similar words that are easily confused, and all of them reported difficulties. Questions 12 to 15 required participants to underline all verbs in the sentences and to identify the

tense or form of each one, giving as much detail as possible. From the inventories, 20 teachers taught various aspects of verbs, and of those, 12 reported difficulties and 15 requested various aspects of verbs to be considered in a professional development program.

Questions 16 and 17 asked participants to identify the type of conditional sentence each portrayed. As conditionals had a high rate of either difficulty or special request in the inventories, it was decided to devote these two further questions to this item. Questions 18 and 19 required identification of transitive and intransitive verbs. Only one teacher taught transitive and intransitive verbs but did not report any difficulties. However, this item was requested by one teacher who had not taught it.

Question 20 was a lengthy and complex sentence, and participants were asked to grammatically analyse each element (each single word and also groups of words) in the sentence. The items in this sentence were not identified in any way, so teachers were working without any given cues. This question hoped to draw out whether teachers could in fact identify grammar items, both well-known ones and not so well-known ones, from their own grammar knowledge. All questions in Phase 2 Section B were designed to test teachers' knowledge of specific grammar items which they themselves had identified as difficult in the inventories.

3.6.2.3 Interviews

Drever (1995) describes the use of semi-structured interviews as a flexible technique suitable for small-scale research. Drever also shows that semi-structured interviews are not suitable for studies involving large numbers of people, but concludes they are most useful in small studies such as the current one. Four interviews were conducted in total. The sampling was purposive, which is shown by Babbie (2008) to be selection "on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ... (respondents) ... will be the most useful" (p.207).

Qualitative data were collected through the four semi-structured interviews to gain explanatory and complementary information together with information that had

already been gleaned from the previous two phases of the study. The interview questions (refer to Appendix 9) grew out of the answers to the survey questions (Phase 2, Section A). The decision to include these questions in the interviews was made in order to better understand the respondents' positions on how grammar is perceived by teachers who are the actual practitioners of classroom grammar teaching. These questions would further address Research Objectives 1 and 2. Four interviews were held in total: the four participants were chosen because of their different genders, ages and academic backgrounds. Three female teachers and one male teacher were included in this phase of the study. One was a long-standing English language teacher, while the other three came from backgrounds as varied as mathematics and science teaching, office administration and tour bus driving. It was considered that the various backgrounds would provide richer data than if the interviewees had come from similar backgrounds.

Babbie (2008) explains that the qualitative interview is more like a discussion than a set of standardised questions; however, the interviewer must be prepared to bring the discussion back to the point if the interviewee takes the conversation off-topic. The interviews in this study comprised a set of questions within which the interviewees were given broad scope to discuss the questions as they wished. Sometimes further questions such as "Can you give an example of that?" were added by the interviewer. This corresponds with Johnson and Christensen's (2004) idea that the process of interviewing causes the researcher to search for meanings from the conversations with the interviewees.

Table 3.2 Contribution of each instrument to the Research Objectives (R.O.)

Research Objectives	Phase 1: Inventories	Phase 2: Section A Questions 1 - 10	Phase 2: Section B Grammar Review	Phase 3: Interview Questions
R.O. 1	N/A	Q. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10	N/A	Q. 1, 3, 4
R.O. 2	N/A	Q. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	N/A	Q. 2, 5
R.O. 3	All inventory items	Q. 1, 2, 3, 4	Grammar Review	N/A

R.O. 4	All inventory items	Q. 1, 2, 3, 4	Grammar Review	N/A
R.O. 5	All inventory items	N/A	Grammar Review	Q. 6
R.O. 6	All phases and R.O.5 contributed to R.O.6			

3.6.2.4 Professional Development Program

Action research is designed to effect change in order to enrich practice. Both Mills (2007) and Burns (2000) incorporate a plan of action as part of their descriptions of action research. Burns (2000) also includes in his explanation that action research is “an approach to problem-solving and a problem-solving process” (p. 443). The professional development program in grammar was designed to fulfil these aspects given by both Mills and Burns.

The first session of the professional development program was conducted prior to the end of the current study. The impending session was advertised at a staff meeting and subsequently in the staff meeting minutes so that all staff would have access to the information. Twelve respondents attended the first session. The session was conducted in a classroom at the centre where the study took place, and lasted for one hour. Information was presented through the medium of laptop computer and projector while participants worked in groups of three or four on the work given to them. All documentation relating to the first professional development session is to be found in Appendix 11. At the end of the session, participants were asked to remain and complete an evaluation form for that session. All evaluation forms for the first session are to be found in Appendix 12. The evaluation forms provided the basis for understanding whether change took place in teachers’ comprehension of the grammar item presented at that session.

3.7 Data collection

The survey questions in Phase 2, Section A and the semi-structured interviews in Phase 3 gave rise to analysis of qualitative data, while the inventories in Phase 1 and

the grammar review in Phase 2, Section B gave rise to analysis of quantitative data. Information from the inventories and the grammar reviews would be used to formulate professional development sessions for teachers on the specific points which either had been identified by them in the inventories or which were not done well in the review. Teachers would be asked to rate each professional development session.

3.7.1 Phase 1

The first phase required teachers to each keep an inventory of any difficulties, problems or insecurities encountered in teaching specific grammar points covered in the course book used at the centre where the study took place. As this institute uses a specific text book that is published with different sequential stages for classes at various levels, grammar is encountered systematically from pre-intermediate to upper intermediate levels in every five-week module over all the classes. In some modules, there is more than one class at a specific level. Therefore, in a five-week period, all grammar items covered in the text would be taught. That is, no teacher would cover all the grammar, but certain items would be covered at various levels by different teachers. These grammar items are the traditional ones generally presented by all textbooks at pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper intermediate levels. Occasionally, one level might not be taught in a particular module. However, in the chosen module at the beginning of 2012 all levels were taught, so all the grammar included in the text at different levels was covered. For this first phase of the study, the 26 respondents were given a booklet in which to record their inventory data on a daily basis. These booklets were collected from the respondents at the end of the five-week period.

3.7.2 Phase 2

The second phase comprised a survey. After the inventories had been analysed, a survey was compiled. The survey consisted of two distinct sections: A and B. Analysis of the grammar review would show whether teachers had real difficulties with grammar items (testing the hypothesis), or whether they had simply been

under-confident during the inventory keeping stage in Phase 1. The grammar review included questions which asked respondents to explore certain grammar points. This would show their understanding or lack of understanding of those grammar items. The grammar review was embedded within the more general survey. Surveys were issued to respondents after the inventories were collected and after it had been determined which grammar items should be included in the review, that is, the grammar identified by teachers in the inventories as causing them stress.

3.7.3 Phase 3

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with four teachers in order to obtain further insights. Interviews were conducted on-site at mutually convenient times. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed (refer to Appendix 9). The four respondents chosen for interview were teachers who had come into the English teaching profession from very different backgrounds.

3.8 Data analysis

In mixed method studies, there are two different timeframes for the analysis of data. Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) state that in parallel or simultaneous mixed method design, data analysis occurs after all the data have been collected. However, in sequential mixed method studies, the data analysis begins before the completion of all data collection. This study was a sequential one, and each phase was analysed before the next phase began as Phase 2 depended on the analysis of Phase 1, and Phase 3 depended on the analysis of Phase 2.

Stringer (2008) shows in graphic form how to categorise and code data into units of meaning. In this system, categorising begins at the top and works its way downwards as items are categorised further and further into smaller and more distinct units. Coding begins at the bottom and works its way upwards as certain elements on the same level are coded according to their parent code above them. Table 3.4 illustrates how categorising and coding were applied to this study.

3.8.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative data analysis was applied to Phase 1, inventories and to Phase 2, Section B, grammar review (data categories 1 and 3). These two sets of data were categorised into units for analysis. The purpose of categorising data is to “identify commonalities, regularities or patterns” (Stringer, 2008, p.100). For an all-staff professional development program, one would have to base the items covered on a consistent pattern of what is lacking in teacher knowledge and / or confidence on a broad level. If all teachers had different items that they were unfamiliar with, this would result in individual professional development programs rather than group professional development. The aim was to produce a group professional development program. The collected data gave rise to information which was unitised, for instance, all verb problems were categorised together, unless the range was too broad, in which case verb problems were further categorised into smaller units, but in different sections from noun problems or sentence structure problems. This depended entirely on the data collected from both the inventories and the grammar review section of the surveys. These units were used to construct themes to be covered in the professional development program. Themes identified were:

- Sentence structure issues, incorporating, for example, conditionals, relative clauses, embedded question word order and sentence fragments;
- Noun issues, for example nouns fulfilling adjectival functions in sentences, especially in academic writing;
- Articles: definite, indefinite or zero article and which article to choose, if any, in various situations;
- Similar word confusion, for example, *effect / affect; and*
- Verb issues, incorporating, for example, mood, voice, tense, aspect and mode.

Table 3.4 below illustrates how categorising and coding were done in this instance. Categorising begins at the top and works its way downwards as items are categorised further and further into smaller and more distinct units. Coding begins at the bottom and works its way upwards as certain elements on the same level are

coded according to their parent code above them. Therefore, sentence structure would be categorised into, for example, conditional sentences; sentences containing relative clauses; embedded question word order and sentence fragments. Conditionals were further categorised into zero, first, second, third and mixed conditionals, while relative clauses were further categorised into defining, non-defining and reduced relative clauses. Coding began with a consideration, for example, that active and passive are coded under voice, which, in turn, is coded under verbs et cetera (refer to Table 3.4). Such coding was a useful exercise in order to make sense of all the different items that teachers had listed in the inventories and also items identified as difficult from the grammar review section of the survey. These items would eventually lead to a program of professional development in grammar for the staff at the centre where the study took place.

The first session of the professional development program was held before the end of the study and dealt with the use of the word *that* in English grammar. This does not appear in Table 3.4 because it does not fit into the parameters of the table, as it is a word that crosses over four different aspects of grammar and was unable to be placed in one single spot on the table. As such, it is more of a dictionary item than a grammar book item, and as it caused such difficulty for the respondents in the grammar review, it became the first item presented in the professional development program.

3.8.2 Qualitative data

Qualitative data analysis was applied to Phase 2, survey, Section A and to Phase 3, interviews (data categories 2 and 4). Within the process of action research, data analysis can be conducted in two diverse ways. The first is that of “key issues and experiences” (Stringer, 2008, p. 88). This method is used mainly to analyse aspects of a situation that have significant impact on the events studied (Stringer, 2008). The current study, however, is not based on a number of issues and experiences. It is based on a single issue, that is, grammar knowledge and confidence among teachers of English. Therefore, the second type of data analysis is more appropriate, that of “categorising and coding” where data is sorted into categories (Stringer,

2008, p. 100). The purpose of such analysis is to “distil or crystallise the data in ways enabling researcher participants to interpret and make sense out of the collected materials” (Stringer, 2008, p.100). In the current study, this involved looking for patterns in teachers’ opinions. Patterns that were identified in the analysis of section A of the surveys were taken forward into the semi-structured interviews, where the four interviewees were asked to further explore some of the issues arising from the survey questions. This was done in order to better understand how respondents viewed the role of grammar in English language teaching and learning. Therefore, the interview questions were dependent on the responses to the survey questions. Table 3.3 below shows how the survey (Section A) data led to the interview questions.

Table 3.3 Issues arising from Phase 2 (Section A) and how they were linked to Interview Questions in Phase 3

Survey data	Interview questions
All survey respondents were engaged in teaching some aspects of grammar at the English teaching centre where the study took place.	Interview Question 1: What is your opinion of the grammar teaching program in this language school?
Survey respondents agreed grammar was important, but disagreed on how important it might be.	Interview Question 2: How do you think that teachers’ grammar knowledge affects how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English?
Survey respondents preferred different grammar teaching approaches; among them CLT was the most preferred.	Interview Question 3: Is CLT adequate for grammar teaching and do teachers need to be very knowledgeable about grammar to teach English using CLT?
Survey respondents differed widely in opinions regarding the usefulness of grammar exercises in class.	Interview Question 4: Do you think that teachers’ views on the use of grammar exercises are linked to how prepared they are to teach grammar?
On the issue of how to make grammar more interesting and motivating for students, survey respondents’ ideas included games, relevance and teacher attitude.	Interview Question 5: What do you think about these ideas in relation to making grammar more interesting and motivating for students?

Interviewees were given the opportunity to expand their answers further.	Interview Question 6: Would you like to add any further comments to this discussion?
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The survey data were also examined in terms of whether opinions were related to respondents' educational backgrounds, their various methods of entry into the profession, as well as their length of service.

An example of exactly how questions were further explored in the interviews is shown below. The second interview question was phrased in the following way, initially linking the question to the survey (phase 2), then moving into the actual interview question which is given in bold:

*A question we had in the survey was: "What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?" All the respondents agreed that grammar was of some importance. However, answers ranged from 'central', 'essential', 'important', to 'need basic knowledge to manipulate the language'. **How do you think that teachers' grammar knowledge affects how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English?***

The analysis of the four interviews that were conducted showed that the four respondents had totally different answers to this question. Further details are to be found in Chapter 4 of this thesis. It is possible that there could have been different perspectives between the male and female teachers, between teachers who had practised for differing lengths of time, or between teachers who had entered the profession via different pathways. These differences, if they existed, would emerge during the course of the analysis.

Table 3.4 Category & coding system for grammar items identified as difficult from inventories and from grammar review
(adapted from Stringer, 2008)

GRAMMAR ITEMS - GENERAL

SENTENCE STRUCTURE ↓				NOUNS ↓	ARTICLES ↓	SIMILAR WORD CONFUSION ↓
CONDITIONAL SENTENCES ↓ ZERO FIRST SECOND THIRD MIXED	RELATIVE CLAUSES ↓ DEFINING NON-DEFINING REDUCED (including punctuation)	EMBEDDED QUESTION WORD ORDER	SENTENCE FRAGMENTS	USED AS ADJECTIVES IN ACADEMIC WRITING (avoidance of possessive apostrophe)	DEFINITE INDEFINITE ZERO	ITS / IT'S EFFECT / AFFECT ETC.

GRAMMAR ITEMS - VERBS

FINITE VERBS					NON-FINITE VERBS	AUXILIARY VERBS
MOOD	VOICE	TENSE	ASPECT	MODE		
Indicative	Active	Past	Simple	Transitive/Intransitive	Gerunds	Modals
Subjunctive	Passive	Present	Progressive	Action/State	Infinitives	Passive 'be'
Imperative		Future	Perfect		Lone Participles	Progressive 'be'
						Perfect 'have'
						Question & Negative 'do'
Finite verbs must have a <u>clear subject</u> in the sentence. The imperative has an unexpressed but understood subject "you". These verbs can exist alone in a sentence.					Non-finite verbs have <u>one form only</u>. They <u>do not relate to a clear subject</u> in a sentence. They can exist alone in a sentence.	Auxiliary verbs relate to a subject. They also have tenses. Apart from modals, they can also show singular / plural forms. <u>They cannot exist alone in a sentence.</u>

3.9 Validity and reliability of this study

3.9.1 Validity

Babbie (2008) defines validity as “a term describing a measure that accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure” (p.160) and criterion-related validity as “the degree to which a measure relates to some external criterion” (p. 161). The validity of the present study is shown in the intention to measure the grammar knowledge or lack of grammar knowledge among teachers of English language. This intention was carried out in the inventories and in the grammar review. The criterion-related validity of this investigation can be seen in the relationship between teachers’ perceived grammar knowledge as shown in the inventories (Phase 1) and their actual grammar knowledge as shown in the grammar review (Phase 2, Section B). Criterion-related validity regarding teachers’ grammar confidence can be seen in the relationship between the responses to Questions 5 – 10 in the survey (Phase 2, Section A), and the further exploration in the interviews (Phase 3).

The grammar review was intended as a measure against the inventory data, so the grammar review can be termed the external criterion to the inventories. The interview data can be termed the external criterion to Questions 5 - 10 in the survey (Section A). Therefore, the grammar review and the interview data were the criteria respectively measuring teacher knowledge in the inventories and teacher confidence in the survey (Section A). In this way, the criterion-related validity of this study was ensured.

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability is defined by Babbie (2008) as “that quality of measurement methods that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon” (p.157). From this study, it is suggested that because teachers (either during their own school days or as student teachers) have not had adequate grammar preparation for the past 50 years in English speaking countries (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005), data which might be collected

anywhere in domestic schools or in tertiary English teaching centres in Australia would have been similar to the data collected during the course of this study in this particular setting. Should this study be repeated in another setting of specialist English teachers in an English speaking country, it is anticipated that the results would be similar because of the history of grammar teaching.

Babbie (2008) also discusses the question of reliability with regard to the researcher: “By presenting all subjects with a standardized stimulus, survey research goes a long way towards eliminating unreliability in observations made by the researcher” (p. 305). According to this explanation, the survey, including the grammar review within this study, can be considered reliable in that all respondents had the same stimulus. Moreover, the review was a test of grammar knowledge incorporating grammar aspects which had been identified by the respondents themselves in the inventories. Respondents were asked to complete the review without reference to any other person or to any other material. This aspect could not be reliably ascertained as the review was not conducted under supervision.

3.10 Triangulation

Triangulation involves using more than one kind of method to study a phenomenon. It has been found to be beneficial in providing “confirmation of findings, more comprehensive data, increased validity and enhanced understanding of studied phenomena” (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012, p. 40). In this study, triangulation was achieved through different data sources and types: (i) initial inventory-keeping in Phase 1; (ii) surveys, Section A in Phase 2 (ten questions eliciting facts and opinions) (iii) surveys, Section B (grammar review) in Phase 2; and (iv) semi-structured interviews in Phase 3. These provided three different data sources and four different data categories. Therefore, correlation or triangulation occurred.

Triangulation would normally involve three different groups, for example teachers, students and investigators. However, in this action research study, it was the teachers who provided all the data. The aim and objectives of this study centred on teachers only; therefore, all the data were collected from teachers, but in different ways.

Further definition of triangulation is given by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), who define two types of triangulation: data triangulation and method triangulation. According to their definition, this study is an example of method triangulation or intermethod mixing, as it uses different methods (each with its own quantitative or qualitative aspect) within the study. It is not an example of intramethod or data triangulation as it does not use a single method with both qualitative and quantitative aspects within the one method.

3.11 Conclusion

Action research was chosen as the methodology for this study because it was an investigation where virtually all teachers at the chosen centre were involved in data collection, and where the ultimate outcome of the study (the professional development program) would benefit all staff members. As previously stated, using Burns' (2000) seven-stage approach, the problem situation was diagnosed (teachers' lack of confidence and inadequate knowledge of grammar). This first stage was followed by fact-finding (inventory keeping by teachers), which then led to a hypothesis based on the research literature (particular grammar items that teachers found difficult and the writing of a grammar review). The next step was the gathering of further information (administering the grammar review to teachers). The resultant action was the writing of the professional development program. An action plan was implemented by way of delivering the resultant professional development program (only one session was delivered before the end of the study), which would have the potential to be re-worked based on teacher feedback. Finally interpretation of data and evaluation of the entire study ensued.

The professional development program can be used at the chosen English language teaching centre into the future to upskill teachers and give them confidence in their own knowledge and ability to teach grammar. Further grammar can be added in the future depending on the needs of future teachers at that centre, that is, the cycle can continue, in order to deliver further knowledge and confidence to teachers. This further knowledge will be based on their own identified needs in the future. The following chapter will give the data analysis and results of the study. It will examine

in greater detail how the action research methodology gave rise to the actual results by the use of the mixed method approach.

4 Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to understand English teachers' preparedness to teach English grammar in the light of the fact that grammar has been taught less and less in English speaking nations for the past 50 years (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005). This chapter will first give the different aspects of the data analysis and results followed by a description of the qualitative and quantitative data categories that were collected during the course of the study. The next section will show the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the various data categories. The relevance of the analysis to the research aim, question and objectives will be described and explained. Finally, a concluding section will bring this chapter to a close.

4.1 Different aspects of data analysis and results

As the data were collected, the information was categorised and recorded in tables for ease of later analysis. When Phase 1 (inventory keeping) of the study had been completed, the resultant information was tabulated. The various tables (refer to Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4) showed the emerging issues, that is, the grammar items which were least understood and those items were then included in the grammar review. The review formed part of the written survey, which constituted Phase 2 of the study. When the second phase of the study had been completed, the resultant data were further tabled. Phase 2 (survey) consisted of two sections. Section A consisted of ten questions. The answers to these questions were compiled in a table so that all answers to any given question appeared together in numbered order (Refer to Appendix 7). In this way, all answers to any given question could be seen easily for the purposes of the analysis. Section B comprised the grammar review, the answers to which were marked and compiled into a table which showed the number of respondents who correctly answered each of the 75 items. This table was simplified into Appendix 8. This table, together with tables from the inventories (Phase 1 of the study), gave rise to the grammar items to be included in the professional development program. Issues emerging from Section A of Phase 2

formed the basis of the interview questions (Phase 3 of the study). When the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed, again for ease of analysis (refer to Appendix 9).

For Phase 2, Section B (grammar review), a second table was drawn up (refer to Appendix 10). On the left hand side of the table are shown scores for each respondent out of a possible score of 75. The first column shows the respondent number and gender; the next four columns show (i) number of correct answers; (ii) number of answers with insufficient information given; (iii) number of answers not attempted; and (iv) number of incorrect answers. On the right hand side of the table the same information is given, but this time converted to percentages. The most often used figure from this table for the purposes of this analysis is the figure in the first column on the right hand side, which shows the percentage of correct answers for each respondent. The percentages of correct answers were interesting when comparing these results to respondents' educational backgrounds and study of other languages (refer to Chapter 5 of this thesis).

4.2 Data categories collected – qualitative and quantitative

The data collection took nine months to complete. During that period, four different categories of data were collected. The study began with 26 respondents keeping grammar inventories, which provided quantitative data. It then progressed to 21 of those original 26 respondents completing a written survey which consisted of two distinct sections, giving rise to two different types of data, one qualitative and one quantitative. The final phase comprised four semi-structured interviews. These final respondents were four of the 21 participants who took part in the surveys, and this phase provided further qualitative data.

4.2.1 Qualitative data categories

There were two data sets that provided the qualitative data. These were the survey data from Phase 2 section A and the interview data from Phase 3.

4.2.1.1 Survey Questions

The second phase of the study involved a written survey, which had two sections. Section A contained ten questions which solicited factual information about the participants' educational backgrounds and training, as well as opinions regarding different aspects of the role of grammar in teaching English. Finally, the participants were asked whether they felt adequately prepared to impart grammar knowledge, and they were asked to give reasons for their responses (refer to Appendix 5 for the survey [Section A] questions and to Appendix 7 for the aggregate answers to those same questions).

4.2.1.2 Interviews

The third and final phase of the study comprised semi-structured interviews. Four interviews were conducted from the 21 survey respondents. The interviewees were asked to comment on issues emerging from the surveys conducted in the second phase of the study (refer to Appendix 9 for interview transcripts). Participants were asked to comment on the following:

- their opinions of the grammar teaching program in the language school;
- whether teachers' grammar knowledge would affect how they viewed the importance of grammar in teaching English;
- whether the communicative approach was adequate for grammar teaching and whether teachers needed to be very knowledgeable about grammar to teach English using the communicative method;
- whether teachers' views on the use of grammar exercises are linked to how prepared they are to teach grammar;
- whether teacher attitude towards grammar can influence student interest and motivation to learn grammar; and
- whether they had any further comments to add.

All but the first and last questions were linked directly to answers given in Phase 2, survey (Section A). These links were made clear to participants by the way the questions were framed.

4.2.2 Quantitative Data Categories

There were two data sets that provided quantitative data. These were the inventories from Phase 1 and the grammar review from Phase 2 Section B.

4.2.2.1 Inventories

The first phase of the study took place over a five week period (one teaching module) in January – February 2012, when teacher participants were asked to keep a daily inventory or list of all grammar items covered in lessons during that day and to further list any of those items that they had found difficult to understand and therefore to teach. In their own assessment of degree of difficulty encountered, teachers needed to consider whether preparation time for lessons included consultation with grammar books (for their own knowledge or confidence) or whether they were confident to teach those grammar items without consulting a grammar book. This further information was purely for the teachers to use when compiling their lists; it was not a requirement to be written in the inventories. Furthermore, if students asked grammar questions, teachers needed to record the grammar item enquired about and list whether they were confident in their responses to the student questions. They were also asked to extend this to their marking of written work and to consider how they explained errors to students. Again, the participants needed to consider whether they would look up points in grammar books, or whether they felt confident to correct and explain using their own knowledge. Then, if students asked for further clarification when written work was returned to them, teachers needed to consider how they would respond, and whether they were confident about those responses. The only information required in the inventories were lists, thus giving rise to quantitative data. Teachers were also asked to list any grammar items they might wish to see included in a professional development program, but which they had not taught during the five week time period of the inventory keeping phase. Twenty-six participants took part in this first phase of the study.

4.2.2.2 Grammar review

Section B of the survey was a grammar review of the issues emerging from the inventories in the first phase of the study. The review consisted of grammar items involving sentence structure; countable and uncountable nouns; use of prepositions; conditional sentences; word order for embedded questions; punctuation; sentence fragments; and sentences where a choice had to be made between easily confused words, such as *effect* and *affect*. In some sentences, all verbs had to be underlined and identified as to tense, form and any other relevant information. Participants were encouraged to give as much detail as possible. Other sentences required participants to identify and explain which type of conditional was used. Identification of transitive and intransitive verbs was also required. Finally, a lengthy, complex sentence was given for participants to parse (that is, to analyse grammatically). Again, respondents were encouraged to give as much detail as possible. Twenty-one of the original 26 participants who were involved in the first phase of the study took part in the survey (refer to Appendix 6 for the grammar review questions; Appendix 8 for the aggregate answers; and Appendix 10 for each respondent's individual score).

4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Qualitative analysis

4.3.1.1 Survey Questions

Section A of the survey (refer to Appendix 5) comprised ten questions, the first four of which elicited factual information about the respondents, while the final six were open-ended questions eliciting opinions. Question 1 asked respondents to give their gender and details of their educational backgrounds. Eighteen were female, while 3 were male. When looking at Section A and Section B of the survey together, it can be seen that for the 21 survey respondents, the individual grammar review scores ranged from 52% to 97%. When these scores are averaged across all 21 respondents, the mean score was 78%. Of the total number of 21, nine had Master's degrees. This figure represents almost half of the respondents. For these

nine, the grammar review scores ranged from 73% to 85% correct answers with an average of 80% and for the 12 without Master's degrees, scores ranged from 52% to 97% with an average of 76%. The difference in averages between the two groups was not significant, with the non-Master's degree group showing the entire range, while those with Master's degrees seemed to be concentrated towards the centre. It is interesting to note that the highest scores (97% and 92%) were achieved by two teachers who did not have Master's degrees, who were native English speakers and who had engaged in tertiary level study of other languages. One of these two had a degree in Classics (including Latin), and the other had studied for a degree in French at the Sorbonne University in Paris.

There were four respondents for whom English was not their first language, but who were near-native speakers. This means that they communicated fluently in English (albeit with an accent), and could understand everything apart from the occasional idiom. Three of them had Master's degrees and their scores on the grammar review ranged from 75% to 84%. The average for the entire group was 78%. Only one of these three respondents who held a Master's degree, scored below the average for their group, while the only respondent in this sub-group with no Master's degree scored 84%. It is also interesting to note that of the three lowest scores, all lower than 70% (52%, 61% and 69%), two were achieved by respondents from science backgrounds who had subsequently entered the profession by completing a CELTA. Of the 21 survey respondents, all but these two had study backgrounds in the humanities. Respondent 10, who achieved the second lowest score of 61%, had a background in humanities and had qualified as a specialist English teacher in 2005. As such, she was among the four most recently qualified as specialist teachers of English language.

Question 2 asked respondents to state which courses they had taken to specifically prepare them for English language teaching. Seventeen had entered the profession via a CELTA course; half of those (eight) had studied a CELTA only, while the other half (nine) had also studied for a Master's degree, or a Graduate Certificate in Teaching English as a Second or Other Language (TESOL). Of the remaining four who did not have a CELTA, one of them had entered the profession via a Graduate

Diploma in Applied Linguistics, two via Master's degrees in Education (specialising in TESOL) and one via a Master of Applied Linguistics.

Question 3 asked respondents to give the country in which they had qualified as teachers of English. Seventeen had qualified in Australia, one in Britain, one in Macedonia, one in Bosnia and one in France. Therefore, all of the respondents had qualified in either Australia or Europe. Although one had completed an original Bachelor's degree in the USA, there were none who had qualified as specialist English teachers from the Americas, Asia or Africa. Question 4 asked for the year in which their English teaching qualification was obtained. The years in which participants had qualified as specialist teachers of English language ranged from 1978 to 2012, which constituted a difference of 34 years. This was the end of the factual information regarding participants' backgrounds.

The remaining questions sought views and opinions. Question 5 asked for teachers' views regarding the role of grammar in English teaching and learning. Replies were all positive in that all the respondents thought that grammar was necessary; however, answers ranged from *'essential'* to *'important'* to *'only need basic knowledge'*, although most teachers agreed that grammar was a very important element when teaching adults. Some clarified their answers with further comments such as: *'teachers should be trained to be able to answer students' grammar questions to increase student confidence in the teacher'* (Respondent 5); *'grammar is the basis for accurate communication, but should not be taught in isolation from other language skills'* (Respondent 7); and *'it is very useful for students to have a good grounding in the metalanguage and rules of grammar, but these aspects need to be integrated into lessons that are contextualised and useful for students'* (Respondent 8). Teaching grammar in context was a common thread throughout the responses. The comment that a teacher's ability to answer students' questions would increase student confidence in the teacher was unusual, but showed that the teacher who made this comment was able to imagine a student's perspective.

Question 6 asked teachers to identify which grammar teaching approach they preferred and to give reasons for their choices. Of the 21 respondents, seven

nominated teaching grammar in context as their preferred method. Reasons given included *'because it allows students to see the grammar in use'* (Respondent 1); *'because grammar is needed as a tool for using language appropriately, not as an academic exercise'* (Respondent 6); and *'grammar only makes sense in context'* (Respondent 10). Five preferred teaching grammar structures explicitly. Reasons given included *'to then give students the opportunity to experiment using the grammar'* (Respondent 12); *'to then embed the target grammar in exercises'* (Respondent 19). Three of these participants favoured functional grammar *'because it is generally more motivating'* (Respondent 4); and *'in order to look at the function of each element of an utterance'* (Respondent 11). Three gave the communicative approach as their preferred method of teaching *'reinforced by worksheets at home'* (Respondent 9) and *'so students can understand why and how grammar affects the accuracy of communication'* (respondent 16). Two favoured task-based teaching *'using real situations'* (Respondent 14) and because *'adults seem to enjoy tasks, then a grammar focus follow-up seems to attract their interest'* (Respondent 15). Respondent 15 also mentioned the discovery approach because it is *'a good way to get them to notice'* the grammar.

Question 7 asked respondents about the use of grammar exercises in class and to comment on the usefulness of such exercises. Of the 21 teacher participants surveyed, 19 agreed that grammar exercises were of some value to students and only two thought they were of limited value. Of those who thought grammar exercises were useful, some expressed qualifications which included the need to contextualise; *'not too much time should be spent on them'* (Respondent 5); *'over-reliance on them can make lessons boring'* (Respondent 9); and *'useful in short doses'* (Respondent 14). Three teachers thought that grammar exercises were very helpful; reasons given included: *'viewed as very important by most students'* (Respondent 6) and exercises should be *'contextualized in a believable way that is perceived by the students as being relevant to them'* (Respondent 8). Therefore, it could be said that the respondents, in general, thought that grammar exercises are of some value as a teaching tool.

Question 8 asked for respondents' opinions on how grammar can be made more interesting and motivating for students. Among the various answers given, by far the most popular was the use of games and interactive activities (seven respondents) and use of contexts that are relevant to students (six respondents). All the other replies were only given by one respondent each. The most interesting reply (given by only one respondent) was that grammar can be made more interesting and motivating for students when teachers themselves are interested and confident in grammar (Respondent 6). This reply was given by a teacher who thought that the role of grammar in English teaching and learning was '*very important*'. She also indicated that her preferred method of grammar teaching was '*in context, because we need grammar as a tool for using language appropriately (for example, in writing) not as an academic exercise*'.

Question 9 asked respondents whether they felt adequately prepared to impart grammar knowledge and Question 10 asked for reasons for their answers. Of the 21 respondents, six replied in the affirmative and two replied in the negative; by far the largest number was a group of 13 who thought they were adequately prepared in some circumstances but not in all circumstances. The teachers did not appear to be overly confident in themselves in this particular area. The two teachers who considered themselves not adequately prepared to impart grammar knowledge achieved scores of 71% and 52% on the grammar review. The six teachers who considered themselves adequately prepared scored between 75% and 97%, while the 13 who thought they were to some extent adequately prepared scored between 61% and 92%. When giving reasons for their self-appraisal, eight respondents said they were not adequately prepared when they were faced with unexpected questions from students.

Five respondents identified that the learning of another language had helped them to better understand English grammar. This was borne out by the surveys which showed that those who had majored in other languages at tertiary level (Respondents 6, 7, 15, 18 and 25) received scores from 75% to 97% on the grammar review, while the 16 respondents who had not studied languages at university level achieved scores between 52% and 84%. Of these 16 who had not studied a

language at university level, only three obtained scores over 80%. These three showed that they were highly motivated. One had studied Spanish at Adult Education, and the other two had taught themselves grammar when they entered the English teaching profession because they realised that students expected them to be knowledgeable in this area.

4.3.1.2 Interviews

When Phase 2 (survey) of the study had been completed, issues emerging were identified from the data in Section A of the survey, and these issues were carried over into the semi-structured interviews, which are generally used as part of qualitative research. To give consistency to the interviews, there were six previously prepared questions for the respondents to answer, with other unprepared questions prompting clarification if and when the need arose. Respondents could give as much or as little information as they wished.

The first interview question asked respondents to give their views on the grammar teaching program in the language school. The four interviewees agreed that as far as a grammar teaching program was concerned, it was unclear, and one of them mentioned that it would be clearer

... if it was set out so it was clear to the teachers (not necessarily to the students, but to teachers) what should be taught at which levels, so say by the end of a certain level students should be across this, this and this, because you assume at certain levels they are familiar with particular grammar and they may not necessarily be aware of that grammar.

The second interview question asked participants whether they thought that teachers' grammar knowledge would affect how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English. Opinion was divided, with the more experienced teachers thinking it was essential, while the less experienced ones did not. For example, Respondent 8 focussed on the importance of teaching metalanguage, while Respondent 10 thought that her lack of confidence would cause her to discount the importance of grammar.

The third interview question asked for opinions on whether the communicative approach was adequate for grammar teaching and whether teachers needed to be knowledgeable about grammar in order to teach English using the communicative method. The more experienced teachers were very definite that it is not adequate, one of the less experienced ones thought it was adequate, and the other was unsure.

The fourth interview question asked for views on whether the use of grammar exercises are linked to how prepared teachers are to teach grammar. This question provoked a mixed response. Respondent 8, who was one of the more experienced teachers, thought that grammar exercises were necessary, but thought that teachers who use a communicative method might consider them not so helpful. The other experienced teacher among the interviewee group expressed her thoughts thus:

Are they just rote learning answers type of exercises, or something a bit more in depth? So perhaps a teacher's grammar knowledge would determine what type of grammar exercises they would choose, whether they have the basic ones (like in Murphy) or something more complex (like "Grammar in Context" or something like that), and it also depends on the level of the students, of course.

The two less experienced teachers had differing opinions. One considered it her duty to ensure that students did grammar exercises, while the other thought they were good as a foundation and also good for teachers who were not so confident (like herself) because there is the opportunity to review the exercises before class.

The fifth interview question asked respondents to comment on the fact that in the surveys, when asked about how teachers can make grammar more interesting and motivating, teachers had mentioned mainly games and relevance, but one had mentioned that teacher attitude towards grammar can influence student interest and motivation. Respondent 8 stated that it is important for teachers to be enthusiastic about grammar '*because then they (the students) know it's really an*

important thing for the teacher to get it across to them'. Likewise Respondent 17's reply was:

Well I certainly think if a teacher does seem keen on anything, including grammar, that can encourage the students, whereas if the teacher makes it obvious that it's their weak point or they're not interested or it isn't important, then that would lead the students to think that perhaps that's the case, so I think teacher attitude is very important in how interested the students are and motivated about learning grammar.

Respondent 10 admitted that her lack of enthusiasm for grammar would mean that *'the students would pick up on that and think: We'll just get through this grammar and then we can do something more relevant or more fun'*. Respondent 23 was of the opinion that if teachers were more knowledgeable or had more experience, then that would make grammar more interesting.

The sixth interview question asked respondents whether they had any further comments to add to the discussion. The two more experienced teachers were both adamant that professional development in grammar for teachers was both desirable and important. The two less experienced teachers had very different answers to the experienced teachers; however, the two showed a certain similarity to each other: Respondent 10 commented *'I always feel like I don't know enough and maybe I can never know enough'*, while Respondent 23 stated *'I know my grammar knowledge is deficient'*.

After the conclusion of the interview, Respondent 23 said that because her background was in mathematics and science, she found it difficult to cope with grammar. The reason given for this self-observation was that grammar rules are not always "cut and dried" as are mathematical concepts. Full transcripts of interviews can be found in Appendix 9.

4.3.2 Quantitative data analysis

4.3.2.1 Inventories

Data category 1 (Phase 1, inventories) was analysed quantitatively, that is, the analysis involved numerical values. In order to analyse this first phase of the study, a table was drawn up (refer to Appendix 1), in which all grammar items listed by teachers in the inventories were given in the first column. The second column shows the number of teachers who reported having taught that particular item. The third column gives the number of teachers who reported experiencing difficulties with that grammar item. For example, the passive voice was taught by five teachers during the five-week period of inventory keeping. Of those five teachers, one reported difficulty in her own understanding of the grammar of the passive voice. Percentages are not shown in the table appearing in Appendix 1 as the number of respondents was small (26 in total). Of all the grammar items reported as being taught during the period, the largest number of teachers teaching a particular item was eight, and that item was articles (definite, indefinite or zero article). Of those eight teachers, four experienced some kind of difficulty or insecurity with the concept behind the choice of definite article, indefinite article or zero article.

Seventy-four separate grammar items were reported as having been taught during the period. Of those, 50 items were reported as having been taught by no more than one teacher for each of those items. Of the 74 items, 45 caused no difficulty or lack of confidence among the teachers who taught those items. As some items were taught by no more than one teacher with no difficulties reported, it is impossible to say that that particular item would not cause difficulty. If more teachers had taught that item, it is possible that some degree of difficulty would have been experienced by some teachers. This situation arose because respondents were teaching at different levels and therefore covering different grammar items. If all teachers were teaching exactly the same grammar items, this would mean that all teachers were teaching the same level of English; however, in a school of this kind, this would be an unlikely situation. From the available data, 29 items caused some difficulty for at least one teacher of those who reported teaching those particular grammar items.

At the end of the inventory keeping period, teachers were also asked to list items they had not taught but would like to see in a professional development program (refer to Appendix 2). Twenty-two items were requested. Five teachers requested relative clauses and four teachers requested conditionals, while two teachers requested each of the following: (i) the subjunctive mood and (ii) sentence fragments. The other eighteen items were each requested by one teacher only. The items requested by more than one teacher will be included in the professional development program to be progressively devised.

From the above raw data, items were grouped together and coded into larger (and therefore, fewer) groupings. The 74 items originally reported in Appendix 1 were coded into 14 categories (refer to Appendix 3). The largest groupings were verbs and sentence structure. Verbs (with 30 sub-items) were taught by 20 teachers, while sentence structure (with 17 sub-items) was taught by 17 teachers. Of the 20 respondents teaching verbs, nine reported experiencing problems. Of the 17 who taught sentence structure, six reported experiencing problems. Five teachers dealt with confusion between similar words, for example *effect* and *affect*, and four of these five reported experiencing difficulties.

Appendix 4 shows all items reported as being difficult by teachers and also items requested by them. The two designations (Difficulty and Request) were added together, thereby creating a list of grammatical issues emerging from the inventories that could have been included in the grammar review as part of the survey, Section B (refer to Appendix 6). Each of the items listed in Appendix 4 (comprising 14 major categories, broken down into sub-categories of between one and 15 items in each) had totals made up of Difficulty plus Request (as shown in the third column of the table in Appendix 4). Where the totals added up to three, four, five or six teachers, those items were included in the grammar review. When fewer than three teachers expressed difficulty with an item, then that item was omitted, as the end product of the study (the professional development program) would aim to cover items that were difficult for most teachers. Items chosen for inclusion in the grammar review were:

- Gerunds (6 teachers)
- Confusion of similar words (5 teachers)
- Articles – definite / indefinite / zero (5 teachers)
- Punctuation (4 teachers)
- Defining and non-defining relative clauses (3 teachers)
- Sentence fragments (3 teachers)
- Conditionals (3 teachers)

4.3.2.2 Grammar review

Section B of the survey (refer to Appendix 6) comprised a grammar review, the items of which were issues that arose from the teachers' inventories. Appendix 8 shows the number of correct answers for each item and sub-item in the grammar review. The grammar review consisted of 20 questions. However, for marking purposes, many of the questions were further subdivided into smaller units. Therefore, there was a total of 75 items within the 20 questions. These grammar items, identified as difficult to understand by teachers during the inventory keeping phase, were also typical of grammar questions that students could unexpectedly ask teachers at any time. The teachers themselves believed that they did not always know how to answer such questions. The grammar review aimed to identify exactly where knowledge was lacking, so that a professional development program could be devised to address these issues. This program would help to give teachers confidence in what they already knew, and would give them tools to find answers to students' questions.

The grammar review covered the items listed in Table 4.1 below. The numbers given show the number of teachers (from the data collected in the inventories) who experienced difficulty with a particular item plus the number of teachers requesting these items for inclusion in the professional development program. The final column in Table 4.1 shows the total (difficulty + request) for each item. The first six items were chosen because they showed the highest frequency. The final three were chosen for varying reasons. One item was chosen because it was requested,

but no teachers reported experiencing difficulty with this item, while another item was chosen for the exact opposite reason – one teacher experienced difficulty, but no one requested it. The final item was interesting because sentence parsing was requested by one participant, but it had not been mentioned at all in the grammar that the teachers reported having taught during the five-week inventory keeping period. Sentence parsing is not normally included in classroom teaching; however, it is a useful teaching tool for learning to classify grammar items in context, so that teachers and students can engage in discussing the students’ grammar problems by using metalanguage. Without knowledge of metalanguage, such discussions are very difficult (Alderson et al., 1996). If students do not know the meaning of words such as “preposition” or “adverbial phrase”, the concepts are difficult for them to consider. When a teacher, for example, tells a student that he or she has used the wrong preposition in a sentence written by the student, it would be reasonable to expect that the student would know the meaning of the word “preposition”, otherwise the discussion, which should take one or two minutes, must perforce develop into an entire lesson on the concept of prepositions.

Table 4.1 Issues emerging from inventories, subsequently included in grammar review

Grammar items	Number of teachers who experienced difficulty	Number of teachers who requested this item	Total
Gerunds	4	2	6
Confusion of similar words	5	0	5
Punctuation with <i>however</i>	3	1	4
Relative clauses	1	2	3
Sentence fragments	1	2	3
Conditionals	0	3	3
Transitive / intransitive verbs	0	1	1
Embedded questions	1	0	1
Sentence parsing	N/A	1	1

In the grammar review, Questions 1 to 5 were sentences that first had to be identified as grammatically correct or incorrect. Secondly, the grammar item displayed in the sentence had to be identified. Thirdly, if the sentence was incorrect, it had to be corrected. Therefore, the first five questions accounted for 15 items. These items (refer to Table 4.1 and to Appendix 6) included conditionals; embedded questions; punctuation with *however*; and sentence fragments. For Question 1, 20 of the 21 respondents identified that the sentence was incorrect, 16 of the respondents were able to identify the grammar item, and 19 successfully corrected the error. The other questions in this first group of five questions showed similar results across the participants; however, for Question 5, only six participants were able to correctly identify the error as a sentence fragment.

Questions 6 to 11 were not further sub-divided. They were sentences in which the correct word of two choices had to be identified. The pairs of words for each sentence were easily confused words, for example, *effect* and *affect*. These six questions accounted for six items. These items comprised exclusively confusion of similar words. This group of sentences did not cause many problems for the respondents, apart from Question 8, where only 12 of the 21 respondents were able to differentiate between the words *effect* and *affect*.

In Questions 12 to 15, the participants had to identify all verbs in the sentences and give the tense or form of each verb, while providing as much detail as possible. These four questions accounted for 16 items and involved identification of various verb moods, voices, tenses, aspects and modes, including gerunds (refer to Table 3.4 in the previous chapter). In this group of sentences, none of the respondents was able to identify the verb in the clause *while you're sunning yourself at the beach* as a present progressive reflexive verb.

Questions 16 and 17 were conditional sentences (refer to Table 4.1 and Appendix 6). Teachers had to identify which conditional was at work in each sentence: choices were between zero, first, second, third or mixed conditionals. These two questions were not further sub-divided and accounted for two items. Fifteen respondents correctly answered Question 16, while two gave insufficient information and four

gave an incorrect answer. Ten respondents gave a correct answer to Question 17, while two gave insufficient information and nine gave an incorrect answer. Questions 18 and 19 were a simple choice between transitive or intransitive verbs (refer to Table 4.1 and to Appendix 6). These two questions were not further subdivided and accounted for two items. This group of two questions returned a 100% success rate.

The most extensive question was Question 20, which consisted of a lengthy, complex sentence in which every word and some groups of words had to be parsed. Another expression for parsing would be grammatical analysis. This sentence accounted for 34 items. Parsing is not generally taught any more in English grammar teaching. However, it can be used in the identification and classification of grammar items in students' own writing. As such, it could be a valuable teaching tool. It is important to bear in mind, however, that parsing should not be considered as an end in itself. None of the items in Question 20 had been reviewed in previous sentences. In this section of the grammar review, there was no indication of the grammar that had to be identified as there had been earlier in the review. This may account for the fact that participants found this particular question the most challenging in the entire review. Thirteen respondents (out of the total of 21) incorrectly identified the word *that*. In the given sentence, it was a conjunction; however, many thought it was a relative pronoun.

Table 4.2 Phase 2, Section B, Grammar Review: number of items contributing to the marking scheme

Question number	Number of items
Questions 1 – 5	15 items
Questions 6 – 11	6 items
Questions 12 – 15	16 items
Questions 16 – 17	2 items
Questions 18 - 19	2 items
Question 20	34 items
TOTAL	75 items

Some items, previously deemed problematic by teachers in Phase 1 of the study (inventory keeping), actually caused no problems during the grammar review. For example, Questions 18 and 19 (identification of transitive and intransitive verbs) caused no problems, with every respondent correctly identifying these two items. With respect to this type of verb classification, it would seem that the teacher participants might have been cautious, with some saying that they did not understand this particular grammar item, yet when tested, there were no problems with transitive and intransitive verbs. Therefore, in certain areas, it would appear that teachers might show lack of confidence rather than lack of knowledge. This means that transitive and intransitive verbs will not be covered in the resulting professional development program, as there was a 100% success rate with this particular grammar item.

One of the least well-known items in the whole grammar review was the identification of the grammar function of the word *that* in the lengthy sentence for parsing. It was correctly identified by only seven participants. Thirteen (over 60%) incorrectly identified it, while one did not attempt to identify it. Therefore, of the 21 participants, only one-third of them correctly identified this particular item. The first professional development session conducted with teachers was on the various functions of the word *that* in English grammar (refer to Appendix 11). Other items that appeared to cause problems for teachers in the grammar review included conditional sentences, word order in embedded questions, gerunds, infinitives and past passives. These items will therefore be included in an on-going professional development program.

The lengthy sentence in Question 20 revealed that participants could all correctly identify simple grammatical concepts, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. However, more complex items were not identified with as much accuracy. These more complex grammar items included nouns used as adjectives, compound nouns, multi-word subjects of sentences, relative pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, defining and non-defining relative clauses, phrasal verbs, conjunctions and prepositional phrases.

4.4 Relevance of analysis to research aim, question and objectives

The aim of this study was to investigate English teachers' preparedness to teach grammar and to produce a professional development program which would help to fill in the gaps in their knowledge and to help them to gain confidence in this area. In order to do this, it was important to ascertain exactly which grammar aspects were lacking in teachers' knowledge base. The data that were collected fulfil this aim, as it can be seen from the data that many of the teachers in this study did indeed experience difficulties in their grammar understanding, and the grammar review yielded items that caused particular difficulties. These items then led to the formulation of a list that would inform the professional development program. The list comprises the items appearing in Table 3.4 in the previous chapter.

The study had six broad objectives which are reiterated below. Each one is then followed by an explanation of how these objectives have been achieved through this study.

4.4.1 Objective 1: To examine teachers' views on the significance of grammar in TESOL

Of the 21 teachers who participated in the survey, all thought that grammar was necessary, but to varying degrees. The gradation ranged from '*essential*' to '*important*' to '*need only basic knowledge*'. The various comments given in answer to these questions can be reduced to two ideas, that is, that grammar must be taught in context and that grammar is a tool for communication, not an end in itself. In other words, grammar is necessary in order to communicate effectively; furthermore, communication skills only operate in context because communication has to be meaningful to the people who are engaging in it. One respondent made the following comment: '*A good understanding of grammar enables a student to communicate their thoughts and ideas with clarity, and limits the potential for misunderstandings.*'

Nineteen respondents thought of grammar in a favourable light, while two respondents were not so convinced about its significance. These latter two gave the following responses: *'It is not necessary to put too much emphasis on it'* and *'Students need a basic knowledge to be able to successfully manipulate the language'*. On the other hand, teachers who thought of grammar as significant made comments such as: *'It's the foundation or key structure around which the whole of language is built'*; *'Language really IS grammar'*; and *'I consider it underpins teaching and learning English'*. Therefore, from the survey, the teachers at the centre where this study took place would appear to consider grammar to be quite significant in the context of TESOL teaching.

The four interview respondents had mixed views on this question. Respondent 8 explained that when he began to pursue a career in English teaching, he came to the conclusion that it was essential:

You really need to give the students an understanding of it. As a second language, they really need it, and the metalanguage I think is necessary so they know which words they are dealing with and how to integrate them and manipulate them, so I think metalanguage is the part that needs to be pushed a little bit more, so that students are able to understand easily if it's a verb, how the verbs are working and how articles are integrated into the language and all that sort of thing. I really think it's a very essential part of the way that we have to teach.

Respondent 17 was equally forceful in her estimation of the significance of grammar in TESOL teaching, with the following:

Well I would suggest that the less somebody knows about grammar, perhaps the less they think it's important, because they don't want to be caught out by appearing not to know, so if they don't know much, they'll probably make it a very limited part of their lesson, so they don't have to expand on it.

These two interview respondents were more experienced than the remaining two. The two less experienced teachers were not so sure about how significant grammar

might actually be, giving answers that appeared to be somewhat evasive. Respondent 10 began her answer with *'I hadn't thought about that to be honest'*, while Respondent 23 seemed to sidestep the issue entirely with *'you have to teach the grammar as it is presented in the book'*. The more experienced teachers would seem to have already pondered the question of how teachers in general might regard the significance of grammar in TESOL, whereas the less experienced teachers seem not to have done so.

4.4.2 Objective 2: To examine teachers' views on the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers in TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular

As for the previous objective, all of the teachers surveyed agreed that grammar knowledge for TESOL teachers was necessary to varying degrees. In this regard, there were two stand-out comments. One respondent stated that *'teachers should be trained to be able to answer students' grammar questions to increase student confidence in the teacher'*. Yet another respondent thought that teachers should feel *'interested in it themselves'* and should be *'confident in delivering it to students'*. These two comments, albeit to two different questions, have a common thread running through them. In order for teachers to be able to answer students' grammar questions, they need to be trained so as to be knowledgeable and confident in this area. Without personal understanding, no amount of training can give the teacher what is necessary to have the ability to answer student questions. If teachers have this understanding, or have a desire to acquire knowledge, then this will give them a natural interest in the subject. Without interest, knowledge is unlikely to be acquired. One respondent gave this opinion in the survey: *'Sometimes I don't feel adequately prepared because grammar is infinitely complex and there are so many exceptions and usage changes for differing situations which can be very difficult to explain adequately to students'*. If and when knowledge is acquired, confidence should grow and students would be able to discern that the teacher is both interested and confident. Teacher interest and confidence can be very influential on student attitude. In such circumstances, student confidence in the teacher would increase as well.

This theme was continued in the interviews (Phase 3 of the study). Interview Question 2 asked respondents: 'How do you think that teachers' grammar knowledge affects how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English?' There was divided opinion on this question among the four respondents. Respondent 8, who had been brought up with very little grammar in his own school days, but who had since taught himself, thought grammar was essential. Respondent 10 had not thought about this topic very much. Respondent 23 commented that one had to teach the grammar that was in the textbook. Respondent 17, who was a teacher of many years standing, was of the opinion that teachers who know little grammar will consider it to be less important.

Regarding their preferences for grammar teaching approaches, many were given; however, a popular choice was the communicative approach, which was chosen by four of the 21 survey respondents. This issue was taken up again in the interviews, where respondents were asked if they thought that the communicative approach was adequate for grammar teaching and whether teachers needed to be very knowledgeable about grammar in order to teach English using the communicative method. Respondent 8 (who had been teaching English for ten years) did not rely solely on the communicative approach:

I teach it more overtly myself. I go into tables of grammar and tables of verbs, so I'm tending nowadays to go more towards that sort of thing, rather than doing it communicatively – I'm doing it in context. I try to do it in context as much as possible – context is very important – otherwise it just makes no sense to them, but what we consider context and what students consider context might be totally different things. They have very different views on subjects, topics that we talk about and it makes perfect sense to us but quite often doesn't make any sense to them. So, I think the hardest part is putting yourself into the mind of the students themselves and understanding where they're coming from, and I find I'm trying to do that more and more, especially in the low levels – trying to see where their understanding lies and working it out from there, so it's got to be contextualised to that extent as far as the student goes and contextualising

in the way of topics as well, so that they would be able to find a common ground with it.

Respondent 10 (who had been teaching English intermittently and part-time for seven years) thought it was sufficient, and gave the following reply:

I would definitely say it's adequate. I'm not sure for all grammar whether it's the best method, but I would certainly say it's adequate. And I wouldn't say you had to be very knowledgeable – I'd say a basic knowledge is probably enough to use that method – for the teacher.

Respondent 17 (the most experienced teacher of English language among the four interviewees) had the opposite view to the previous respondent:

Well, if they're going to get the most value out of it, they certainly need to have a very solid understanding of grammar, because they should be able to put the communication activities into some sort of context, and where they have to use certain grammar to be able to complete a task successfully. So, is it adequate for grammar teaching? No, so I think it's only one part – grammar teaching – I think you need the whole varied number of approaches, including a needs analysis of your students to see what they need, depending on their experience and background et cetera. So, within the first week or so, you need to work out where they come from and their basic knowledge of grammar background, and work out which is the best way for that particular group, or you might even need to set up different groups within the class, depending on their needs for grammar, because you don't want to bore some with things they know very well and others can't cope with it at all.

Respondent 23 (the least experienced teacher of English language) seemed somewhat overwhelmed by the choice of grammar teaching approaches, and gave the following reply:

Right this very week in my studies I'm looking at the different ways grammar has been taught in the past, so because this is new to me, I didn't know there were so many different approaches. When I went to school, when I was learning languages, we did do grammar – I learned French and German. From my readings, it looks like having grammar in context is the best way to teach it, because it looks like there's a lot of evidence for that. Students will see where the grammar comes from. From my own experience ... and I'm still reading all about the pros and cons.

From the above replies to this question, it would appear that the teacher with the least experience is still grappling with the fact that there are so many different approaches to grammar teaching. On the other hand, the teacher with five years' experience thinks that the communicative method is adequate for teaching grammar, and moreover that teachers do not need to be very knowledgeable about grammar when using the communicative method. When considering the replies of the more experienced teachers, a different reality emerges. The teacher with ten years' experience admits to having gone away from the communicative approach and into teaching grammar more overtly. The most experienced teacher is quite clear that the communicative approach is not adequate for the teaching of grammar.

An associated question (Question 7) that was asked in the survey was whether teachers thought that the use of grammar exercises in class was useful. Again, there was wide discrepancy in replies, ranging from 'very helpful' to 'slightly useful' to 'not the most efficient tool for teaching grammar'. This idea was further explored in the interviews, where the respondents were asked whether they thought that teachers' views on the use of grammar exercises in class could be linked to teachers' preparedness to teach grammar. Two very different answers came from two teachers who had very different lengths of experience. The teacher with less experience (Respondent 10) replied thus:

Grammar exercises are useful for the foundation. Also for someone who is not overly confident (like me) it gives a chance to review the exercises before

class to feel confident in that particular exercise. A good foundation, but I don't always use grammar exercises – or good perhaps to consolidate.

This less experienced teacher, in answer to another question in the interview, described grammar as *'a necessary evil'*. It would appear that teachers with less knowledge and less experience may be quite under-confident, and could possibly even harbour fears of grammar. The teacher with much more experience (Respondent 17) had a totally different opinion: *'Well, having just grammar exercises is like an easy cop-out. I think they're good for homework, as a back-up to what you've taught'*.

The four most experienced teachers among the survey respondents all qualified as specialist English teachers before 2000, namely in 1978, 1986, 1989 and 1992. Therefore, this group of teachers all have between 20 and 35 years' experience of teaching English to international students. In the grammar review, they achieved 97% (the highest of all respondents), 80%, 83% and 85% respectively. In reply to Questions 9 and 10 in the survey, two of them felt adequately prepared to teach grammar. The reasons given were as follows. Respondent 25 gave this reply:

As a student of foreign languages, I have always been very interested in grammar. I have sought to improve my own understanding of English grammar throughout the years. As a result, I feel confident about teaching English grammar to my students and have helped colleagues with their questions about English grammar.

Another (Respondent 5) replied thus: *'I've received a lot of training in this area'*. The other two felt reasonably prepared but acknowledged that there were gaps in their understanding. One of them (Respondent 9) gave the following reason:

I have taught for a number of years so I have improved my grammar knowledge over this time. I still find some areas more difficult to teach than others, such as relative clauses. I can teach students the differences, for example, between defining and non-defining relative clauses, but the error rate is often still very high. I found some of the questions below difficult, so

this shows that I would not be adequately prepared to impart all aspects of grammar knowledge.

This respondent's expression '*questions below*' refers to the grammar review in the survey. Although she says she found some of the questions in the grammar review difficult, this teacher still achieved 85%.

When examining these four more experienced respondents' replies to Question 5 in the survey, which asked for views on the role of grammar in English teaching and learning, all four agreed that it was very important. Although the most frequently mentioned item for this question among all respondents was '*contextualisation*', only one of these four more experienced teachers mentioned it, and that was the most recently qualified of the four (in 1992). That does not mean that these respondents consider context unimportant. Perhaps they take context as a given, as the environment in which grammar is taught, in which case their ideas could be understood as more specific comments within context, whereas the teachers with less experience might have context at the forefront of their thinking. When discussing the role of grammar in English teaching and learning, these more experienced teachers used expressions such as '*essential to be able to use a language independently*' and '*to be able to successfully manipulate the language*'. These comments may show that the more experienced teachers have gone beyond what is happening in the here and now in the classroom and are thinking of their students' future proficiency. On the other hand, by concentrating on context, the less experienced teachers are focussed more on how they do things in the classroom in the short term, that is, the process of teaching, rather than the outcomes for students.

When answering Question 6, regarding preferred grammar teaching methods, the four most experienced teachers showed no noticeable difference from the general sample. Two chose the communicative method; one chose discourse analysis and the other stated:

I attempt to help students to understand grammatical terminology through many examples and exercises. I use both published grammar textbooks and my own material developed over many years.

Question 7 asked for views regarding the use of grammar exercises in class. Of the four more experienced teachers, two respondents considered such exercises as 'valuable', one thought they were 'helpful to an extent' and the fourth thought they were 'slightly useful to raise awareness, but only if they are relevant to what is being actually produced'. These answers were in general agreement with the whole sample.

The answers of the four more experienced teachers to Question 8 (How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?) are printed below:

In my experience, most students are eager to improve their understanding of English grammar because they know that this is necessary for them to improve their command of the language, particularly their writing skills. The teacher needs to make the students understand that the grammar lessons will help them to achieve their goals. (Respondent 25)

Games and other communicative methods. (Respondent 5)

Make it relevant; teach it using games. (Respondent 17)

I enjoy helping students discover the rules. I think online activities have a place in making grammar learning more interesting. (Respondent 9)

These replies all give the impression that these teachers are very relaxed, which is not surprising because of their long experience. Some of the other replies were lengthy and gave the impression that the respondents were under some pressure with trying to make grammar more interesting and motivating for students. (All survey question replies can be found in Appendix 7). These four longest serving teachers of English at this centre all scored 80% or higher on the grammar review. Two feel well prepared and two feel reasonably prepared to teach grammar.

4.4.3 Objective 3: To identify teachers' actual knowledge of grammar through inventory keeping and through a grammar review

Higher degrees (Master's) do not seem to make a difference in teachers' knowledge of grammar. Of the 21 respondents to Phase 2 Section B of the study (grammar review), the two respondents who obtained scores of over 90% had either studied Latin (a dead language, which has to be studied grammatically and cannot be studied communicatively – Respondent 15) or had engaged in studying French in France over a lengthy period of time, completing a degree in that language and in that country (Respondent 25). Those two respondents would have had the greatest exposure to grammar study, while the two that had come into the profession from a science background (Respondents 19 and 23) appeared to be poorly prepared in the area of grammar understanding. The percentage scores for each respondent can be found in Appendix 10.

There appeared to be no discernible differences between male and female teachers, with the male teachers achieving scores between 71% and 83% with an average of 76%, while scores for the whole sample ranged from 52% to 97% with an average of 78%. Therefore, the male teachers' scores were close to the average scores for the entire group.

Question 2 in Appendix 7 shows the entry pathways for teachers at the language centre where this study took place. When one compares those entry pathways with individual respondent scores in Appendix 10, it appears that the 12 respondents who entered the profession via a CELTA with no other English teaching qualification scored an average of 74% on the grammar review, while the other nine, who had entered via another qualification or a CELTA plus another qualification scored an average of 83%.

Ages were not possible to gauge; however, when viewing number of years of teaching English (taken from year of English teaching qualification), the following became apparent:

Table 4.3 Number of years teaching English and scores on grammar review

Number of years of English teaching	Average grammar review score
5 years or under (3 respondents)	65%
6 – 10 years (10 respondents)	78%
11 – 20 years (5 respondents)	80%
Over 20 years (3 respondents)	87%

From Table 4.3, it might be possible to conclude that older teachers know more grammar than younger ones, or perhaps that those who have spent a lengthier time in English teaching know more grammar.

4.4.4 Objective 4: To determine variations between teachers' actual knowledge of grammar and expected knowledge of grammar for TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular

Expected knowledge of grammar was taken to be the grammar that is covered in the particular text book (comprising various levels) that is used at the English teaching centre where this study took place. The grammar covered in the text is typical of grammar covered in TESOL texts from beginner level to upper intermediate level. Advanced grammar is not taught at this particular school, because advanced level students of English are very rare admissions at that institute. The grammar review was based on grammar that had been taught by teachers from the prescribed text book and that had been found to be difficult for some of the teachers to grasp, so that they felt they could not teach it effectively. Therefore, variation can be said to have occurred both when teachers identified problems in their own understanding of certain grammar items (as reported in the inventories in Phase 1 of the study) and also when scores in the grammar review (Phase 2 Section B of the study) were lower than expected for teachers whose work

includes teaching language structure (or grammar). Scores above 90% were only attained by two teachers of the 21 who undertook the grammar review.

From the interviews conducted, all four respondents agreed that the grammar program at the English teaching institute where this study took place was not clear. Although grammar is taught as it appears in the text book, there was agreement among the four that there is little direction about exactly what grammar students need to achieve at certain levels. As teachers move from one level to another in an ad hoc manner from one module (five-week period) to another, there would be little incentive for teachers to embark on a personal program of acquiring systematic knowledge that would be useful for them. To the question 'What is your opinion of the grammar teaching program in this language school?' Respondent 10 gave the following answer:

I think generally the grammar teaching program is good, but I think it might be clearer if it was set out so it was clear to the teachers (not necessarily to the students, but to teachers) what should be taught at which levels, so say by the end of Level 4, students should be across this, this and this, because you assume at certain levels they are familiar with particular grammar and they may not necessarily be aware of that grammar. I don't think that I've ever had that as a skills lesson because I usually only teach two days a week, so the grammar that I've taught has basically just been patches from the textbook, so in a whole lesson, rather than a full two-hour grammar and vocab session, which probably suits me, to be honest.

This respondent, who attained 61% in the grammar review, stated that because she teaches only two days a week, there has not been much grammar involved, and that has suited her. In this case there would be a definite variation between expected and actual grammar knowledge. This reply corresponds with the reply to the second interview question given by another interviewee who indicated that '*the less somebody knows about grammar, perhaps the less they think it's important*'. It is hoped that a professional development program would indeed give teachers more knowledge and confidence in the area of grammar.

In the survey, respondents were asked to consider how grammar can be made more interesting and motivating for students. Replies included such comments as *'games'*; *'teacher attitude'*; *'not over-correcting'*; and *'relevance'*. In the interviews teachers were asked to comment specifically on teacher attitude towards grammar and how this can influence student interest and motivation. One teacher (Respondent 8) mentioned using different colours for different grammar items to portray his own enthusiasm. This respondent also mentioned repetition and frequent revision to show that the teacher *'is prepared to thrash it out a bit to get them to really think about it first, to work with them so they understand'*. Another teacher (Respondent 10) who deemed grammar to be *'a necessary evil'* admitted that her *'enthusiasm and motivation for teaching grammar wouldn't be extremely high, so probably the students would pick up on that'* and she supposed that students would think *'We'll just get through this grammar and then we can do something more relevant or more fun'*. Of these two teachers, the first one (with ten years' experience, highly motivated and self-taught in grammar), is prepared to *'thrash it out'* with students so they, too, will understand a grammar point, while the second one (with seven years intermittent experience) imagines the students are thinking what she herself might actually be thinking. The answer from the teacher with the least experience (Respondent 23) was:

When you're under pressure, you really have to keep moving. It's only in the second session of the day that you can do other things. It just seems because of time constraints, you couldn't spend as much time on an area as you wanted to, but I guess if the teacher's more knowledgeable and has more games or experience ... as a teacher coming in, I just had to ask other teachers for help, otherwise I'd be sitting there for hours looking through it. So I guess a bit of extra background for teachers would be useful.

The teacher with the longest experience (Respondent 17) replied to this question in this way:

Well I certainly think if a teacher does seem keen on anything, including grammar, that can encourage the students, whereas if the teacher makes it

obvious that it's their weak point or they're not interested or it isn't important, then that would lead the students to think that perhaps that's the case, so I think teacher attitude is very important in how interested the students are and motivated about learning grammar, but certainly they have to make it seem relevant, so it would depend on what sort of activities they have to do and how relevant it seems within the context, but I do think games are very good and very motivational. I've seen students get really excited about grammar games, but maybe it's because, as a teacher, my attitude towards games is that I love games and get them all excited about it, so it could be any game, not just grammar. It doesn't really matter – I get excited about having a game. So I think there is something in that – teacher attitude, but the students have to see its relevance, somehow.

More experience is reflected in more confidence and it must also be remembered that of the four teachers who were interviewed, the two with the longest experience seemed to have more knowledge (as evidenced by their scores in the grammar review – both achieved 83%), while the two teachers with less experience had far less knowledge (again evidenced by their scores in the grammar review – one achieved 61% and the other 52%). Therefore, experience and knowledge could be said to work together to give teachers more confidence and enthusiasm in their treatment of grammar in the classroom.

At the end of the interviews, respondents were asked if they would like to add any further comments. The comments of both the teachers with the most knowledge and experience are very revealing. Although confident in their own knowledge and ability to teach grammar, neither considered that he or she knew everything there is to know about this topic. Both expressed a desire for more and ongoing professional development in this area. The two teachers with less experience both said they knew their grammar knowledge was lacking, but hardly mentioned professional development. After the conclusion of her interview, Respondent 23 (the least experienced teacher of English) commented that because her background was in mathematics and science, she found grammar difficult to cope with, because sometimes grammar is open-ended. She went on to say: *'In mathematics, answers*

are either right or wrong and grammar is not always so cut and dried', and asked for this extra comment to be recorded.

It can be concluded that an ongoing professional development program would be welcomed by teachers, both knowledgeable ones and those with less knowledge. As evidenced by the first professional development session that took place before the conclusion of the study, the more knowledgeable teachers helped the ones with less knowledge while the group work was in progress. This is not much different from what teachers themselves expect of their students in group work in classroom situations.

4.4.5 Objective 5: To devise a professional development program based on the results of the study and on insights from theory and research on grammar teaching

The role of the trainer in the professional development program will be that of a facilitator in order to help the teachers to increase their awareness about grammar teaching. A facilitator is more “a person who has the role of helping participants to learn in an experiential group” (Heron, 1992, p. 11) rather than a lecturer or an expert. Much of each session will be conducted as group work, which has the advantage of not only encouraging generation of ideas, but also allowing those with more experience and expertise to share their knowledge with those who have less. Working in groups can also help less experienced teachers to identify which teachers can help them outside and beyond the professional development program. In this way, the program can act as a catalyst for identifying mentors.

The first session of the professional development program had been devised and delivered before the end of this study. It concerned the functions of the word *that* in English grammar (see Appendix 11). The function of this word had been wrongly identified by two-thirds of respondents in the grammar review, so it was considered that this was the most urgent grammar item that needed to be considered in the professional development program. Other sessions on other grammar items will be written and presented in due course. Other topics to be included in further professional development in the future include relative clauses, conditional

sentences, sentence fragments, the subjunctive mood (which will be treated in relation to all other verb moods) and avoidance of possessive apostrophe in academic writing (refer to Table 3.4 in the previous chapter). All of the above-mentioned items were requested by teachers in the original inventory keeping in Phase 1 of the study. The grammar review in Phase 2 of the study revealed some other items that should also be included in future professional development sessions. Some of the above-mentioned items requested by teachers also featured as needing attention from the grammar review. Other items from the grammar review included embedded question word order, gerunds, use of infinitives, passive voice, nouns functioning as adjectives and used as part of compound nouns, multi-word subjects of sentences, relative pronouns, articles, verb phrases, conjunctions and prepositional phrases. This is a lengthy list. If professional development were to be conducted once a month, there would be enough scope in these items for a program that would last for a year. Moreover, other items could be added if and as requested by teachers. If new teachers come to the centre, they may have further and different grammar needs, which could also be added to the list of items for professional development.

4.4.6 Objective 6: To implement the professional development program and evaluate its effectiveness

Twelve teachers attended the first professional development session. The session was given at a time of the year when many of the original participants were not working (because of fluctuations in student numbers). It is envisaged that this session will be repeated when those teachers return at a time of the year with higher enrolments. Further sessions concerning other grammar items identified as problematic will be organised in the future and repeated if necessary, depending on the number of teachers present at any given time, again, according to fluctuations in student numbers. The first session of the professional development program (refer to Appendix 11) appeared to be successful. All those in attendance completed an evaluation form (refer to Appendix 12) and all answered 'yes' to the first three questions. Answers to the first question on the form showed that all found the session very useful for their own knowledge. The second question showed that all

found the session very useful for teaching purposes. The third question showed that all now felt more confident in their ability to address that particular grammar item in the classroom. One participant wrote the word 'absolutely' as well as ticking the 'yes' box for question three. The fourth question asked for suggestions about how that session could be improved. Although not the subject of the fourth question, three participants explicitly requested more professional development in grammar as part of their answer to this question. All evaluation forms for the first professional development session can be found in Appendix 12. All suggestions will be evaluated and taken into consideration before a further session is held. Participants also had three handouts to take away with them for later consolidation. Two of the handouts concerned the group work that was conducted during the session, and the other was information concerning the grammar item treated in the session (refer to Appendix 11). It would appear from the teachers' evaluations above that the first professional development session was successful, as the teachers attending all gave a positive evaluation.

4.5 Conclusion

The analysis has shown exactly which grammar items are lacking in the knowledge base of teachers at this centre. This will inform the content of the professional development program which will be progressively devised and delivered over the course of a year. As action research has cycles built into it, there is room for adding more grammar items in the future, especially if new teachers come with different needs. Current teachers might also discover other items with which they need help, and these items can likewise be added to the program.

As described in this chapter, the research aim and objectives have been met and the grammar improvement of the teachers at the centre chosen for this study will continue into the future. The data for the study were collected over three different periods and these three periods provided four data categories. The first and third categories (inventories and grammar review) were more quantitative in nature, as the data could be coded numerically, while categories two and four (survey questions and semi-structured interviews) were more qualitative in nature. Data

from all categories were transferred into tables. Grammar items that were found difficult to understand by teachers were coded into categories for ease of analysis, in order for decisions to be made about what to include in an on-going professional development program for teachers. In the second data category (survey: Section A), respondents gave valuable insights into their beliefs about grammar teaching and learning, and interviewees provided further insight for data category four. From the qualitative data, it emerged that teachers who had engaged in study of other languages knew more grammar than those who had not, while serious study of language (such as studying a language no longer in use or studying another language over a long period of time in the country where that language is spoken) gave teachers the best chances of assimilating grammar understanding. The following chapter will discuss the implications of the findings of this study.

5 Discussion

This chapter will expand on the results of this investigation from the previous chapter and discuss the implications of the findings as they relate to the Research Objectives of the study. There were six Research Objectives for this study. Each of them will be examined separately, highlighting how each finding relates to a particular Objective. This chapter will also consider tentative explanations for the findings, and comparisons will be drawn with previous research studies mentioned in the Literature Review chapter.

5.1 Research Objective 1

To examine teachers' views on the significance of grammar in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL)

The respondents in this study considered grammar to be significant in TESOL teaching; however, for grammar to be meaningful, they preferred certain grammar teaching methods over others. The most preferred method was teaching grammar in context. Various respondents defined context as how the grammar that was taught related to one or more of the language macroskills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. Other respondents defined context as finding ways to relate grammar to situations in which students have an interest or situations that relate to their daily lives. This finding corresponds with a number of authors quoted in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. The first one is Buck (1909) who insisted that the grammar of English should reflect how the language is spoken. She believed that language should reflect real life situations and that therefore, teaching mechanical drills was a poor way of teaching grammar. Her strong preference was for teaching grammar based on actual speech. This equates well with the modern concept of teaching grammar in context, as is shown by Myhill and Watson (2013) who give the example of the United States' Common Core Standards which remind teachers of the "inseparability of language study from reading, writing, speaking

and listening contexts” (p. 4). On the other hand, mechanical drills cannot be considered to be in context, and in fact they are divorced from the above-mentioned skills. The Literature Review chapter of this study examined the work of other authors who recommended teaching grammar in context, namely Bae (2000); Pekoz (2008); and Saricoban and Metin (2000).

Among the many grammar teaching methods available to teachers, the largest group of respondents (seven) in this study explicitly opted for teaching grammar in context (specifically in answer to Question 6 of the survey). Some of the reasons given for teaching grammar in context were: *‘because it allows students to see the grammar in use’*; *‘because grammar is needed as a tool for using language appropriately, not as an academic exercise’*; and *‘grammar only makes sense in context’*. A further two respondents favoured task-based teaching *‘to use real situations’* and because *‘adults seem to enjoy tasks, then a grammar focus follow-up seems to attract their interest’*. Another respondent mentioned the discovery approach because *‘it is a good way to get students to notice the grammar’*. These ten would all seem to prefer what is nowadays commonly referred to as teaching grammar in context. Therefore, it can be said that almost half of the survey respondents (out of a total of 21) preferred the approach of teaching grammar in context. This could be largely as a reaction against the former method of teaching grammar, that is, the grammar translation method, which was largely based on Latin teaching methodology. As Latin is a language that is no longer in general use, the only effective way of learning it is through the grammar translation method. There are no longer any populations in the world who speak Latin (Powney, 2013); therefore, some of the more common modern methods could not be applied to learning Latin. For instance, the communicative method could not be considered in that instance, as the language is now fixed and static because no groups of people use it for communication, especially in speaking. English, however, is a living language with a vibrant and changing grammar. As a living language, the grammar translation method is not so suitable for teaching it, as this method might appear to be dry or uninteresting. Therefore, other teaching methods must be considered, and from this study, many respondents preferred the method of teaching in

context, that is, by linking the grammar to the other four macro-skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking and by using situations that are familiar to the students.

The above-mentioned task-based teaching method '*to use real situations*' is a more recent variant of the CLT approach and introduces grammar through contextualised tasks. As such, it can be considered as associated with teaching grammar in context. The reason given by this respondent was because '*adults seem to enjoy tasks, then a grammar focus follow-up seems to attract their interest*'. Using real tasks would fit very well into the mould of teaching in context. The tasks could very well be listening or reading situations (using receptive skills), which would then lead on to speaking and writing situations (using productive skills). The mentioning of the discovery approach fits in well with Sugiharto's (2006) grammar consciousness-raising or C-R (examined in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis), whereby grammar is "noticed" by students rather than having it taught to them explicitly. There would be a certain value in using such an approach, because if students can actually notice what is happening with the grammar, they are more likely to remember it, as it would be their own discovery. Naturally, this assumes that students **will** notice, (although this may not always be the case) and that there is ample time for students to make the connection. Often teachers do not have a great deal of time at their disposal while waiting for students to notice a particular grammar point that is being presented without explicit teaching. The brighter students may well notice, but it does not follow that **all** students will notice, and often lesson time can expire before all students have made the necessary observation. The issue of grammar consciousness-raising was mentioned by one participant (Respondent 15) within Phase 2 (survey) Section A of the current study. This respondent, although not using the C-R label, did, in fact, use this method for some of her grammar teaching. She concluded that it worked if there was ample time. If time was short, then she would more likely give grammar explanations without waiting for students to notice the grammar for themselves.

This respondent called it the *'discovery approach'* and stated that this approach is *'a good way to get them to notice'* the grammar. As mentioned above, this "noticing" is how Sugiharto (2006) describes the C-R approach.

The use of songs, games or problem-solving activities could all be classified as teaching grammar in context. It is not difficult to see how singing songs that might be sung by native speakers and then analysing their grammar content for meaning fits into the mould of teaching in context. Games can also be used in a similar way:

Through well-planned games, learners can practice and internalise vocabulary, grammar and structures extensively ... While playing games, the learner's attention is on the message, not on the language. In a way, students acquire language unconsciously since their whole attention is engaged by the activity. By providing personal, social, and cross-cultural issues to define, they sometimes simulate real life situations. (Saricoban & Metin, 2000)

Before the game, the grammar might be mentioned. It could even be mentioned in a previous lesson, for instance the day before. When the game is over, a re-cap of its language structures and an analysis of the grammar used will help students to remember the language they used in the game. This also is teaching grammar in context. Furthermore, it applies to problem solving activities, in which the questions require students to use available evidence to reach a conclusion. This is supported by Saricoban and Metin (2000):

Logic problems which assist language learning by challenging students to demonstrate their understanding of English in an interesting way are types of problem-solving activities. In problem solving activities, the problems are either based on real or imaginary situations. In the activities students are given a real or an imaginary situation, and they are expected to find solutions for the problems. (Section 3, Para 4)

As students discuss the problem to be solved, they use the grammar that has been taught, while a subsequent re-cap after the activity will ensure that the structures

will more easily remain in their memories. Games were favoured by many participants in the current study. Songs and problem-solving activities were also used, but not to the same extent as games.

It was surprising that although all teachers thought that grammar was necessary to varying degrees, one comment was that teachers '*need only basic knowledge*'. This comment was given in the context of preference for CLT with the idea that the ability to communicate is somehow acquired through participation in activities that do not require extensive grammar knowledge either on the part of the teacher or the student.

In Chapter 4 of this thesis, Section 4.4.2 examines the replies of the respondents to the second interview question. The variety of answers from the interviewees gives a snapshot which could be pointing towards three different explanations. The first is that beginning teachers could be finding their feet in the area of grammar teaching, then embracing the communicative approach, but later on, with more experience, they realise that it is not adequate and move to other methods. When looking at scores from the grammar review, the least experienced teacher scored 52%; the teacher with seven years intermittent experience scored 61%; the teacher with ten years' experience scored 83%; and the teacher with the most experience also scored 83%. The second explanation could show that teachers with more knowledge are more likely to use methods for teaching grammar that need more explanation, while teachers with less knowledge might choose the communicative approach precisely because it might need fewer explanations. A third way of explaining this would be that those with more interest in grammar would naturally choose methods which required more grammar input from them (of the two longest-serving interviewees, one had assiduously taught himself grammar and the other had long experience). On the other hand, those with less interest might choose the communicative method, because it requires less grammar input from them, as they could be insecure in their ability to give explanations.

Moreover, the respondents in this study who were long-standing teachers of English language gave the impression of being more relaxed in relation to grammar

teaching. Chapter 4 Section 4.4.2 of this thesis reports on replies to Question 8 in Section A of the survey (Phase 2): “How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?” The replies of the teachers with long experience showed that they were unperturbed, giving succinct answers. On the other hand, the replies of some of the teachers with less experience showed a degree of anxiety veiled in rather long-winded answers. It is possible that the more experienced teachers think more in long-term prospects for their students, and can give succinct answers because they have it at the forefront of their minds, as opposed to teachers with less experience, whose minds might be preoccupied with questions about how to make grammar more interesting. The former give a more relaxed impression about making grammar more interesting and motivating for students, in all likelihood because they have been doing exactly that for many years.

5.2 Research Objective 2

To examine teachers’ views on the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers in TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular

The respondents in this study had varying views on the importance of grammar knowledge for teachers in TESOL teaching. It appears that the respondents with more knowledge thought it to be more important, and those with less knowledge thought it might not be so important. The lack of effective grammar teaching in English speaking countries for the past half century and the availability of the communicative method of teaching, which minimises grammar knowledge, may be the reasons for this. Within the context of teaching, respondents were definite that grammar knowledge should not be considered an end in itself, but should be considered purely as a tool for communication. Teachers were more eager to consider the concept of grammar knowledge in relation to teaching rather than in relation to their own personal grammar knowledge.

The fact that respondents considered grammar knowledge as a tool for communication corresponds with other research, for example Petruzzella’s (1996) study, which was conducted to investigate teachers’ thoughts on grammar

instruction (refer to Literature Review chapter of this thesis. The respondents in the current study tended to agree with Petruzzella's findings. Twenty-one respondents took part in Phase 2 of the current study, and of those, 14 (or 66%) mentioned either explicitly or implicitly that grammar is a tool for achieving effective communication across Questions 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the survey (Phase 2 Section A). This pattern was continued in the interviews (Phase 3). Three of the four interviewees (Respondents 8, 10 and 17) mentioned that grammar is a tool for good communication, and those same three had also mentioned this precise point in the surveys. The fourth interviewee (Respondent 23) was the teacher from a mathematics and science background. This respondent did not mention the prospect of grammar as a tool for communication either in the survey or in the interview. Perhaps the reason is that this respondent was so new to English language teaching that the mechanics of grammar teaching loom large in her mind, and perhaps she has not had the time to consider the aim of grammar or at least had the opportunity to verbalise it.

As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, Ur (1988) agrees with the notion that grammar acquisition is merely a means of gaining mastery of the target language and should not be an end in itself. She goes on to say that if grammar exercises are employed in the early stages of learning, these should be replaced by fluency practice as time progresses, so that in the long term the emphasis should be on successful communication, and with the passage of time, grammar learning becomes incidental rather than the main objective. Likewise, Foppoli (2008) insists that the primary goal of second language teachers must be to create users of the language, not linguists. Therefore, for Foppoli, any grammar taught must be oriented towards usage of the language rather than a study of the grammar for its own sake.

The use of grammar exercises in class can have further significance. The finding regarding the use of grammar exercises in class as presented in the Data Analysis and Results chapter of this thesis concurs with Canh (2012) who quotes various studies particularly a 1997 study undertaken by Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers, which showed that a group of ...

... Puerto Rican teachers, unlike their New York colleagues, who favoured a purely meaning-focused approach to language teaching, believed that formal attention to grammar was needed. These Puerto Rican teachers explained that an explicit approach to grammar satisfied their students' expectations as well as syllabus requirements. (Canh, 2012, pp. 36-37).

It is possible that the international students at the institution where the current study took place favour a more explicit grammar teaching approach because of their previous experience and cultural formation, whereas the teachers at the centre (from an English speaking background, like the New York teachers mentioned by Canh), do not. The reasons may well include the fact that the teaching of grammar in English speaking countries has not been a focus for the past fifty years or so (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005) as shown in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. Therefore, from their own previous experience and cultural formation, the teachers involved in this study may view grammar as an adjunct that is not strictly necessary in language teaching.

The adult international students at the centre are generally motivated, and many of them have studied English grammar in the past in their own countries before coming to Australia for further studies. Furthermore, they expect teachers to be knowledgeable in the area of grammar. Adult international students know exactly what they are looking for, both from lessons and from teachers. Different teaching methods in different countries notwithstanding, adult students of English do require their grammar questions to be answered by teachers. If teachers cannot answer student questions, or appear hesitant, this will not create confidence in the teacher on the part of the student. Canh's (2012) proposal that culture may significantly influence both student and teacher expectations in the area of grammar teaching and learning is significant in this regard.

Canh also reports that 61% of teachers in his Vietnamese study thought it was important to do as many grammar exercises in the classroom as possible. This may signal a similar cultural divide, as only three of the 21 teachers in Phase 2 (survey)

Section A of the current study (or less than 10%) classified grammar exercises in class as very helpful. One of these three (Respondent 6) commented that grammar exercises are very helpful because '*they are viewed as very important by most students*'. Another (Respondent 8) was insistent that these exercises should be '*contextualized*'. The third (Respondent 20) gave no further comment apart from the words '*very helpful*'. It was also shown that 72% of the student respondents in the Vietnamese study thought they needed to do as many grammar exercises as possible in the classroom. Therefore, in both cases it would appear that grammar exercises are viewed as vital by more students than teachers, although in the Vietnamese study, the gap between teachers' views and students' views was small (61% and 72% respectively). In contrast, in the current study, the gap would in all likelihood have been much wider, given that less than 15% of teachers considered classroom grammar exercises to be vital. Although students did not take part in the current study, possible student reaction could be gauged from teacher comments.

From the opinions given by the teachers in this study, it would appear that experienced teachers might use grammar exercises for consolidation purposes and give them for homework rather than use class-time to actually administer such exercises, while less experienced teachers might use them in class, because this is something that can be prepared, as text books have answers in the teachers' editions. More experienced teachers might be prepared to teach the grammar and answer student questions from their own knowledge, whereas less experienced teachers might rely more on set exercises for which they have access to the answers.

The idea of more formal grammar study is backed up by Landolsi and Tyson (2011) whose study in the United Arab Emirates showed that 100% of their student respondents believed that formal grammar study was an essential component of mastering a second language, whereas only 50% of the teachers supported this idea. Another point of discrepancy was that 72% of their students (compared to 31% of the teachers) believed that there should be more formal grammar study in class. In a Korean study, Park and Lee (2006) also discuss different perceptions between students and teachers, and make the following unusual observation:

The teachers who consider grammatical proficiency less important and focus on more fluency than accuracy in class can be rejected by the students who believe in the importance of grammatical proficiency and want their errors to be corrected. (p. 247)

As shown in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, the study by Lopez Rama and Luque Agullo (2012) points out that the deep-end approach (communication is all that matters) has been found to be inadequate, and that a shallow-end approach, where grammar is considered only as a means to achieving communication, is a much more fruitful proposition. CLT does not abandon grammar altogether for the sake of communication. It does take grammar teaching into consideration, although it is considerably minimised. Therefore, even with a method which takes a minimalist approach, grammar is still used to some degree. Within CLT, it is easier to see the point of teaching grammar not for its own sake, but rather for the sake of learning to communicate clearly. On the other hand, Nassaji and Fotos (2004) contend that there is a body of research which shows that approaches where meaning-focussed communication is the main aim are totally inadequate. For learners to develop high levels of accuracy, a grammar focus is necessary.

The notion that the study of grammar should be a tool for effective communication rather than an end in itself seems to have universal appeal, as it was enunciated as far back as 1947, and has also been found in this current study and other studies between 1947 and the present. However, it should be borne in mind that meaning-focussed communication might be sufficient for purely communicative purposes; however, as Nassaji and Fotos (2004) point out, if high levels of accuracy are the main objective, then a grammar focus in teaching must be considered. The end product towards which one is aiming should govern the method used to arrive there.

Some researchers consider that grammar knowledge for teachers is a crucial element for the teaching of grammar, for example Grant and Mueller (2010). Teachers' grammar knowledge is invariably tied to outcomes for students. As shown

in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, in a radio interview Grant and Mueller (Goddard, 2011) discussed the necessity of drilling of grammar basics, so that the brain can retrieve these basics when needed for the purposes of applying that knowledge. Although in the 1960s (pre-Dartmouth Conference) teachers were dissatisfied with grammar drills, there should be a place for such drills, albeit not a prominent place. When students check their written work, they should be able to recognise problems in their writing out of the storehouse of grammar knowledge residing in their brains. From that storehouse, if a student can recognise a sentence fragment, for instance, then the solution becomes immediately apparent. If the notion of sentence fragment has never been put into the storehouse, it is highly unlikely that such an error would even be noticed or acknowledged. From the relevant literature (e.g. Goddard, 2011) and from this finding of the current study, this thesis would suggest that drilling (in a non-pervasive way) is a method for acquiring grammar as a tool for precision in communication, although it should not be regarded as an end in itself. Drilling in grammar basics could lead to the beginnings of deep literacy, which students would then possess in order to further pursue such depth in their future lives. Deep literacy, in turn, would lead to freedom to express one's ideas in a most precise and concise way.

5.3 Research Objective 3

To identify teachers' actual knowledge of grammar through inventory keeping and through a grammar review

It was indeed found that there was a lack of grammar knowledge to some degree for most of the respondents; however, in some situations respondents showed a lack of confidence rather than a lack of knowledge of grammar. From this study, it could be concluded that teachers do not seem to be very able judges of their own abilities. If they are aware of gaps in their knowledge, this may make them less confident even if they do know a particular grammar item. During the first phase of the study, some teachers requested inclusion of transitive and intransitive verbs in the proposed professional development program. However, during the grammar review, this was the one item that showed a 100% success rate. Although teachers

might have been insecure in their knowledge of this grammar point, this insecurity was proven to be unfounded. As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, Andrews' 2003 study showed that his teacher respondents revealed a "marked lack of confidence in their ability to handle grammar adequately" (p. 363) and that in some cases, this lack of confidence was reinforced "by a sense of inadequacy in dealing with something as important as grammar" (p. 363). Therefore, even if teachers know certain grammar points (as shown in the grammar review), it is likely that some will nevertheless feel a lack of confidence.

Two respondents in the current study achieved scores above 90% in the grammar review (Phase 2, section B). Respondent 25, who attained the highest score of 97% showed confidence in her ability to teach grammar and also showed a sense of responsibility towards her less knowledgeable colleagues:

As a student of foreign languages, I have always been very interested in grammar. I have sought to improve my own understanding of English grammar throughout the years. As a result, I feel confident about teaching English grammar to my students and have helped colleagues with their questions about English grammar.

Respondent 15, who attained the second highest score of 92% in the grammar review, gave this assessment of her grammar preparedness: '*I sometimes find unexpected questions on fine points hard to explain clearly*'. The highest scoring respondent at 97% felt confident; however, the second highest scoring respondent at 92% showed a certain amount of grammar anxiety in the context of unexpected student questions. Grammar anxiety does seem to play a part in how teachers view themselves and whether they are confident in this area (refer to Andrews, 2003).

Respondent 25, who achieved a score of 97%, was the teacher who had taught English for the longest period of time, obtaining her original English teaching qualification in 1978. Although respondents were not asked to give their ages, it can be inferred that this respondent was among the older teachers as her qualification had been obtained more than 30 years prior to the current study. Respondent 15, with a score of 92% had obtained her English teaching qualification in 2012, but had

a long history of teaching before she trained as a specialist English teacher. Therefore, although ages were not required to be given, it could be inferred that older teachers may have more grammar knowledge than younger ones.

Table 3.4 in the Methodology chapter shows the grammar items with which the respondents had difficulties. This is quite an extensive list, and as far as the verb section is concerned, it covers a wide range of items. Many teacher participants in this study found difficulty with the grammar review, and the total number of correct answers in the grammar review ranged from 52% to 97% with an average of 78%. This should be considered as a major problem. If some teachers of English language can only achieve just over 50% of correct answers, this should be critical in triggering professional development for current teachers and serious grammar courses for student teachers. If teachers of mathematics were found to have the same error rate in a mathematics review, it would be considered an intolerable situation. There have already been calls for more professional development for currently serving teachers of English language, for example Lê et al. (2011) and Shuib (2009).

It was surprising that the most commonly misunderstood grammar item in the review was the function of the word *that* in English grammar. In the grammar review, only one third of participants correctly identified the word class of this particular word in the context in which it appeared. As a result, the first professional development session was held on this particular point. Grammar books generally do not have all the functions of this word together in one unit. However, dictionaries do. During that session, participants learned that grammar is not always learned from a grammar book, but that dictionaries can be an equally useful source of information, especially in the circumstance of identification of word class. Relying on grammar books for grammar information simply is not enough; all resources need to be brought into play. Also surprising was the fact that teachers found similar words difficult to differentiate, for example *its* and *it's*, *effect* and *affect*. It would be reasonable to assume that educated native speakers, especially teachers of English language, would know the difference. The fact that grammar has been taught in an increasingly attenuated manner in English speaking countries for the

best part of five decades (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005) could well account for this situation. This kind of misunderstanding warrants attention from language teachers. People working as translators and interpreters between English and another language would be in serious difficulty if they did not know the difference between words such as *effect* and *affect*. It is incumbent on language teachers to teach such differences. From the grammar review it was also ascertained that teachers knew the basic nomenclature, that is, for the most part they could identify nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. This is hardly sufficient for professional language teachers. Much more is needed. Jones and Chen (2012) also indicate that teachers are “most comfortable with commonly used terms such as nouns, verbs and adjectives” (p. 152). As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, Andrews (1999) shows a similar concern when he explains that the respondents in his study were poorly prepared, even when the tasks he gave them did not involve complex metalanguage or obscure rules of grammar; despite this lack of complexity, they still performed poorly.

In the current study only two teachers achieved a score above 90%, which equates to less than 10% of the 21 respondents, who were all specialist English teachers in a tertiary setting. The percentage might have been even less in a school setting, where teachers are not generally specialists in one area only. In Australia, primary school teachers are generalists, and high school teachers usually have at least two areas of expertise. From these figures, it would appear that effective teaching of grammar as set out in the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b) will be an uphill battle unless action is taken to help teachers who are unsure of their knowledge of English grammar. There have now been several generations of teachers without adequate grammar preparation who have been teaching English both to domestic students in schools and to international students in higher education (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005). This is indicative of a problem both with proper implementation of the grammar component in the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b) at school level and with teaching university enabling courses for international students, who have a firm expectation that their teachers will be both able and willing to explain grammar to them in an effective way.

The interviewees in this study agreed with Hudson's (1998) finding that effective grammar teaching depends on the teacher's own knowledge and that a teacher who knows very little about grammar can teach very little compared with one who knows much more. This also links in with the ideas of Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004), which were mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. These authors state that "shallow grammatical knowledge places more emphasis on rehearsing and practicing grammar forms through careful monitoring with relatively limited, superficial analyses of language forms" (p. 871). Respondent 10, who admitted during the interview (Phase 3 of the study) that she was not confident about grammar, and who scored 61% on the grammar review (Phase 2, Section B), thought that teachers who were very conversant with grammar would give it a greater role in teaching, and that if her grammar knowledge had been more extensive, she *'would definitely be moving it from need a basic knowledge up to a more central role'*. This is an interesting comment. Generally speaking, a teacher with less grammar knowledge might simply consider grammar to be unimportant; however, this respondent has shown that if she were more knowledgeable, then her thinking would change. This is like a nostalgic thought or a regret that she missed out on learning grammar, and without being sentimental about it, she simply faces the fact that if things had been different, she would think differently. However, she did not appear to countenance that she could change the situation.

Respondent 17, who had a long history of grammar teaching, and who scored 83% on the grammar review, was quite blunt in her assessment, commenting that *'the less somebody knows about grammar, perhaps the less they think it's important, because they don't want to be caught out by appearing not to know'*. Respondent 8, who had taught himself grammar, and who also scored 83% on the grammar review, made comments such as *'you really need to give the students an understanding of it'* and *'the metalanguage is necessary so they know which words they are dealing with and how to integrate them and manipulate them'*. These two respondents were highly motivated and successful grammar teachers. Their views, which reflected their confidence, differed markedly from the view of Respondent 10. Respondent 23, who was very new to English language teaching, and who

scored 52% on the grammar review, thought that *'there's just so much they have to learn so quickly – that concerns me'*. By mentioning her concern for the students in having to learn so much so quickly, it seems that this respondent might be reflecting her own feelings, especially given her low grammar review score. Sipe (2006) echoes the fears mentioned above with the following: "Too often, new teachers are reluctant to teach writing because of a fear that some issues of grammar or usage will come up for which they have insufficient knowledge" (p. 16).

The above ideas emanating from the teachers in this study are supported by Paterson (2010), who goes even further and asserts that teachers' grammatical competence comes from their own education that they received prior to the age of 16, that is, during their own school days. The teachers who are referred to in Paterson's (2010) paper are the ones who were pupils themselves in what Hudson (1998) refers to as "grammar-free zones" (p. 4). Wales (2009) agrees that these teachers have had no or very little training in grammar. It can therefore be assumed that a certain amount of analytical linguistic competence has largely been lost and must be regained as a matter of urgency if the *Australian Curriculum's* expectations of grammar teaching are to be fulfilled.

Although all four of the interviewees in this study had had very little in the way of grammar training when they themselves were at school, the two with the higher scores and higher confidence levels had taken responsibility for their own grammar knowledge and had successfully applied that knowledge because they were very aware that they would need it for teaching English to international students. However, with the advent of the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b), English teachers in domestic schools are only now beginning to realise that they need more grammar skills, and they could be in a situation like the two respondents in the current study with the lower scores, that is, they might accept their current situation without hope for change. For this reason also, professional development in grammar is an urgent need for current teachers. Gray (1999) very sensibly encapsulates the idea that "grammar taught sensitively is a short cut to reduce the load on the memory" (p. 40). She goes on to say that it is essentially a system of patterns describing how language works and should be regarded as a significant

prerequisite in communicative competence. When considered in this way, there would be very few teachers who would argue against teaching it. One of Gray's (1999) enthusiastic student teachers likened grammar to mathematical problem solving:

Structuring the teaching of a new pattern or construction reminds me very much of maths. If the formula, how to solve the equation or problem, is once understood, any similar problem can be tackled. In order to get there you have to break down the problem and to concentrate on the unknown ... I want to enable the pupils to solve a grammatical problem, that means to make them recognize the pattern and use it for their own purpose. (p. 43)

This is indeed a paradigm that is worth exploring. If current teachers, student teachers and students of all levels and situations can be encouraged to understand grammar in this light, there could be more enthusiasm and motivation to propel them forwards.

As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, teachers in general had very little professional training before 1927, yet almost 100 years later, the situation has improved for most subjects, but not for English grammar (Marckwardt, 1968). This is not to say that the situation remained static for 100 years: there was serious grammar teaching and learning up until shortly before the 1966 Dartmouth Conference; however, since that time it has been progressively disregarded. The situation now is that there are very few teachers left who understand grammar and are able to teach it effectively (Mueller & Grant, 2011). These teachers tend to be older, and tend to be those who have engaged in serious language study (usually other languages rather than English). This was supported by the observations in the current study, that is, the two respondents who had engaged in serious study of other languages at tertiary level scored over 90% in the grammar review (refer to Chapter 4 of this thesis).

Marckwardt (1968) also states that because teachers in the past were not adequately prepared, they were unable to come to agreement about standards in

the teaching of English. The current situation is not substantially different. If one were to consider the problems highlighted by Huddleston (2010) in the *Coalface Grammar Dispute* (refer to Literature Review chapter of this thesis), it can easily be seen that those who have responsibility for providing professional development may themselves not be adequately prepared to tackle such a task. Therefore, the question of how agreement could be reached is a serious issue at this current time. It appears that it might now necessary to hold another conference with the standing of the Dartmouth Conference of 1966, which could present the opposite view from the 1966 prevailing view. As a result, it is possible that the no grammar trend set in motion in 1966 could be reversed.

Many grammar disputes involve teaching methods, where various groups favour one method over another, or favour no method at all. These disputes rarely centre on nomenclature or identification of certain grammar points. In fact, the only such dispute uncovered during the literature search for the current study occurred in Australia and is known as the *Coalface Grammar Dispute* (Huddleston, 2010), which was mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. Wales (2009) discusses the British situation, and mentions the inaccuracies discovered in the 1992 resource published under the title *Language in the National Curriculum* and states that those inaccuracies were more of an embarrassment than a dispute. Moreover, she admits that there was an acknowledgement that the situation had arisen because linguists had not been involved in the publication of that particular teacher resource.

If school students were to be taught basic grammar, they would take it into their adult lives. Should any of them choose to become English teachers, they would at least have basic grammar ingrained into them, to which more advanced grammar could be added at a later date. They could still dispute with one another over methods of grammar teaching, but at least the grammar would be known to them. Part of the problem is that there is no final arbiter to settle such questions. As evidenced by the *Coalface Grammar Dispute* (Huddleston, 2010), the situation was never resolved, precisely because there is no final arbiter. From the relevant literature it can be deduced that an arbiter is needed. Moreover, now that Australia

has a national curriculum which includes the teaching of English grammar, and as there is no means of resolving such disputes, this study recommends that it is time to appoint a person to the position of national Director General of Education as already exists at state level in some states of Australia, and disputes could always be taken to that officer for final arbitration.

As mentioned above, the second aspect of this first finding is the issue of teacher confidence in their knowledge of grammar. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there was a grammar area in which teachers showed uncertainty, and this area covered transitive and intransitive verbs. Yet when participants took part in the grammar review, there was a 100% success rate with this particular item. This grammar item was requested for the professional development program; however, it is not necessary to include it, because testing proved that no teacher had difficulty with it. This uncertainty on the part of the respondents could be attributed to lack of confidence. Lack of confidence can cause teachers to think they know less than they actually do, and it is apparent that this may have been the situation in this instance. Lack of confidence can also cause anxiety, so teachers might become less confident in their knowledge. For current teachers, regular professional development would help to provide them with an accurate self-evaluation of their own knowledge, and this in itself would increase their confidence. The issue of lack of confidence is supported by Jones and Chen (2012) who report that teachers in their study felt “anxious, overwhelmed and confused” (p. 157) by the grammar requirements in the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b). Lack of confidence, anxiety and confusion on the part of teachers – and all such negative feelings – should be addressed in order for Australia to adequately implement the new curriculum.

Within this aspect of teacher confidence, the Data Analysis and Results chapter of this thesis reported an interesting answer to the question ‘How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for the students?’ The answer given was: ‘*by feeling interested in it themselves and being confident in delivering it to students*’. The respondent who gave this reply recognised the connection between interest and confidence. If one were not interested, one would not take the

necessary steps to redress the situation. However, by becoming interested, one would surely find the means to ameliorate the situation and consequently gain confidence. Andrews (2003) showed that the majority of his respondents seemed to feel “as unenthusiastic about teaching grammar as their students” did about studying it (p. 362). If teachers are grammar instructors, they need to be interested, enthusiastic and confident in order to inspire their students.

Yet another interesting item from the surveys in this study is that in reply to Question 3 in the survey (What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?), Respondent 5 stated that *‘teachers should be trained to be able to answer students’ grammar questions to increase student confidence in the teacher’*. Effective grammar teaching usually brings the greatest benefit to students, that is, it can increase their confidence in their own abilities and it can improve their performance in writing. The above comment from Respondent 5 brings in a different perspective, that is, a benefit for the teacher. If students have more confidence in the teacher, this surely is of mutual benefit; students would be more relaxed, knowing that the teacher has complete mastery of the subject matter. At the same time the teacher would benefit as well, knowing that the students respect him / her for the knowledge and expertise he / she can pass on to them. As discussed in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, Welker (1996) makes it clear that students need teachers to be confident in order to be inspired to become confident themselves. Welker therefore advises teachers to relax and enjoy themselves. In answer to the same question, Respondent 3 made the comment that *‘grammar enables a student to communicate their thoughts and ideas with clarity, and limits the potential for misunderstandings’*. This comment is in complete agreement with Brown (2014) and Myhill et al. (2008). Both of these studies were examined in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis.

Teacher interest in grammar was another point brought out in this study. During the interview, Respondent 17 thought that if teachers are keen on grammar, then that would encourage the students, whereas if teachers show that they have little interest in grammar, then that could negatively affect students’ perceptions about learning grammar. Respondent 10 agreed by noting that her own attitude towards

grammar was neither enthusiastic nor motivated and this would affect students. These two teachers are in agreement, one from the point of view of a knowledgeable teacher and the other can see that her own perspective might be the cause for students' lack of enthusiasm for grammar.

Respondent 8 stated that he tried to show enthusiasm when teaching grammar, while Respondent 23's comment was *'When you're under pressure, you really have to keep moving'*. Expressions like *'necessary evil'* and *'under pressure'* give the impression of a lack of grammar enthusiasm in Respondents 10 and 23, whereas the words of Respondents 17 and 8 show enthusiasm and keenness for the topic of grammar. Respondent 10 mentioned motivation and the fact that her motivation (as well as enthusiasm) for grammar teaching was not high. The teacher preparation system may not have succeeded in the case of this respondent. It would be reasonable to think that if a person has chosen the career of teaching English, then a certain modicum of enthusiasm and motivation for grammar should be present. Teacher preparation programs should help to impart such enthusiasm and motivation.

In Phase 2 (survey) Section A, Respondents 19 and 3 mentioned that before taking the CELTA, a prospective teacher may have had very minimal exposure to grammar. Respondent 19 stated: *'As students in the 60s and 70s, we received little explicit grammar teaching ...I was finally formally introduced to grammar understanding in my CELTA course.'* This respondent achieved 69% in the grammar review; therefore, although the CELTA course may have been successful in introducing her to grammar, there is still a long way to go, because 69% in a grammar review is, in all likelihood, too low for a professional language teacher.

Respondent 3 explained that she always prepared thoroughly for grammar teaching because the CELTA course had taught her how to go about introducing and teaching a grammar point. She noted, however, that if a student asked an unexpected question about another grammar point, she would be unsure of how to reply. She drew attention to the fact that she might have forgotten the answer because she might not have taught that point for a long time or perhaps had never taught it, or

she may even never have known it. She also mentioned that there could be other situations where she might know the grammar, but found it difficult to give adequate explanations.

Again, Respondent 3, who achieved 72% in the grammar review, benefitted from the CELTA course's grammar introduction; however, there is a lack of basic understanding if she only feels confident about the grammar she has prepared immediately prior to teaching. It would be unlikely that a mathematics or science teacher would make similar comments about the teaching required for those subjects. All teachers, regardless of their specialist subject areas, should be expected to answer unexpected questions from students. It is not a satisfactory situation when teachers of English are left in such an unenviable situation as having to appear unknowledgeable before their students when an unexpected question is asked.

The perception of feeling confident only about the grammar that has been prepared immediately before a lesson is in stark contrast to the work of Johnston (2010) as well as the work of Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004). Both of these studies were mentioned in the Literature Review chapter. Their work on depth (Johnston refers to deep literacy, while Haim, Strauss and Ravid refer to deep grammar knowledge) is much more than a functional preparation before class. It is an idea of liberation, a deep understanding that means that grammar is not a dead weight, but that it can be brought to life. If teachers were to have such an understanding ingrained into them, they would be freed to explore student questions on the spot, rather than have to resort to telling students they will find out and get back to them later. The fact of teachers' grammar insecurity is well supported in the literature, for example, Jones and Chen (2012); Petraki and Hill (2010); and Sipe (2006).

As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, Butler (2004) and Belchamber (2007) both discuss teacher confidence levels in the teaching of fluency. Belchamber recommends low emphasis on grammar for fluency to occur; however, Butler's study shows that identification of gaps in the productive skills can be a problem for teachers. The productive skills are the places where fluency

occurs. Therefore, these two authors are in disagreement with each other. Low emphasis on grammar generally pertains to CLT. In Phase 2 (survey) Section A of the current study, four respondents out of a total of 21 (Respondents 5, 9, 14 and 16) said that their preferred teaching approach was CLT. This point was followed up in the interviews. Three interviewees (Respondents 8, 17 and 23) thought that CLT was not adequate, while one (Respondent 10, who thought that grammar was '*a necessary evil*') thought that it was adequate. From this study, it would seem that CLT is adequate for teaching English if general communication is the aim, but if the aim is to instruct students who will progress to tertiary studies conducted through the medium of English language, then CLT is, in all likelihood, insufficient. For students intending to move into degree courses taught through the medium of English language, a study of grammar must, at least, be considered. Otherwise, those students will, in all probability, fail to be adequately prepared and will not achieve levels of accuracy in writing and speaking as required for tertiary study. As discussed in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, Nassaji and Fotos (2004) examine recent research which shows that "in order to reach high levels of accuracy, formal grammar instruction is necessary" (p. 129). These authors further show that "explicit instruction ... results in substantial gains in the learning of target structures in comparison to implicit instruction ... alone, and that these gains are durable over time" (p. 129). Therefore, for international students wishing to enrol in English speaking universities, it would appear that mastering grammar is a necessary skill.

During the course of the study it was discovered that teachers of English language at the teaching institute where this study took place could all correctly identify simple grammatical concepts, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives and prepositions. However, more complex items were not identified with as much accuracy. These more complex grammar items included nouns used as adjectives, compound nouns, multi-word subjects of sentences, relative pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, defining and non-defining relative clauses, phrasal verbs, conjunctions and prepositional phrases. A comparison could be drawn with teachers of mathematics who might be proficient in arithmetic, but who might have difficulty understanding

calculus. Such a situation would be considered a cause for concern. If language teachers experience difficulties with grammatical concepts beyond nouns and verbs, this would surely cause them stress, if not distress. This idea is also supported by Jones and Chen (2012), as mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, where they reported on teachers feeling “anxious, overwhelmed and confused” (p. 157) by the new grammar requirements of the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b).

This finding from the current study shows that work should to be done with both current teachers and also with student teachers to help them to really understand grammar and its concepts, so that students (both in domestic schools and in international settings) might have the benefit of solid English language grammar teaching. This would, in turn, help in developing or regaining a national consciousness of that which has largely been lost in linguistic and communicative competence since the 1960s (Johnston, 2010).

5.4 Research Objective 4

To determine variations between teachers’ actual knowledge of grammar and expected knowledge of grammar for TESOL teaching in general and TESOL grammar teaching in particular

The previous finding, listed under Research Objective 3, could also be said to relate to Research Objective 4. However, there was an unexpected finding in this study, which correlated even more closely to Research Objective 4, and this was that grammar may be more difficult for teachers of English who come from a non-humanities background, as those teachers achieved low scores in the grammar review. From all the respondents, the two science background teachers achieved two of the three lowest scores on the grammar review, and therefore, for those teachers there would have been a wider gap between their actual knowledge of grammar and expected knowledge. Expected grammar knowledge was taken to be the grammar that was required for teaching in the courses at the language centre where this study took place. Teachers were expected to know and understand the

grammar content in the course books to be able to teach it effectively and confidently.

The two teachers from a non-humanities background were Respondent 23 (who had been a long-term teacher of high school mathematics and science) and Respondent 19 (who had come to English teaching after a career in dentistry). It can therefore be seen that both of these respondents had done their tertiary studies in the science field. These two respondents scored poorly on the grammar review (52% and 69% respectively). These scores were the lowest and third lowest of the group of 21 who undertook the grammar review in Phase 2 Section B of the study. The other low score (61%) was attained by Respondent 10, the teacher who, although having a background in the humanities, considered grammar to be a *'necessary evil'*. Respondent 23 admitted that she had found grammar difficult because *'answers are not always cut and dried (like mathematics answers)'*.

There was a dearth of research on the question of science graduates taking up English teaching, in all probability because it is an unusual situation. This is not to say that all science graduates do not understand grammar as many clearly do. However, the two science graduates who took part in this study did show a marked lack of understanding, as did one of the humanities graduates.

Entry requirements for anyone who wishes to become a teacher of English language to international students at tertiary level are not governed by the same precepts required for entry into primary or secondary school teaching. Generally, the basic requirement is a bachelor degree (in any discipline) plus a CELTA qualification. One of these two teachers (Respondent 19), who had not come from a humanities background, was in precisely this situation. She had an honours degree in Dental Science, then after many years of practice as a dentist, she had completed a one month long CELTA course and had entered English teaching, which represented a complete career change. The other teacher (Respondent 23), who had been a teacher of high school mathematics and science, had a Bachelor of Science degree and a Diploma of Education; after many years, she, too, had completed a CELTA course and changed focus in her work, although she stayed within her original

career of teaching. The latter had already been a teacher, whereas the former had not. It is not surprising that there is little literature on this phenomenon. It would be usual to expect that those teachers who are teaching English to international students would have come from an English teaching background, as many do. However, because of the current entry requirements, it is possible to enter the profession with very little formal English language knowledge or with inadequate teaching qualifications. Although the sample was very small (a mere two teachers in this situation), it is interesting to note that both of them (or 100% of the very small sample) found grammar difficult.

In Phase 2 of the study (survey) Section A, Question 5 asked respondents to give their views on the role of grammar in English teaching and learning. Respondent 19's reply was that *'it underpins teaching and learning English'*, while the reply of Respondent 23 was *'it is important to understand it'*. Respondent 19's reply is a matter-of-fact opinion. However, the reply of Respondent 23, who scored 52% on the grammar review, belies a feeling of insecurity regarding the topic of grammar.

Question 6 asked respondents to identify which grammar teaching approach they preferred and to give reasons for their choices. Both of these respondents thought that the grammar should be taught first, before progressing to use of the language point in another macro-skill. It could be that they were unconsciously thinking back to their own experiences of learning a foreign language at school, as this had been the commonly used method in the past. As these two teachers were both quite new to English language teaching, it is possible that they equated their own personal experience of second language learning with how they thought English as a second language should be taught. (In Question 1 of the survey both indicated that they had studied a second language, but only at school level).

Question 7 asked respondents to give their views on the use of grammar exercises in class, and to comment on how helpful such exercises might be. Respondent 19 gave a considered opinion and mentioned that the context given in the course book at the language centre where this study took place was often too difficult and got *'in the way of the main objective, the grammar point being taught'*. Respondent

23's reply was simply that '*students seem to accept them*'. Again, the reply of Respondent 23 (who attained the lowest score on the grammar review) does not seem to answer the question. It is not a view, but rather a justification for the use of grammar exercises.

Question 8 asked respondents to consider how teachers can make grammar more interesting and motivating for students. Respondent 19 gave quite a lengthy answer in which she explained how she related grammar to navigation. It showed that this respondent had spent time contemplating the issue of grammar, much like the above-mentioned student teacher in Gray's (1999) study, who likened the teaching of new grammar structures to the teaching of mathematics. Respondent 23, however, simply stated that eliciting grammar from students is preferable. Respondent 23 was also the newest teacher among the entire staff; it is possible that, because of her very recent entry into the profession of English teaching, she was still finding her way with all the abstract concepts that must be considered in this particular teaching area.

Question 9 in the survey asked respondents whether they felt adequately prepared to impart grammar knowledge. Respondent 23 simply replied '*No*' without giving any other explanation. Most respondents gave a longer answer. For instance, Respondent 19 replied:

I certainly didn't when I started teaching and was often just one step ahead of some teachers (and probably less knowledgeable than others). I always prepared well but sometimes was confused. My secret weapon was my husband who, with a British education in the 30's – 50's, has a very sound knowledge of grammar. He understands most of the terms, even though his area is Chemistry. With practice, I have developed a better understanding of basic grammar but still feel shaky on more complicated aspects (e.g. relative clauses, complicated sentence construction and nomenclature).

Question 10 in the same section of Phase 2 asked respondents to give reasons for their answers to Question 9. Respondent 23's reply was '*international students want more in depth answers, which I don't often have.*' Respondent 19's reply was:

I was not taught grammar explicitly at primary school and so developed an intrinsic knowledge of how to apply it and I did this well. I used to get distinctions and above for English, but, if asked to explain grammar, I would have been flummoxed. I think this is very sad as being able to articulate why you use grammar in the way you do (not just because it sounds right) is crucial. In many countries, grammar is taught explicitly. Hence I have Dutch cousins who know and understand far more English grammar than I have done before I did my CELTA. It really handicaps English speakers when they try to learn another language. I don't think grammar teaching is necessarily boring (unless it's always taught by rote methods) and once students understand the relevance of it in imparting the subtleties of meaning, it can be quite exciting. I found it to be so.

By mentioning the opinion 'handicap for English speakers' this respondent has shown agreement with Haim, Strauss and Ravid (2004) who mention that shallow grammatical knowledge is not uncommon among teachers of English. As mentioned in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis, these authors show that such teachers place "more emphasis on rehearsing and practicing grammar forms through careful monitoring with ... limited, superficial analyses of language forms" (p. 871), possibly through the use of grammar exercises which can be carefully monitored. This is in direct contrast with teachers who have attained deep literacy (Johnston, 2010) or deep grammar knowledge (Haim, Strauss & Ravid, 2004). These teachers are able to metaphorically soar head and shoulders over teachers with shallow knowledge and can take their students with them in an exploration of exact meaning of expression that teachers with shallow knowledge cannot do.

It can be seen that both of these respondents from a non-humanities background are struggling to keep up with the grammar they need to teach. One of them relies on her grammatically knowledgeable husband, while the other does not mention anyone or anything that she relies on. Moreover, they both seem to rely on their own school experiences of studying a second language when thinking about how to go about teaching grammar to students who are studying English as their second language. Surprisingly, the more disadvantaged of the two appears to be

Respondent 23, who was already a long-standing teacher, albeit in another field. Respondent 19 seems to have spent more time contemplating the issue of grammar teaching, as her replies to Questions 5 – 10 in the survey (Phase 2, Section A) are fuller replies and appear to be much more considered.

5.5 Research Objective 5

To devise a professional development program based on the results of the study and on insights gained from theory and research on grammar teaching

It was found that teacher respondents from this study would welcome a professional development program in grammar that was tailored to their specific needs. In Phase 1 of the study, teachers requested certain grammar items to be included in a professional development program. Of the 26 respondents in Phase 1 of the study, teachers made 31 requests for 22 different grammar items (items they had not personally taught during the Phase 1 period) to be included in the professional development program (refer to Appendix 2). In Phase 3 of the study, two of the four interviewees specifically mentioned professional development at the end of their interviews when asked if they had anything further to add. These two were the ones with more teaching experience than the other two interviewees. Respondent 17 stated:

I think there needs to be a much greater emphasis on how to teach grammar for teachers right at the beginning before they start and ongoing through the years to refresh, ... so I think ... ongoing professional development. At least once a year there should be some sort of grammar workshop by an expert.

Respondent number 8 rejoined with:

There have been some PDs that we've had for grammar ... a long time ago, but some of that was over the top for what we had to teach. It needs to be really relevant to what we're teaching, so more PDs would be good. The more we get, the more people are going to be aware of it.

These sentiments are supported by Andrews (2003), Huddleston (2010), Lê et al. (2011) and Wang (2010), who all agree that there is a general lack of resources for teachers to improve their grammar knowledge (refer to Literature Review chapter of this thesis). Teachers themselves can see their need for further grammar learning, which can easily be delivered within a professional development program based on the actual needs of teachers at this centre.

As stated in the Literature Review chapter of this study, Ho (2003) reported that teachers in her study were keen to receive more time and practice in grammar. The title of her paper was *Empowering English teachers to grapple with errors in grammar*. Empowerment is certainly a powerful idea when referring to language teachers. If teachers can be helped in any way to feel more empowered and in control of their subject matter (in this case, grammar), this would be a noble and laudable aim of any professional development program. Long (1999) spoke of support for language teachers and gave four sources of support, three of which could be workplace-based. These could easily be encompassed by professional development.

Twenty-one teachers took part in Phase 2 of the study. Six of them (only 28%) considered themselves adequately prepared to impart grammar, while two (almost 10%) considered themselves inadequately prepared. The remaining 13 (62%) considered that they were adequately prepared in some circumstances but not in all circumstances. Apart from the six who show self-confidence, this actually equates to 72% of the teaching staff who experience some level of stress in the area of grammar teaching. This percentage is high, and warrants the implementation of a professional development program in grammar to allow teachers to gain grammar knowledge and confidence. The 13 teachers who felt they were adequately prepared in some circumstances but not all invariably said that they prepared thoroughly before teaching a grammar point; however, there was usually a concern expressed about unexpected questions for which they felt ill-prepared. Some of these 13 teachers mentioned that they knew that students would expect the teacher to know the answers to any grammar question a student might pose, and this caused them a certain amount of stress.

The first professional development session was held prior to the end of this study. During the session, as the group work progressed, it became obvious that the respondents were also enjoying themselves. This is similar to teachers' expectations of students taking part in group work in the classroom. Therefore, the professional development sessions, as well as improving teacher knowledge and confidence, can also be used to model good classroom practice for teachers. Moreover, it became obvious during the session which teachers had more knowledge to impart; therefore, the more grammatically challenged teachers were able to identify for themselves mentors to whom they could go for help after the professional development session. This is an important point, because no one was appointed to be a mentor, but grammar mentors are needed. In this way, when teachers can see what other teachers are capable of, it is a great incentive for those who need help. Teachers do not normally see each other in action in the classroom; however, in professional development sessions, it is as if they are observing each other in a classroom, and it appears to be of benefit to everyone. The teachers who need help can identify who can help them, and those who are more knowledgeable can identify whom they need to take under their wing for a full flourishing of the staff.

The advantages of group work in a professional development program were raised in the Data Analysis chapter of this thesis. These advantages have been well documented in teacher training literature, and it is amply recommended by de Jong et al. (2011) in a recent study that was carried out at Edith Cowan University. It is proposed that the on-going professional development program in grammar at the English teaching institute where this study took place will continue to be conducted as group work in order to take full advantage of this type of learning. Further professional development sessions will be progressively devised in the future.

5.6 Research Objective 6

To implement the professional development program and evaluate its effectiveness.

One professional development session, which was very well received, was held before the end of the current study. The teachers who attended this session appeared very interested, willingly engaging in the set group work. They were all keen to improve their personal knowledge, and because of the time and effort they expended, they were rewarded with such knowledge. It appeared that their confidence improved to a certain degree after just one session. From comments expressed by teachers at the end of the session, it was obvious that they were appreciative of the information presented, which they were able to practise and discuss in groups. The session was evaluated by the 12 teacher respondents who attended. All teachers responded positively in the evaluation forms, some commenting that more such sessions were needed. All 12 evaluation forms filled in by the teachers who attended this session can be found in Appendix 12. All comments given by teachers on these forms will be taken into consideration when devising further professional development sessions.

Further professional development sessions will be devised and delivered in time. As action research is conducted in cycles, this will also be a part of the program. Any session can be repeated if necessary, especially if there is a new intake of teachers with similar grammar needs. In Phase 3 (interviews), Respondent 8 commented that there had been some grammar PDs held in the centre a long time in the past, and his recollection was that some of those PDs had been “*over the top for what we have to teach*”. It is therefore necessary to ensure that all such PD sessions are firmly grounded in practicality, and be seen as relevant to teaching.

It is envisioned that an entire grammar professional development program encompassing the identified grammar needs of the teachers at this centre would take an entire year if a session were to be held once a month, with provision for repetition if requested. Each session would be evaluated by those attending to ensure quality control and to ensure improvements for future sessions. Action

research is not imposed from above (Mills, 2007); therefore, it is essential that teacher evaluations should be valued and used for future reference.

5.7 Conclusion

The findings associated with Research Objectives 1, 2 and 3 are in total conformity with recent research. One example is a study conducted in Vietnam, which quotes succinctly from the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, that communication constitutes the “goal of the teaching of English ... while formal knowledge of the language serves as the means to the end” (Canh, 2012, p. 35). The findings associated with Research Objectives 5 and 6 also conform to recent research, for example Ho (2003). The finding associated with research Objective 4, that grammar may be more difficult for teachers of English who come from a non-humanities background, is a little more difficult to place within the literature, because of its unusual nature.

The purpose of education in general is surely not just to train workers for certain jobs, as this would be thinking of people purely as functional beings or as cogs in a wheel. Johnston’s (2011) article entitled *Literacy as basis for flourishing nation* encapsulates this idea, as she writes specifically about the language skills and capacities that are required in order to be able to participate in one’s community. She stresses the critical nature of knowledge of language, which has the capacity to lead to deep literacy, which then “breeds imagination, speculation, dreaming, cleverness and meaningful action” (Johnston, 2011). The language skills and capacities that Johnston mentions can only be acquired through serious study of language structures in order to be able to express one’s thoughts precisely and succinctly. This simply cannot be done if one is unaware of the grammar options available for any expression of thought that one might have.

The two groups of English teachers in Australia (teachers of English for domestic school students and teachers of English for international students in tertiary settings) that have been mentioned in this study are not one uniform group. Entry requirements into their two professions are different, and they work in different

situations and with different student cohorts. However, both groups are products of the virtual no grammar policy that has been operating in Australia and other English speaking countries for several generations. As a result, neither group has been adequately prepared for the task of teaching English to their students, as most of the teachers themselves did not receive grammar instruction during their own school days, nor did they receive grammar instruction in their tertiary studies. The CELTA course for teachers of international students in universities encompasses an introduction to grammar, but it is not sufficient to allow teachers to explore grammar with their students in a way that is expected by the students, especially international students. Therefore, in effect, although the two groups are not one population, they share a common background of having completed their own educational attainments without the benefit of adequate grammar instruction. This is unlikely to help them to carry out their duties as teachers of English (including grammar) in their differing fields.

There needs to be a greater emphasis on teacher preparation when considering the current plight of teachers of English. As grammar has been considered unimportant for the past five decades (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005), and as teachers of domestic school students are now required to teach grammar within the parameters of the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b), serious thought needs to be given to how the nation should approach this problem. Teachers of other core subjects seem to be given all the tools required to teach those subjects. It is high time for political will to be exercised, in order to give teachers of English language the same advantages.

6 Conclusion

In view of the fact that grammar has tended to be neglected in English speaking countries for the past 50 years (Hudson & Walmsley, 2005), the purpose of this study was to investigate how prepared teachers of English language are to teach grammar, and to discover exactly which grammar items are missing from teachers' knowledge. This is especially important at this time because the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b) requires all school teachers in their various disciplines to be responsible for student grammar acquisition, and also because international students studying English at Australian university language centres expect their English teachers to give credible explanations to their probing grammar questions. This chapter will first summarise the findings of the study and then examine the significance of the research that was conducted for this thesis. This will be followed by a personal reflection on this study. The next sections comprise research strengths, research limitations, educational recommendations and possible future research directions. A concluding section will bring this chapter and the entire thesis to a close.

6.1 Summary of research findings

6.1.1 Qualitative findings

There were three major qualitative findings from this study. These three findings are termed qualitative because they arose from teachers' expressed opinions. The first was that respondents believed that grammar is a tool for communication rather than an end in itself. The second was that many of the respondents in this study preferred a method of grammar teaching that is in context. The third was that teachers would welcome a professional development program in grammar that was tailored to their specific needs.

The study of grammar for its own sake belongs in the realm of academics and researchers; however, the irony is that if grammar is not clearly understood even by non-academics and non-researchers, then communication will be negatively affected. Grammar could be considered as theory. For instance, when students study a musical instrument, the theory of music is vitally important, and music students are expected to master the theory behind the music as they are taught to practise scales. Even a concert pianist, for example, would have begun by studying musical theory. Society in general needs to ponder whether it wants its citizens and those wishing to learn English to be able to communicate with clarity. If the answer is in the affirmative, then, like the concert pianist mastering musical scales, everyone needs to master grammar, not for the ultimate use of the exercises, but for the pleasure of communicating accurately and for the ability to think clearly. This was set out by Johnston (2010) and was considered in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. Teachers in this study also supported the idea of grammar being necessary for clarity of communication. The purpose of education in general is not simply to train workers for certain jobs, as this would be thinking of people purely as functional beings, or as cogs in a wheel. In order to produce human beings with a capacity for “deep literacy” which affects “not only thinking, but attitudes and behaviours”, and which in turn “nurtures the minds that generate civil and creative societies” (Johnston, 2010, p. 50), then it is important to teach students clear thinking and clear communication. Moreover, because thinking and communication are conducted through the medium of language, this can only be achieved through language study, which, perforce, needs to include the study of grammar.

The second major qualitative finding was that the teachers who took part in this study mainly preferred a method of grammar teaching that is in context. This idea was supported by various authors who were discussed in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. An example of studies supporting this view is the work of Myhill and Watson (2013) who remind teachers of the “inseparability of language study from reading, writing, speaking and listening contexts” (p. 4). Some of the other methods mentioned by teachers that conform to teaching in context were:

task-based teaching; the discovery approach; and grammar consciousness-raising, all of which were discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

The third major qualitative finding was that teachers in this study would welcome a professional development program in grammar that was tailored to their specific needs. This can be ascertained from various phases of the study. In Phase 1 of the study teachers requested certain grammar items for inclusion in a professional development program. In Phase 3 of the study, two of the four interviewees specifically requested professional development at the end of their interviews when asked if they had anything further to add.

Apart from the above-mentioned major qualitative findings, there were other qualitative findings which are also of some interest. Four of the respondents counted English as their second language. While the average score for all respondents in the grammar review was 78%, three of these four respondents scored over the average. This correlates with Andrews' (1999) study in Hong Kong, which showed that the native speakers did not do as well as the non-native speakers in the language awareness competency. It is possible that non-native speakers, who have learned English later in life, are more aware of language structures, while native speakers are not so acutely aware.

Whether the age of teachers made any difference to grammar knowledge was difficult to ascertain because ages were not requested in Phase 2 (survey) Section A; however, teachers with more teaching experience and those who were more motivated to increase their grammar knowledge seemed to have more grammar knowledge and awareness. This, too, is not surprising. It was found that teachers had entered the profession by different pathways. The minimum qualification for teaching English in a tertiary setting is a bachelor's degree (in any discipline) plus a CELTA.

Canh (2012) raised the possibility that culture could influence the expectations of both teachers and students in the area of grammar. As discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, the current study found that less than 10% of the surveyed teachers thought that grammar exercises done in class are very helpful, although many

believed that it is very important to teach grammar. Canh's (2012) Vietnamese study reported that more than half of the teachers in his study thought it was important to do "as many grammar exercises in the classroom as possible" (p.41). The result of this study in relation to this point may signal agreement with Canh's notion of cultural divide, as only two of the 21 teachers in the current study (or under 10%) rated grammar exercises in class as very helpful. Therefore, in both cases it would appear that grammar exercises are viewed as vital by more students than teachers. This notion also ties in with Hudson and Walmsley's (2005) study, which found that English grammar had been taught minimally for five decades in English speaking countries. Fifty years of little grammar instruction would surely have informed the culture in which native speaker English teachers did their training, whereas non-native English speaker teachers in Vietnam would have trained in a culture that was differently informed. This could also explain why international students, who do not come from English speaking countries, place more emphasis on formal grammar instruction including grammar exercises.

Although most teachers agreed that grammar was useful, there was a wide difference in just how useful they considered it to be. Why there should be such a range is an interesting question. Mathematics teachers would all agree that learning basic manipulations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are essential before students can progress to higher mathematics. Music teachers would agree that mastering scales is an essential first step for aspiring musicians. One question for English teachers to examine would be why they have such differing opinions regarding the importance of grammar in language teaching. One consideration could be that those who know more grammar think it is more important, while those who know less consider it to be less important. More research into this question would be beneficial.

It was also found that highly motivated teachers were prepared to teach themselves grammar, even though they had not been beneficiaries of grammar teaching in their own school days. From the current study it could also be concluded that teachers do not seem to be very good judges of their own abilities. If they are aware that there are gaps in their knowledge, this can make them less confident, even when they do

know a particular grammar item. Unexpected grammar questions from students were found to be particularly difficult to handle. This would therefore point to a certain amount of grammar anxiety.

6.1.2 Quantitative findings

There were two major quantitative findings from the study. These two findings are termed quantitative because they arose from the grammar review, and were based on performance in the review. The first quantitative finding was that there was indeed a lack of grammar knowledge to some degree for most of the respondents. During the course of the study it was discovered that teachers of English language at the centre where the study took place could all correctly identify simple grammatical concepts. However, more complex items were not identified with as much accuracy.

The second quantitative finding was that grammar understanding may be more difficult for teachers of English who come from a non-humanities background. This was unexpected. The study did not seek to discover this. However, it was obvious from the grammar review scores and from the interview of one such respondent that this might indeed be the case. This can be considered an unusual situation, as it might be expected that most specialist English teachers in international centres would be trained in the humanities and especially in English language from their earlier studies.

Other minor quantitative findings that are of interest are the following, which were gleaned from the results of the grammar review. No differences in knowledge of grammar were found between male and female teachers in this study. Master's degrees seemed to make no difference to grammar knowledge. Differences were observed when participants had engaged in a major study of a foreign language at tertiary level.

6.2 Significance of the research

6.2.1 Theoretical significance

The theory of grammar teaching in recent times has leaned heavily on the side of discounting the usefulness of grammar. From a practical point of view, teachers must operate within certain given parameters. Australia now has a national curriculum which stipulates that formal grammar will be taught throughout the span of years that students spend at school (ACARA, 2012b). Perhaps as a result of this situation, research shows that there has been a resurgence of interest in grammar (Hudson, 2001). Although there is scant agreement in the research literature about the usefulness or otherwise of grammar teaching, the choice to teach it or not to teach it is no longer available in Australia.

This study has shown, along with other studies, such as Lê et al. (2011) that teachers of English want to be more knowledgeable about grammar. In Lê's study, the respondents were primary school teachers; in the current study the respondents were teachers of adult international students at an Australian university language centre. Both groups of respondents desired better knowledge of grammar. It would be useful if research, which informs theory, would now turn to how best to support the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA 2012b), by studying the best methods to equip teachers to carry out the requirements of the curriculum.

6.2.2 Educational significance

This research is educationally significant because it identified a gap in the extant research literature on this topic and has filled it in one particular case. Although studies were found which had identified that there were problems in teachers' grammar understanding, e.g. Andrews (1999; 2007); Harper and Rennie (2009); and Kömür (2010), no studies were found which reported on specific grammar items that teachers needed to understand, nor were any studies found which led to professional development programs devised for the specific grammar needs of a particular group of teachers.

Using action research, this study has identified, through grammar inventories (subjective) and a grammar review (objective), the specific grammar needs of a group of English teachers at a language centre attached to an Australian university. This will lead to a progressively devised professional development program for these teachers on the specific grammar items with which they need most support. One professional development session has already been held and all documentation relating to that session is to be found in Appendices 11 and 12.

6.2.3 Methodological significance

This research is methodologically significant because it was undertaken using action research and a mixed method approach. Action research was described in the Literature Review chapter as “research done *by* teachers *for* themselves; it is not imposed on them by someone else” (Mills, 2007, p. 5). This is significant because the current study involved virtually all of the teaching staff at the language centre. The teachers willingly entered into the study from the beginning as they felt they were all contributing to the future professional development program, which would be of benefit to them all.

A mixed method approach was employed because it was considered that using only one method would be too restrictive. The use of qualitative data only would not have given the measureable data that was gained from the inventories or the grammar review, while the use of quantitative data only would not have given the insights gleaned from comments in the survey questions or in the interviews. Therefore, action research combined with a mixed method approach proved to be an effective way to gain the data required for this study.

6.3 Author’s reflections

The author of this thesis acquired various skills during the course of the study and the writing of the thesis. These were development of research skills, improvement of time management skills and an increase in self-confidence.

The author had some basic research skills before embarking on this research. However, those skills were greatly improved as a result of conducting this particular

study. Further research skills were acquired in the various stages of the study, for example skills in quantitative analysis were acquired during Phase 1 (inventories) and in Phase 2 Section B (grammar review). Qualitative analysis skills were acquired during Phase 2 Section A (survey questions) and Phase 3 (interviews). Sampling, and in particular purposive sampling, was learned from Babbie (2008). This was a very useful skill when it came to decision making about which of the respondents to interview.

The current age has been termed the information age, which makes it possible to source many studies through the Internet. University and other libraries have also digitised many items in their collections. This made access to studies in academic journals a less daunting task than would otherwise have been the case. During the literature review stage the author learned to prioritise studies sourced from the Internet according to certain criteria, such as author authority, publication date and publisher credentials. The discovery of the conference papers from the Dartmouth Conference of 1966 (Marckwardt, 1968) was particularly significant to the literature review for this study; these papers were discovered through the work published online by Myhill and Watson (2013). The Dartmouth conference papers were then also sourced online.

The research experience also provided improvement in organisational and time management skills. The various stages of the research required preparation and planning, and each stage needed to be analysed before the next stage could begin. This required strict organisational and time management skills to be implemented in order for the research to be conducted in a timely manner. Much of the writing had to be done at night after the working day had ended; therefore, strict personal discipline had to be implemented to ensure enough sleep as well as work time and writing time, and any unnecessary activities were shelved for the duration of the writing period. In short, the research experience has improved the author's skills in time management, which is of benefit to the author at a personal as well as a professional level.

This research has resulted in a significant increase in self-confidence for the author. This was achieved in two ways. The first was in overcoming insecurity in communicating effectively with the research subjects. The respondents were all very willing to co-operate in the endeavour, and this made the process much less stressful than it otherwise might have been. Without that willingness, the data collection would not have been possible. The respondents recognised the fact that the resulting professional development program in grammar would be available to all teachers at the centre and this was a significant motivator for them.

The second was in the presentation of the first professional development session. The author is an experienced teacher, but the professional development required the role of teacher to be extended to the role of facilitator. Once again, the respondents taking part in the professional development session made this necessary transformation less taxing for the author.

As a result of spending many hours on preparation for data collection and on writing, and due to encouragement from supervisors, respondents, family and friends, the author was able to prevail over any sense of insecurity and conduct the research confidently. The author will especially benefit from the increased level of self-confidence in the area of facilitating professional development.

6.4 Research strengths

The strengths of this research lie mainly in the methodology used. Action research and mixed method approach contributed greatly to the data collection and to the analysis of the various data categories which were collected. The benefits have been enumerated in section 6.2.3 above.

The triangulation that was achieved through different data sources and types could be considered another strength of this study. Triangulation was achieved through three phases and four data types, which yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. These all provided correlation with each other.

A third strength could be said to come from the depth of the research; the richness of the qualitative data has provided in-depth insights into the perceptions, beliefs, teaching practices and attitudes of the teacher participants and how they are influenced and shaped by various factors that pertain to their professional lives.

6.5 Research limitations

6.5.1 Limitation 1

This study was limited to the experience of teachers in one tertiary English language teaching institute at an Australian university. Given the scope of the study, this research did not extend to teachers in primary or secondary schools, nor indeed to teachers in other universities, leaving the way for future research to be conducted in those areas. This study was also limited to teacher knowledge and the research objectives did not seek to investigate methods of teaching grammar, nor indeed to investigate how students reacted to their teaching.

6.5.2 Limitation 2

Another limitation is that this study cannot be expected to reflect exactly the situation in the whole of the teaching profession. The two populations of teachers mentioned in this study are not one group, and they operate under different systems, including entry requirements to their chosen fields. Similarities could only be found in the fact that teachers in general have not been given adequate grammar training for half a century.

6.5.3 Limitation 3

In Phase 1 of the study, there were certain grammar items reported that had been taught by one teacher only with no problems stated. This did not mean that problems would not have existed, if more teachers had taught those items. However, as action research is conducted, there is scope for constant revision within cycles and opportunity for more data to be gathered. Therefore, if more teachers at the language centre in the future were to find certain grammar items

difficult, these could be added and included in professional development in a future round.

6.5.4 Limitation 4

Only teachers' views were canvassed in the study as student views were not included as part of the research objectives. As teaching always involves students, student views could have added a further dimension. For example, when the question of the importance of doing grammar exercises in class arose, some teachers mentioned that students deemed such exercises to be important.

6.6 Educational recommendations

Recommendations arising from this study can be grouped into four broad categories. Recommendations listed would fall under the jurisdiction of government, educational policy makers, curriculum designers or individual teachers.

6.6.1 Recommendation for government

6.6.1.1 Recommendation 1

Disputes about grammar were examined in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis. Some Australian states have a Director General of Education. In view of the fact that Australia now has a national curriculum for the first time, it would be opportune for a federal Director General of Education to be appointed, among whose tasks would be to oversee the implementation of the nation-wide *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b) and to arbitrate in any educational disputes, including grammar controversies such as the *Coalface Grammar Dispute* (Huddleston, 2010), which, to date, is still unresolved.

6.6.2 Recommendations for educational policy makers

6.6.2.1 Recommendation 2

It is somewhat disconcerting that some teachers of English were found to be not very knowledgeable about English grammar. As reported by Hudson and Walmsley

(2005) and Mueller and Grant (2011), the reason for this situation is that grammar has been taught to a diminishing degree in English speaking countries for the last five decades. It is also perplexing because international students in university English teaching institutes expect their teachers to answer grammar questions that the students might pose; furthermore, the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b) expects all teachers in all subject disciplines in domestic schools to be responsible for English grammar instruction to school students. Of all the sectors of society, teachers of English should know more grammar than most, and in all likelihood they do, but nevertheless recent research in various countries shows that teachers' grammar knowledge is insufficient. Therefore, it could be said that their training has not adequately prepared them for the task of teaching grammar. The results of this study would also seem to point to the fact that teachers have not been well prepared for the teaching of English grammar, and this should be addressed. As it is a systemic problem throughout the entire education system of the country due to the seeming lack of grammar teaching for the past 50 years, it is recommended that universities should take the lead in teaching grammar to student teachers. These student teachers would then graduate and go on to teach grammar to students in schools to fulfil the aspirations of the new *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b) and the requirements of NAPLAN testing (Grant & Mueller, 2010). Some of those student teachers would become teachers of international students, and they would then experience the same benefits. Naturally, this would be a long-term project as there is no immediate solution for these circumstances.

6.6.2.2 Recommendation 3

School system education departments nation-wide should move to provide ongoing professional development for current teachers (Lê et al., 2011; Mueller & Grant, 2011), and this should be undertaken sooner rather than later. A recent education article in the British *Guardian* newspaper which discussed the teaching of grammar stated that "the keepers of the flame are either long retired or dead" (Grice, 2013). Moreover, the KISS Grammar website (Vavra, 1999), which is maintained by Professor Ed Vavra, whose ideas regarding grammar teaching are explored in the

Literature Review chapter of this thesis, recommends that local School Boards, State Departments of Education and politicians should be approached in order to improve the situation for teachers who need to teach grammar. His ultimate advice is to “invite retired English teachers ... (to form advocacy groups to approach these bodies) ... as they know much more about grammar than do the teachers currently entering our schools” (Vavra, 1999).

6.6.2.3 Recommendation 4

Teachers of English should not be disadvantaged. Teachers of other subjects are given all the training necessary both to teach those subjects and to answer student questions about issues related to those subjects. If English teachers are sent out without adequate preparation and training in grammar, then this cannot be considered equal treatment of all student teachers. It could be said that “emancipatory research” (Babbie, 2008, pp. 334-335) is required to make a level playing field for all student teachers and beginning teachers as well as current teachers of English. The situation cannot be considered equal when mathematics teachers are trained to be able to field student questions in that subject and English teachers are not trained to do the same in English classes. If teachers of English language were not disadvantaged, it is likely that there would be more enthusiasm among teachers to approach grammar in a more wholehearted way, and this could play a part in motivating students.

6.6.3 Recommendations for curriculum designers

6.6.3.1 Recommendation 5

At a more local level, at the English teaching centre where this study was undertaken, it is recommended that the professional development program be conducted mainly as group work within each session. The advantages of group work have been well-documented in teacher training literature and it is amply recommended by de Jong et al. (2011) in a recent study that was carried out at Edith Cowan University. Therefore, the person delivering the professional development should not be looked upon as an expert or a lecturer delivering facts,

but rather as a facilitator or mentor. In fact, as well as helping teachers to develop their personal knowledge and confidence in grammar, the professional development program could also be seen as a catalyst for identifying grammar mentors among the staff, who can then help less experienced teachers on other occasions beyond the times set aside for professional development. This would also help to bring about a community of scholarship, where there is free exchange of information and assistance with no one feeling inadequate or stressed about grammar.

6.6.3.2 Recommendation 6

The various grammatical functions of the word *that* were identified as the most urgent grammar issue facing teachers at the English teaching centre chosen for this study. By the end of this study, one professional development session on this topic had already been held at the English teaching institute where this study took place. It was the first professional development session resulting from this study. From the grammar review, other items recommended for inclusion in an ongoing professional development program for that group of teachers can be seen in Table 3.4 in the Methodology chapter of this thesis. These items were collected from inventories in Phase 1 of the study and from the grammar review in Phase 2 Section B. As action research has the capacity to operate in cycles, it is possible for more items to be added as new teachers take up positions at the centre, or if current teachers meet further grammar problems that need to be addressed in the future. In relation to new teachers, sessions might need to be repeated in the future if new teachers identify the same issues that cause them to lack confidence. In relation to new items, teachers could be encouraged to bring those new items forward, so that those items would then be included in future professional development sessions.

6.6.4 Recommendations for teachers

6.6.4.1 Recommendation 7

All teachers (and, in turn, students) should be encouraged to have a respectful regard for grammar, not as an end in itself, but as a tool for learning how to

communicate clearly and effectively. For researchers, an academic study of grammar is very useful, as is the study of how and why grammar changes over time (refer to Okrent, 2013) as outlined in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis). For students, it would be sufficient to know how grammar works, so that they can avoid problems such as the adjective / adverb dilemma (solely for clarity and succinctness of communication) as set out in the introductory chapter of this thesis.

6.6.4.2 Recommendation 8

Individual teachers should also be encouraged to engage in self-training. Access to grammar materials is abundant, both in printed form and Internet-based. Two of the teachers in this study (Respondents 8 and 17) have shown that self-training can be done. These respondents, who went through their own schooling with very little grammar instruction, are now successful teachers of English grammar, and both gained scores of 83% in the grammar review. These respondents were two of the four interviewed during Phase 3 of this study. A mix of individual self-training and group professional development would, in all likelihood, be an ideal situation for teachers who need further training in grammar.

6.7 Possible future research directions

This study captures a snapshot of a group of teachers at one tertiary English language teaching centre in Australia with regard to their knowledge and opinions about grammar teaching to international students. Further research is needed in the area of whether current teachers (in both domestic schools and international student teaching centres at tertiary level) need to learn grammar systematically from the beginning or whether they simply need a course where metalanguage is learned. This would help to give meaning to what they already know, but are not confident about showing when they deem themselves to be lacking in knowledge. Research is needed into how to best equip teachers with grammar knowledge in order for school teachers to fulfil the requirements of the *Australian Curriculum* (ACARA, 2012b), and in order for teachers of international students to gain confidence in answering unexpected student grammar questions.

This study has identified the fact that teachers of English language have quite divergent views about the importance of grammar in language teaching. It is possible that teachers who know more grammar may think it is more important, while those who know less might consider it to be less important. Further research into why there is such a discrepancy in thought would be useful.

This study did not take into account the views of students. Research into adult international student views of grammar teaching and learning as well as student views into the use of grammar exercises in class or out of class would give an added dimension to this question.

There was a dearth of research into the grammar knowledge of TESOL teachers who come from a non-humanities background. Although the sample of such teachers in this study was very small (two), it was ascertained that teachers from that background in this study generally experienced more problems in grammar understanding than teachers from a humanities background. Further research in this area would be useful if TESOL teaching continues to be open to people with a degree in any discipline.

6.8 Conclusion

As the lack of concentration on grammar in English teaching and learning has been going on for so long (half a century), the current situation is that many teachers and students think of grammar as difficult and complicated. This is not truly indicative of reality. When comprehension of grammar is achieved, it is no longer considered difficult or incomprehensible. If students of mathematics thought that understanding of mathematical principles was beyond them, they would be setting themselves up for failure even before beginning their study. The problem is not that grammar is difficult; the problem is more likely to be attitude, in all likelihood brought on by the long period of time in which grammar has not been adequately taught. This problem has been compounded because, as time progresses, there are fewer and fewer people who can claim to really have a good understanding of the principles underlying English grammar. The results are easily seen in the media,

where both print journalists and radio and television journalists make errors which can cause misunderstandings in their reporting and which could easily be avoided, for example the previously mentioned confusion between adverbs and adjectives. These are not natural language changes that happen with living languages, but changes based on lack of knowledge of grammar conventions which should be preserved for the sake of clarity in communication. As a result of this lack of knowledge, communication begins to deteriorate, as clarity is lost. The task for those who have carriage of education policies should be to insist on teaching and learning which restores clarity to communication. Communication using human language is the domain of the human race, and its role in clear thinking and clear message transmission should be guarded and improved, rather than letting it subside into situations where misunderstandings become common.

Grammar should not be considered difficult (Lewis, 1986). It does require effort to come to an understanding of it, but so do mathematical principles. Very many students study mathematics successfully, and praise is due to their diligent teachers. It seems that no matter how diligent teachers might be in the domain of grammar, overall success is limited, because teachers appear to have been inadequately prepared to teach grammar. It must be stressed that study of grammar is not an end in itself; it is for the purposes of clear and unambiguous communication. If teachers have been fortunate enough to study at length a dead language such as Latin, or if they have had the opportunity to extensively study a foreign living language in a country where that language is the means of communication, then those teachers will be well and truly prepared to teach English grammar, because serious studies in other languages will have given them an understanding of the principles of grammar. In other circumstances, where the above situations do not apply, a political solution needs to be found for teachers to be given the grounding they need in grammar in order to be able to teach it effectively, as this would help in priming future generations for clarity in communication. Thus, everyone would be in a winning situation – teachers would be able to carry out their work of teaching grammar and passing on the skills required for excellent communication, while students would be more likely to

accept grammar instruction when observing the interest and enthusiasm of their teachers.

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Appendix 1 Phase 1: Grammar Inventories - problems experienced

1.1 All Grammar Problems Experienced

Grammar Inventories: all grammar items mentioned as difficult by 26 teachers teaching across all levels of the program

GRAMMAR ITEMS TAUGHT	Taught by (no. of Teachers)	Found difficult by (no. of Teachers)
VERB PROBLEMS		
Passive voice (present + past)	5	1
Passive voice / active future progressive (<i>will be pursued</i> / <i>will be pursuing</i>)	1	1
Present simple / past simple in academic writing	1	0
Past perfect / past simple	4	0
Gerunds / nouns (zero article with gerunds)	4	4
<i>Can / could</i>	1	1
Present perfect	6	0
Past simple	1	0
Past simple & past simple progressive	1	0
Present perfect simple & present perfect progressive	1	0
Present perfect progressive + <i>for / since</i> ; present perfect simple (state verbs)	1	0
Conditionals	6	1
Past progressive / past simple	1	0
Present perfect / present simple	1	0
All progressive tenses	3	1
Will be + <i>-ing</i> form	1	1
Infinitive & <i>-ing</i> form	1	0
Auxiliary verbs (<i>do you have? / have you got?</i>)	1	1

GRAMMAR ITEMS TAUGHT	Taught by (no. of Teachers)	Found difficult by (no. of Teachers)
<i>Used to + infinitive</i>	1	1
Phrasal verbs	1	0
Present perfect progressive	1	0
Present progressive to denote future	1	0
Use of two verbs (2nd in infinitive with or without <i>to</i>)	1	0
Modals	1	0
Present tense & future with <i>will</i> (<i>plane arrives tomorrow; plane will arrive tomorrow</i>)	1	1
Transitive / intransitive verbs	1	0
Present progressive	1	0
Passive – past simple	1	0
Irregular verb forms	1	0
Verb tense problems, confusing verb tenses	1	0
OTHER GRAMMAR (NON-VERB) PROBLEMS		
Countable/uncountable nouns (also <i>staff, police, family</i> : singular or plural verb?)	5	1
Parallel structures (e.g. <i>not only, but also</i>)	6	1
Nominalisation	3	1
Sentence structure	2	0
Prepositions	6	3
Dependent prepositions	2	1
Punctuation in non-defining relative clauses	1	0
Articles: definite / indefinite / zero	8	4
Question forms (word order)	1	0
Word class (endings)	2	0
<i>Its / it's</i>	1	0
<i>they / their</i> (plural) referring to <i>student</i> (singular)	2	2
Punctuation (comma or semi-colon in complex / compound sentences); Punctuation with <i>however</i>	2	1
Connectors & transition words in academic writing (difference between <i>however/ yet; moreover/ in addition</i>)	2	1

GRAMMAR ITEMS TAUGHT	Taught by (no. of Teachers)	Found difficult by (no. of Teachers)
Relative clauses (use of relative pronoun) Defining & non-defining + punctuation Use of <i>where / when / in which</i> in relative clauses	6	3
Sentence fragments	3	1
Incomplete sentences with present participle	1	1
Vocab: <i>widow/ widower; effect / affect</i>	2	2
Prefixes & suffixes	1	0
Word families	1	0
Syllables	1	0
Expressions of quantity	1	0
Reported speech & reported questions	1	0
Word order in embedded questions	3	1
Comparative & superlative adjectives	2	1
Linking words	3	0
<i>There is / there are</i> with e.g. <i>hardware / software</i> etc	1	1
Subject – verb agreement	4	0
Difference between <i>too</i> & <i>enough</i>	1	0
Word order (sentence structure)	1	0
<i>For / since</i>	1	0
<i>Some / some of / some of the</i>	1	0
Comma splices	1	0
Question forms	1	0
Prefixes (adjective opposites)	1	1
<i>By + -ing</i> form	1	0
<i>That</i> : reported speech or relative clause? (e.g. <i>X claims that</i>)	1	0
<i>Because / because of</i>	1	1
Vocabulary – word class	1	1
Position of adjectives in sentences	1	0
Question forms	1	0
Question tags	1	0
Prepositions	1	0
Order of adjectives / adverbs in sentences	1	0

1.2 Teachers' Inventory Samples of Problems Experienced

(Respondent 1)

Week 1 Tuesday

Grammar points covered today (either through teaching in class or through marking of writing):

Staff vs staffs (plural form) - American English vs British English

How easy or difficult was it to teach this / those point(s)?

Easy

List any questions asked by students:

What an alternative word would be

How did you respond to such questions?

Suggested "employee/s"

How confident were you of your answers?

Very

Week 2 Wednesday

Grammar points covered today (either through teaching in class or through marking of writing):

Prepositions + *-ing* form of verb

e.g. "before receiving"

How easy or difficult was it to teach this / those point(s)?

Reasonable

List any questions asked by students:

None

How did you respond to such questions?

n/a

How confident were you of your answers?

Had to look up Swan

Appendix 2 Phase 1: Grammar Inventories - teacher requests

2.1 All Teacher Requests

Grammar items requested by teachers for inclusion in professional development program	No. of teachers requesting item
Subjunctive mood	2
Sentence parsing	1
Recognising subject & object in complex sentences	1
Verb + <i>-ing</i> form and preposition + <i>-ing</i> form	1
Possessives: <i>students' involvement / student involvement</i>	1
Conditionals (including mixed conditionals)	4
Relative clauses (defining & non-defining) Subject / object in reduced relative clauses Omission of relative pronoun	5
Complex sentence structure	1
Gerunds / <i>-ing</i> forms	1
Present / past perfect	1
Passive (can't use with <i>happen</i> etc – why?)	1
Avoidance of ownership apostrophe in academic writing	1
<i>Staff is / staff are; people are</i> (not <i>is</i> why?)	1
Sentence fragments	2
Terminology for different types of clauses (and their functions)	1
Articles	1
Present perfect (simple & progressive)	1
Transitive / intransitive verbs	1
<i>Must / have to</i>	1
Use of <i>for example</i> mid-sentence	1
Gerunds	1
Nominal groups	1

2.2 Sample of Teacher Requests

(Respondent 17)

Are there any other grammar points which you have not taught this module and about which you are unsure and would like included in a professional development program for teachers of English? If so, please give details here.

- Present perfect – simple & continuous
- Reduced relative clauses
- Transitive / intransitive verbs
- Subjunctive
- Mixed conditionals

Appendix 3 Phase 1: Grammar Inventories – analysis of problems experienced

Categorised grammar items (number) taught by teachers (number) during the 5 weeks and types of grammar problems experienced by those who taught those items (number and percentage)

Grammar aspects taught	No. of items within that aspect	Taught by no. of teachers	Number of teachers who reported experiencing problems with this grammar aspect	Percentage of teachers who reported experiencing problems with this grammar aspect
Verbs	30	20	9	45%
Sentence Structure	17	17	6	35%
Prepositions	5	10	5	50%
Articles	1	8	4	50%
Relative Clauses	3	4	1	25%
Expressions of quantity	3	3	0	0%
Nouns	1	5	1	20%
Prefixes & suffixes	2	2	1	50%
Adjectives	1	2	1	50%
Word class	1	1	0	0%
Linking words	1	5	1	20%
Syllables	1	1	0	0%
Confusion of similar words	4	5	4	80%
Punctuation	3	4	1	25%

Appendix 4 Phase 1: Grammar Inventories - analysis of problems plus requests

Total number of items that could have been included in grammar review for teachers

Grammar Aspect	Item	Problem + Request = Total
Verbs	past passives	1+1=2
	difference between passive & active future progressive tense	1+0=1
	gerunds	4+2=6
	present perfect simple / present perfect progressive	0+1=1
	conditionals	1+1=2
	mixed conditionals	0+3=3
	progressive tenses	1+0=1
	will be + <i>-ing</i> form	1+1=2
	auxiliary verbs (<i>Do you have?</i> / <i>Have you got?</i>)	1+1=2
	<i>used to</i> + infinitive	1+0=1
	present tense or future with <i>will</i>	1+0=1
	transitive / intransitive verbs	0+1=1
	subjunctive mood	0+2=2
	present perfect / past perfect	0+1=1
<i>must</i> / <i>have to</i>	0=1=1	
Sentence Structure	parallel structures	1+1=2
	nominalisation	1+1=2
	sentence fragments	1+2=3
	incomplete sentences with present participle the only verb form	1+0=1
	indirect questions – word order	1+0=1
	sentence parsing	0+1=1
	Recognising subject & object in complex sentences	0+1=1
	Structure of complex sentences	0+1=1
	Terminology for different types of clauses & their functions	0+1=1
	Use of <i>for example</i> mid-sentence	0+1=1

Grammar Aspect	Item	Problem + Request = Total
Prepositions	prepositions dependent prepositions preposition + <i>-ing</i> form preposition + relative pronoun	3+0=3 1+0=1 1+1=2 1+0=1
Articles	Definite / indefinite articles	4+1=5
Relative Clauses	use of relative pronoun use of <i>where / when / in which</i> in relative clauses defining & non-defining and punctuation in such clauses reduced relative clauses relative pronoun omission in relative clauses	1+0=1 1+0=1 1+2=3 0+1=1 0+1=1
Expressions of Quantity	No problems or requests	
Nouns	Countable / uncountable nouns Possessives: <i>students' texts / student texts</i> <i>staff is / staff are; people are</i> (not <i>is</i> – why?)	1+0=1 0+1=1 0+1=1
Prefixes and Suffixes	Adjective opposites More examples needed for teaching	1=0=1 0+1=1
Adjectives	Comparatives & superlatives	1+0=1
Word class	Word families	1+0=1
Linking words	Connectors & linking words in academic writing: difference between <i>however / yet; moreover / in addition; for / since</i>	1+0=1
Syllables	No problems or requests	
Confusion of similar words	<i>its / it's; they / their</i> referring to singular noun; <i>because / because of</i> ; vocabulary: <i>widow / widower; effect / affect</i>	5+0=5
Punctuation	Punctuation in non-defining relative clauses; comma or semi-colon in compound & complex sentences; punctuation with <i>however</i> ; avoidance of ownership apostrophe in academic writing	3+1=4

Appendix 5 Phase 2: Survey – qualitative questions (Section A)

1. What is your gender and educational background?
2. What courses have you done specifically to prepare you for English language teaching?
3. In which country did you obtain your English teaching qualification(s)?
4. In which year did you obtain your English teaching qualification(s)?
5. What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?
6. Of the many and varied grammar teaching approaches, which one do you prefer and why?
7. What is your view regarding the use of grammar exercises in class? How helpful are they?
8. How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?
9. Do you feel adequately prepared to impart grammar knowledge?
10. Why or why not?

4. It's very hot. I will however still go for a walk. **correct / incorrect**

Grammar aspect: _____

Correction: _____

5. My friends enjoying the soccer game last week. **correct / incorrect**

Grammar aspect: _____

Correction: _____

Choose the correct version by underlining the correct word

6. The dampness is beginning to **effect / affect** my health.

7. To **effect / affect** a change, we need to look at all possible solutions.

8. As usual I **effected / affected** a supreme unconcern.

9. The cat chased **it's / its** tail round and round the garden.

10. **It's / Its** going to be very windy today.

11. To get a good photo you must turn the camera on **it's / its** side.

Underline all the verbs in the following sentences. Below each sentence identify the tense or form of each verb. Give as much detail as you can.

12. Living in Australia allows us to barbeque every weekend.

13. Although I have been preparing classes all night, I still have not finished.

14. Last week two students were bitten by dogs.

15. I'll be slaving away at work next week, while you're sunning yourself at the beach.

Can you identify which type of conditional is displayed in each of the following sentences? Write your answer under each sentence.

16. Had I known all the circumstances, I would not have done it.

17. If you hadn't wasted so much money last month, we'd be able to afford a better holiday.

In this pair of sentences, one has a transitive verb (T) and the other an intransitive verb (I). Underline T or I as appropriate.

18. Could you stop the bus, please? T / I

19. Do you think you could stop in front of the post office? T / I

Can you parse the following sentence? Give as much detail as possible. (parse = analyse grammatically the words / phrases / clauses as given in the list)

20. Results from research studies, which are of a considerable number, would seem to suggest that the average human adult needs between seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

Results	
from	
research	
studies	
(research studies)	
(Results from research studies)	
which	
are	
of	
a	
considerable	

number	
(which are of a considerable number)	
would seem	
to suggest	
(would seem to suggest)	
that	
the	
average	
human	
adult	
(the average human adult)	
needs	
between	
seven	
to	
nine	
hours	
of	
sleep	
(between seven to nine hours of sleep)	
per	
night	
(per night)	

Appendix 7 Phase 2: Survey – Section A - aggregate answers

Question 1: What is your gender and educational background?

1. F - Bachelor of International Business, Bachelor of Teaching, Masters in TESOL
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. F - BA; DipEd
4. M - BA and various postgraduate training
5. F - M. Ed (TESOL)
6. F - DipEd (Modern Languages), CELTA, Master of TESOL
7. F - BA (Hons) German/French, MA (German literature), Dip Ed (LOTE)
8. M - CELTA in 2002; BAVE in 2006; M.Ed. (specialising in TESOL) in 2010.
9. F - Bachelor of Arts; CELTA; MA Ed.; MA Ed. (Hons).
10. F - B.A. 1997 (double major Sociology, minor studies in Political Science); CELTA 2005
11. F - Dip. Teach; B.Ed. (TESOL); M. App. Ling.; B. Fine Arts
12. M - BA (majors in History and Politics); DipEd (primary method); Grad Dip (Library and Information Studies); Grad Cert in Education (TESOL)
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. F - B. Teach – Primary, CELTA and Grad Cert of Ed (TESOL)
15. F - BA Classics (Latin)
16. F - B.Ed. with a major in language teaching.
17. F - Bachelor of Education; Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics
18. F - I completed a Social Sciences degree with Honours in Psychology in 1994. In 2005 I completed a combined Bachelor/Master's degree in Scandinavian Languages and Language History at Uppsala University in Sweden. At the end of this year I hope to have completed a Master's in Education (TESOL).
19. F - B. Dental Science (Hons) and was a dentist for many years. I am also a trained massage therapist (Assoc. Dip. Health Science – Massage Therapy) and completed a CELTA course in 2008.
20. F - Bachelor of Arts Degree (Honours) comparable to the level of Australian Bachelor's Degree
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.

23. F - B.Sc. Was a maths/science teacher in high school for 25 years; DipEd; Grad Cert Education; CELTA; Currently doing a Master's in TESOL. First unit is Linguistics
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. F - BA; DipEd; Grad Dip in Applied Linguistics; Licence de Lettres Modernes (Université de Paris – Sorbonne)
26. F - Bachelor of Outdoor Education; Diploma of Teaching (secondary); Master of Education

Question 2: What courses have you done specifically to prepare you for English language teaching?

1. CELTA
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. CELTA
4. CELTA
5. A 4-year graduate course specifically designed to prepare students for EL teaching, including Eng. Lit and a Graduate Degree and Master's in TESOL.
6. CELTA, Master of TESOL
7. RSA Cambridge CELTA
8. CELTA, BAVE and Master of Ed
9. CELTA; MA Ed.; MA Ed. (Hons).
10. CELTA
11. B.Ed. (TESOL); M. App. Ling. Also, language units of my earliest training as a primary teacher covered aspects of written language such as spelling rules and phonic word attack skills which have been somewhat useful in the second language learning classroom.
12. CELTA and Grad Cert in Ed
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. CELTA and Grad Cert of Ed (TESOL)
15. CELTA
16. CELTA and Certificate of TESOL
17. Graduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics
18. I completed my CELTA in 2004. As mentioned in response to Question1, I am currently studying towards a Master's in Education (TESOL).
19. CELTA. Currently I am enrolled in a Master of Teaching (Primary) and literacy is one focus of the course.
20. Degree in English Language and Literature and CELTA Course

21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. CELTA 2 years ago; Also Adult Ed short course in English grammar.
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. CELTA and DELTA
26. Diploma of Education (ESL unit – year long practical); Master of Education (9 units in TESOL); Study tour of Pedagogic centres in Vietnam (teaching and learning with local colleagues)

Question 3: In which country, did you obtain your English teaching qualification(s)?

1. Australia
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. Australia
4. Australia
5. Macedonia and Australia
6. Australia
7. Australia
8. Australia
9. Britain and Australia
10. Australia
11. Australia
12. Australia
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. Australia
15. Australia
16. Australia
17. Australia
18. Australia
19. Australia.
20. Bosnia and Australia
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. Australia
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.

25. I obtained both of my English teaching qualifications in France at the International Language Centre in Paris under the auspices of The Royal Society of the Arts (UK).

26. Australia

Question 4: In which year did you obtain your English teaching qualification(s)?

1. 2005
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. 2004
4. 2004
5. 1986
6. 1999, 2005
7. 2000
8. CELTA 2002; BAVE 2006; M.Ed. (specializing in TESOL) 2010.
9. 1992
10. 2005
11. 1993 & 2002
12. CELTA 2003 and Graduate Certificate in Education - 2006
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. 2010 and 2012
15. 2003, but didn't use it until 2005
16. 2006
17. 1989
18. As mentioned in response to Questions 1 and 2, I hope to have completed a Master's in Education (TESOL) by the end of this year.
19. 2008
20. 1979, 2002
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. 2009
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. The first one I obtained in 1978 and the second in 1981.
26. Dip Ed 1994; Master's 2000

Question 5: What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?

1. Grammar is required for all skills and communication. Grammar should be taught in an integrative/functional way as well as on its own.
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. A good understanding of grammar enables a student to communicate their thoughts and ideas with clarity, and limits the potential for misunderstandings. If a student has a good grasp of grammar, their English sounds natural and improves their chances of succeeding in an academic course. Therefore I feel it plays an integral role in the teaching and learning of English.
4. It's the foundation or key structure around which the whole of language is built.
5. Teachers should be trained to be able to answer students' grammar questions, to increase their confidence in their teacher. However, it is not necessary to put too much emphasis on it.
6. Very important
7. Whilst a communicative approach helps strengthen students' ability to actually use the language (cf Japanese / Korean students), grammar is the basis for accurate communication (cf Chinese language that does not have verb tenses). So yes, it is important, but should not be taught in isolation from other language skills, but as part of these.
8. I think it is very useful for students to have a good grounding in the metalanguage and rules of grammar but that these aspects need to be integrated into lessons that are contextualised and useful for students.
9. It is very important especially if students need English for writing and further study. It is best taught in context and it is important that you go over grammar points frequently.
10. Teaching – I believe it is an important building block to give students confidence in their skills. Learning – Grammar is an important foundation that can be studied and improved upon independently as well as in a classroom situation.
11. Language really IS grammar. Grammar is simply the basis for how a language works.
12. It is a description of the way language works. It is a means for teachers and students to know what is generally considered correct usage of language.
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. I think grammar is an important component for teaching and learning grammar, but should be taught in context of other areas of English teaching to make it understandable.

15. Integral part of the process, and essential for adult learners. It's a facilitating tool. Helps learners understand meaning, and develop own production.
16. I feel it is absolutely essential to provide structure for both written and spoken English.
17. Students need a basic knowledge to be able to successfully manipulate the language.
18. I consider grammar to play a significant role in both everyday communication and English for Academic Purposes. As such, I think that grammar instruction is important at all levels of English teaching and learning.
19. I consider it underpins teaching and learning English (but, as a student of the Queensland education system in the 60's and 70's, we received little explicit grammar teaching and so, when I tried to learn Italian in the 80's, I was woeful as I didn't know or understand basic grammar terms). I was finally formally introduced to grammar understanding in my CELTA course. I think grammar is especially important for writing. But, while I appreciate the need for EOL students to learn a strong foundation of grammar, I feel insufficient emphasis is given to developing vocabulary, pronunciation and being given speaking practice in the context in which I have worked.
20. It is important to produce correct and meaningful sentences.
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. So far I have only done relief teaching, but often grammar questions are asked. I think it is important to understand it!!
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. I think an understanding of grammar is essential to be able to use a language independently.
26. It is central to teaching and learning

Question 6: Of the many and varied grammar teaching approaches, which one do you prefer and why?

1. Eliciting and analysing grammar points from a text (reading or listening), going through the mechanics, controlled practice and more 'real life' situations. I like this method because it allows students to see the grammar in use and to practice it in a way in which they may need to use it in their own lives.
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. I think it is important to teach grammar in context. It needs to be introduced alongside another skill e.g. reading. It then needs to be practised and reviewed, for example via exercises, speaking activities etc.

4. I would probably prefer a functional grammar approach, i.e. teaching the grammar and then giving the students some functional communicative situation which requires them to use the grammatical form or point being taught. I prefer this approach because it is generally more motivating, it activates passive knowledge of grammar and it shows students that there is a practical reason for needing to have good grammar.
5. The communicative method. Explaining which grammar forms are used in which situations and the reasons for it will help students understand grammar in context.
6. Learning grammar in context, because we need grammar as a tool for using language appropriately (e.g. writing), not as an academic exercise.
7. (no answer given)
8. I do not follow any approach strictly but lately have been tending to integrate traditional rules and usages of grammar in the context of the lesson being taught, or at least trying to structure a useful meaning around the aspect of grammar under study so that the students are able to see how and why the grammar point is being used and how it changes with different situations. This is often done quite well by some of the course books available.
9. I prefer teaching grammar in a communicative way reinforced by worksheets at home.
10. I prefer the inductive approach as I feel grammar really only makes sense in context.
11. I have been exposed to Halliday's functional grammar models and I suppose that is a more complex version of the type of sentence analysis that I do with students i.e. looking at the function of each element of an utterance.
12. I prefer to teach grammar structures directly, then give students opportunities to experiment in using the grammar. The products of those experiments then become a means for further teaching and learning. I also like to use the Grammar Workout approach where students collaboratively reproduce a listening text and compare the results against the work of other groups.
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. I like CLT and task-based learning. This is because I like language to be learnt using real situations (well, as real as possible within a classroom).
15. Several, but I like Task-based Teaching. Adults seem to enjoy the tasks, then a grammar focus follow up seems to attract their interest, because they can see the relevance to what they were trying to express. I also like the discovery approach as in the Cambridge Face2Face text book series. It's surprising what students don't know and a good way to get them to notice. Also I like the idea of the Lexical Approach but haven't tried it often.

16. I prefer the communicative approach since it puts the grammar in context, and students can hopefully begin to understand why and how it affects the accuracy of communication.
17. Discourse analysis – as you can see how grammar truly works in text.
18. I prefer different approaches at different levels. In General English lessons, I think it is important to introduce 'level-appropriate' grammar in the context of a reading activity. In EAP lessons I think that grammar instruction can be more learner-centred; taught according to students' needs (identified from highlighting errors in assignments, for example).
19. I like some explicit teaching of the grammar point by the teacher and then having the target grammar embedded in exercises. I would prefer students don't get too 'hung up' on getting grammar absolutely right, as it undermines their confidence and also slows down their progress. (And to be honest, I think we sometimes expect more of foreign students than native born ones who make numerous grammar errors).
20. Presentation (highlighting the form of new language), practice (restricted, less restricted), production.
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. As I'm a beginner in this area, I have very limited knowledge of approaches...but think that with beginning students, it's good to teach a few structures first e.g. simple past tense and practice using lots of communication, e.g. talking
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. I attempt to help students to understand grammatical terminology through many examples and exercises. I use both published grammar textbooks and my own material developed over many years.
26. I don't follow any particular approach. I prefer to teach the grammar that is necessary for what we are doing at any given time. Or, in the case of the textbook we use, which I don't find that good for grammar teaching, I try to find material with clearer explanations. I suppose I follow a more functional approach.

**Question 7: What is your view regarding the use of grammar exercises in class?
How helpful are they?**

1. I think that they are a part of the controlled practice which is needed after mechanics are taught. It's practicing the 'formula'. If this is then practiced it makes it easier to produce later in other situations. Although they could be completed outside the classroom, some exercises in class help the teacher to identify any problems students may be having and address these then and there. This helps the students to learn the grammar point from the start and may reduce errors being learnt. It also allows the students to discuss the

mechanics with the teachers and offers students an opportunity to actively interact with the grammar.

2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. I think they are helpful when a new grammar point is learnt and a student needs to practise it. It is also useful for the teacher to see which students haven't really grasped it and whether further teaching needs to take place. They are also useful for revision.
4. They can be useful as a confidence-building tool and can make the students aware of the structures and the teacher can identify and explain any difficult points that arise. I don't feel that they are the most efficient tool for teaching grammar in class though.
5. Helpful to an extent, but not too much time should be spent on dry grammar exercises. It should be learned in context.
6. Very helpful; viewed as very important by most students; provide foundation for many other language activities
7. If targeted correctly and are follow-up to grammar explanations, they are useful to help students put the grammar into practice. However would need to be in context.
8. I think they are very helpful as long as they are contextualized in a believable way that is perceived by the students as being relevant to them and therefore useable in their daily and future lives. If these conditions are not met, the grammar point will most likely be forgotten.
9. They are valuable to consolidate learning and to see whether students have actually picked up on the point. Over reliance as a teaching method can make the lessons boring.
10. Limited grammar exercises are useful initially; however, I think practical exercises are far more valuable.
11. I prefer to use examples from student writing as the basis for a clinic type approach. I find the following two processes very helpful:

Error correction: Provide sentence with error → ask students to discuss the error in small groups so that they build up their vocabulary of talking about grammar, e.g. 'There are too many verbs here. 'You can't put an *-ing* form after a modal.' → move around room redirecting weaker groups to possibilities for error correction if necessary → correct the sentence with whole group, explaining grammar rule → have students work on further examples of structures of similar type.

Dictogloss: Have the students work in groups to complete their own version of a text which has been read to them, usually on a topic related to current content and containing situations designed to trigger the use of any target structures. Move around, direct attention to some grammar points. Using the OHP or document

reader, show each group version to the class with one student being responsible for making corrections as directed by class members. Some direction is usually needed here to get all errors correctly reworded but the bulk of correction should come from students.

12. It depends on how the exercises are designed. I think doing exercises from a book is of limited value. I think it is more useful to give students an opportunity to write and to use grammar that has been taught and then to use that writing as the basis for further exploration and teaching.
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. I think grammar exercises are useful in short doses to check understanding and consolidate learning. It can be a useful way to check for holes in knowledge also.
15. Helpful for practice with immediate feedback. May be better as homework at student's own pace. Some students find them satisfying and reassuring. Reveal problems to the teacher. However, many students don't use the grammar in speaking or writing immediately after doing exercises.
16. While I endorse the communicative approach, I also feel that any grammar point presented in this way must be reinforced with written practice to allow the student to integrate it fully into their body of knowledge. However, the exercises must deal with real communication that the student needs in everyday life (not the 'La plume de ma tante...' type!)
17. Slightly useful to raise awareness but only if they are relevant to what is being actually produced.
18. I think that grammar exercises can be useful in the classroom as long as they are just one part of the grammar lesson. I regard the CELTA approach to grammar lessons to be really helpful. In these lessons target grammar is first introduced in the context of a reading, then practised in a controlled exercise and finally practised in a freer speaking or writing activity.
19. With regard to the specific textbook used at this centre, I find the context often is too difficult and gets in the way of the main objective, the grammar point being taught. This is especially so in the pre-intermediate level book. So much time is spent trying to get students to comprehend the scenario presented when it is just a vehicle for the main goal – the grammar.
20. Very helpful
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. Students seem to accept them!
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. As stated above, I think it is important to give students grammar exercises to help them understand grammatical categories and rules.

26. Grammar exercises are okay, as long as they extend the grammar point that the students have been learning. They are not the lesson in entirety, although sometimes I do exercises first to see how much the student knows, or can figure out, before going over the form.

Question 8: How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?

1. Grammar games can be useful in controlled practice. The teacher's attitude towards grammar can also have an influence on interest and motivation. Making it relevant to the students by showing how it will be useful to them. Using a variety of texts. Not over-correcting.
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. Using it in a variety of ways in interactive activities.
4. I feel strongly that grammar needs to be taught with some functional purpose in mind, rather than it being too much of an abstract thing. It is generally necessary to repeat grammar many times and I think it helps to use a range of activities and exercises to keep it interesting and motivating. I often use a few funny examples to demonstrate particular points which can help keep the students engaged with the material.
5. Games and other communicative methods.
6. By feeling interested in it themselves and being confident in delivering it to students.
7. By using games /activities to practise grammar points; using grammar in context and situations where incorrect grammar leads to communication problems.
8. By using contexts that are relevant to the students and integrating the grammar points into functions that can be deemed by the students to be useful to them. I think that, as the relationship between grammar and context is so close, grammatical points need a relevant context in order to be used correctly and therefore be readily understood by students. These contexts could be in the form of relevant lesson topics, games, role plays and such which students identify and have fun with, so that they are interested and motivated. Also grammar points can be instituted into listening, reading, writing or speaking exercises at opportune times so that students can see the reason for the particular usage.
9. I enjoy helping students discover the rules. I think online activities have a place in making grammar learning more interesting.
10. By applying grammar to real life situations, in speaking and writing exercises. The study of grammar is pretty dry, but using language correctly is rewarding for students.
11. By using the students' own language as a starting point, you are imparting what is needed not what some program says they need. With motivated

adult learners, having something de-mystified for them and finally seeing something clearly is usually motivating enough.

12. Provide meaningful contexts for their writing; Use tools like Grammar Workout where a collaborative approach to learning is possible.
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. Using grammar in real scenarios allows it to be used in context. Also teaching the same grammar points in different ways shows how the grammar can be used and can change the pace of the lesson. This is because repetition aids the teaching of grammar points, but you don't want it to appear repetitive.
15. Variety of activities. Integrated into topic lesson. Personalising the exercises. Again, Face2Face uses a lot of personalising activities.
16. I think games which practice the point while being fun are a good idea. Dialogues are also an interesting and motivating way to see the language in action. However, any situations used must involve natural use of the grammar point – not the 'speak about X using the present simple passive' type!!!
17. Make it relevant; Teach it using games.
18. I think that opportunities for freer practice (such as group discussions) is really important – hopefully interacting with their classmates gives students a more enjoyable chance to use the target grammar and also a motivation for learning it (i.e. in order to communicate with other people).
19. I often relate it to navigation – trying to get somewhere.

You are here, and you want to go to there. (for 'here' read current understanding of English, for 'there', read desired level of English). Normally, you would consult a map, plan your route, make some deviations maybe (for a coffee, to sight-see). It's the same with English. The map is strongly based on grammar (the basics of driving – maybe pleasurable or not, but necessary), with deviations for lighter activities (the coffee breaks, the sight-seeing).

I find students relate to the mindfulness of this as they naturally find planning a trip ahead as a sensible and practical thing to do. The same with grammar. It's the basis for your navigation to a better understanding of the English language.

I also relate it to building blocks – if you know the basics, you can use them to construct an array of wonderful things. Grammar as the 'lego' of language.
20. Using games, matching cards, parts of sentences, using pictures miming actions.
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.

23. It seems to me that the textbooks are the 'course', there is no leeway to be different. But if given the chance, setting up situations where the grammar is elicited is preferable. The trainer used this approach when teaching the CELTA and it was very motivating.
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. In my experience, most students are eager to improve their understanding of English grammar because they know that this is necessary for them to improve their command of the language, particularly their writing skills. The teacher needs to make the students understand that the grammar lessons will help them to achieve their goals.
26. Make it relevant, give lots of examples, test their knowledge in an informal way and give them chances to show that they know it.

Question 9: Do you feel adequately prepared to impart grammar knowledge?

1. Usually, yes. There are times when I research the point first or talk to colleagues to make sure I can explain a point to students in the simplest manner possible. I feel less adequate with more complex grammar points which I have not researched and that may crop up in a lesson.
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. Sometimes
4. Mostly, yes, but not with advanced levels.
5. Yes
6. Yes
7. It depends on the grammar point. My knowledge of rules of grammar was imparted to me when I learned / taught other language, rather than at school in English.
8. In some areas of grammar such as verb tenses and modals I am generally adequately prepared and can put forward a point with reasonable confidence (although there are still some areas that create problems).
9. To some extent. Not in all areas.
10. I generally feel prepared, but I usually review the grammar before class to clarify (especially for the higher level students). When you only teach sporadically it is hard to retain all the working knowledge you need.
11. Yes.
12. No, not really. I don't carry too many rules about language around in my head, I always refer to useful sources before teaching a grammar point. I work to understand the point I am about to teach, go back to some useful sources like Martin Parrott, read up and give myself something of a base from which to proceed. I retain that knowledge for a short duration and then it disappears.

13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. It really depends on the grammar points and what I have been able to prepare beforehand. Generally, I feel inadequate when approaching a grammar lesson and second guess myself and my ability.
15. Yes and no.
16. Can one ever know everything? I'm aware of this, so I know my shortcomings, but I feel I'm reasonable well prepared and I do spend a lot of time reading grammar books and analysing dialogue and written pieces of work, trying to sensitise myself to the nuances of the language. Having said this, I feel that ongoing in-service grammar education is essential and is lacking, so I would welcome it.
17. Reasonably, but I still feel there are gaps in how I explain grammar issues to the students.
18. Yes.
19. I certainly didn't when I started teaching and was often just one step ahead of some teachers (and probably less knowledgeable than others). I always prepared well but sometimes was confused. My secret weapon was my husband who, with a British education in the 30's – 50's, has a very sound knowledge of grammar. He understands most of the terms, even though his area is Chemistry. With practice, I have developed a better understanding of basic grammar but still feel shaky on more complicated aspects (e.g. relative clauses, complicated sentence construction and nomenclature).
20. Yes
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. No
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. Yes.
26. Usually I prepare by looking up the grammar to make sure I understand the form thoroughly. I always carry a grammar book, in case there are questions that I can't answer.

Question 10: Why or why not?

1. I usually feel prepared because I make sure I know the point I need to teach. Also, learning another language helps with identifying how the native language works. When I don't feel confident about grammar, it's usually because I haven't analysed it myself or broken it down.
2. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
3. If I am teaching a specific grammar point, I make sure I have a good understanding of it, and therefore feel prepared to impart knowledge. I feel

the CELTA course taught me how to go about introducing and teaching a grammar point. If, however, a student asks me a grammar question about some other grammar point, I may or may not know the answer. This will depend on whether I have just forgotten the answer because I haven't taught it for a long time, or have never taught it, so just don't know. There are also some areas where I know the correct grammar but find it difficult to explain.

4. The grammar points are predictable and I have repeated them many, many times before. In addition, I have a background in languages myself and therefore feel I have a good grounding in grammar.
5. I've received a lot of training in this area.
6. I usually can understand most (but not all) of the grammar points I deliver as well as answer most of the students' grammar questions.
7. I didn't learn grammar at high school – nor did we have Latin, which would have helped with terminology. My knowledge of grammar came through teaching LOTE (German, French).
8. Sometimes I don't feel adequately prepared because grammar is infinitely complex and there are so many exceptions and usage changes for differing situations which can be very difficult to explain adequately to students. Also students' understanding of what is being covered in the lesson can be unpredictable and their lack of English can make it difficult for them to express their problems clearly or to fully understand what can sometimes turn out to be fairly complex explanations. Also, as stated above, sometimes grammar points can be used only in certain situations which may not be part of the lesson being taught and therefore it is difficult to adequately portray the point to the student.
9. I have taught for a number of years so I have improved my grammar knowledge over this time. I still find some areas more difficult to teach than others, such as relative clauses. I can teach students the differences, for example, between defining and non-defining relative clauses, but the error rate is often still very high. I found some of the questions below difficult, so this shows that I would not be adequately prepared to impart all aspects of grammar knowledge.
10. I like to review so I feel confident in the classroom. I try to avoid that awful situation of being 'caught out' and unsure of / unable to explain a grammar point. There is just so much grammar knowledge that I feel it is almost impossible to know everything.
11. My own primary education involved the study of grammar and the naming of parts and functions. My Ling Master work provided a more sophisticated version of this. Study in a second language (Spanish - Adult Education) encouraged examination of the first language while making sense of the second, e.g. How does English use the subjunctive? My work on the Cambridge FCE course some ten years ago honed my skills in the explanation

of some grammatical distinctions such as defining and non-defining relative clauses.

12. Language is complex and usage changes. There are a variety of views and theories about approaches to grammar and they keep changing too. And the points of grammar are many and varied. I'm a person who functions more confidently when certain of my ground. Grammar is not black and white.
13. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
14. When I know what grammar points I have to teach, I prepare a lot. Especially for grammar I haven't taught much or grammar I'm unsure of. Some grammar I understand well, but the more I teach, the better I feel when I teach it. I feel that I still lack a lot of experience in grammar teaching.
15. Confident when prepared for a particular grammar point. However, sometimes find unexpected questions on fine points hard to explain clearly. Lack of long term experience of teaching grammar, so I still need to prepare.
16. (as for Question 9)
17. Because I have been teaching English for a long time throughout Australia.
18. My study of other languages has inadvertently given me the opportunity to analyse the English language.
19. I was not taught grammar explicitly at primary school and so developed an intrinsic knowledge of how to apply it and I did this well. I used to get distinctions and above for English but, if asked to explain grammar, I would have been flummoxed. I think this is very sad as being able to articulate why you use grammar in the way you do (not just because 'it sounds right') is crucial.

In many countries, grammar is taught explicitly. Hence, I have European cousins who know and understand far more English grammar than I did before I did my CELTA. It really handicaps English speakers when they try to learn another language. I don't think grammar teaching is necessarily boring (unless it's always taught by rote methods), and once students understand the relevance of it in imparting the subtleties of meaning, it can be quite exciting. I found it to be so.
20. It was part of my tertiary study.
21. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
22. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
23. My knowledge was fine for teaching Australian students, but the international students want more in depth answers, which I don't often have (so I look things up).
24. Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study.
25. As a student of foreign languages, I have always been very interested in grammar. I have sought to improve my own understanding of English grammar throughout the years. As a result, I feel confident about teaching

English grammar to my students and have helped colleagues with their questions about English grammar.

26. I don't always feel that I know grammar well as I come from a generation of people who were not specifically taught it at school.

Appendix 8 Phase 2: Survey – Section B - aggregate answers

Refer to Appendix 6 for the actual grammar review questions. Each question in the grammar review was given a different number of marks depending on how much information was required.

Questions 1 – 5 consisted of 3 parts each:

- a) choice between correct or incorrect for each given sentence
- b) identification of the grammar aspect in the sentence
- c) corrected sentence to be written if original had been incorrect

Questions 6 – 11 consisted of one part only to each question

Question 12 consisted of 6 parts: 3 verbs had to be identified by underlining, then each had to be identified by tense or form, with as much information given as possible

Question 13 consisted of 4 parts: 2 verbs had to be identified by underlining, then each had to be identified by tense or form, with as much information given as possible

Question 14 consisted of 2 parts: 1 verb had to be identified by underlining, then it had to be identified by tense or form, with as much information given as possible

Question 15 consisted of 4 parts: 2 verbs had to be identified by underlining, then each had to be identified by tense or form, with as much information given as possible

Question 16 – 17 consisted of one part only to each question

Question 18 – 19 consisted of one part only to each question

Question 20 consisted of 34 separate items

Thus the grammar review comprised 75 separate items.

21 respondents participated in this phase of the study. Therefore each item in this table totals 21.

Key:

√ = number of correct answers for item

? = number of answers with insufficient information given for item

NA = number of answers not attempted for item

X = number of wrong answers for item

	√	?	NA	X			√	?	NA	X
1a	20	0	0	1		13-1b	20	0	1	0
1b	16	2	0	3		13-2a	21	0	0	0
1c	19	0	0	2		13-2b	17	0	1	3
2a	20	0	0	1		14-1a	21	0	0	0
2b	17	1	1	2		14-1b	13	6	1	1
2c	20	0	0	1		15-1a	21	0	0	0
3a	21	0	0	0		15-1b	18	0	1	2
3b	18	0	0	3		15-2a	21	0	0	0
3c	14	0	0	7		15-2b	0	19	1	1
4a	19	0	0	2		16	15	0	2	4
4b	14	1	1	5		17	10	0	2	9
4c	13	1	0	7		18	21	0	0	0
5a	21	0	0	0		19	21	0	0	0
5b	6	13	0	2		20-1	20	0	0	1
5c	20	0	0	1		20-2	20	0	0	1
6	19	0	0	2		20-3	6	12	0	3
7	18	0	0	3		20-4	21	0	0	0
8	12	0	0	9		20-5	16	2	1	2
9	19	0	0	2		20-6	10	8	2	1
10	21	0	0	0		20-7	17	2	0	2
11	20	0	0	1		20-8	19	0	0	2
12-1a	13	0	4	4		20-9	21	0	0	0
12-1b	9	0	5	7		20-10	13	7	0	1
12-2a	21	0	0	0		20-11	21	0	0	0
12-2b	20	0	1	0		20-12	21	0	0	0
12-3a	16	0	4	1		20-13	9	8	2	2
12-3b	14	0	5	2		20-14	14	4	1	2
13-1a	21	0	0	0		20-15	20	1	0	0

	√	?	NA	X			√	?	NA	X
20-16	8	3	3	7		20-26	20	0	0	1
20-17	7	0	1	13		20-27	7	4	1	9
20-18	15	4	0	2		20-28	20	1	0	0
20-19	18	1	0	2		20-29	21	0	0	0
20-20	16	4	0	1		20-30	20	0	0	1
20-21	21	0	0	0		20-31	8	6	3	4
20-22	7	11	1	2		20-32	16	0	1	4
20-23	21	0	0	0		20-33	21	0	0	0
20-24	21	0	0	0		20-34	9	4	4	4
20-25	6	5	1	9						

Appendix 9 Phase 3: Interview transcripts

Key:

- I: Interviewer
R: Respondent
Grey text: Interviewer script

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT 8

I: ***Interview Q 1: What is your opinion of the grammar teaching program in this language school?***

R8: *I don't think there's a targeted grammar teaching program. It's done as the course progresses. We have exercises in the course book and we do grammar as part of the second session on one of the days, so there is a program I suppose, but not a particularly targeted one.*

I: A question we had in the survey was: What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?

All the respondents agreed that grammar was of some importance. However, answers ranged from central, essential, important to need basic knowledge to manipulate the language.

Interview Q 2: How do you think that teachers' grammar knowledge affects how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English?

R8: *Well, personally I was brought up with very little grammar teaching. In those days they didn't really do it very much, so you can speak it quite easily without having to know it, but coming to teach it, I find it's very important, it's essential. It's something that you really need to give the students an understanding of it. As a second language they really need it and the metalanguage I think is necessary so they know which words they are dealing with and how to integrate them and manipulate them, so I think metalanguage is the part that needs to be pushed a little bit more, so that students are able to understand easily if it's a verb, how the verbs are working and how articles are integrated into the language and all that sort of thing. I really think it's a very essential part of the way that we have to teach.*

I: Another question we had on the survey was: Of the many and varied grammar teaching approaches, which one do you prefer and why?

Some respondents mentioned grammar in context, while others preferred the communicative approach.

Interview Q 3: Is the communicative approach adequate for grammar teaching and do teachers need to be very knowledgeable about grammar to teach English using the communicative method?

R8: *I teach it more overtly myself. I go into tables of grammar and tables of verbs, so I'm tending nowadays to go more towards that sort of thing, rather than doing it communicatively – I'm doing it in context. I try to do it in context as much as possible – context is very important, otherwise it just makes no sense to them, but what we consider context and what students consider context might be totally different things. They have very different views on subjects, topics that we talk about and it makes perfect sense to us, but quite often doesn't make any sense to them. So, I think the hardest part is putting yourself into the mind of the students themselves and understanding where they're coming from, and I find I'm trying to do that more and more, especially in the low levels – trying to see where their understanding lies and working it out from there, so it's got to be contextualised to that extent as far as the student goes and contextualising in the way of topics as well, so that they would be able to find a common ground with it.*

I: Now you say you've created grammar tables and you also said you weren't brought up with grammar when you went to school, so have you taught yourself?

R8: *Yes. I've got grammar books and gone through them. Recently I've not done as much, possibly because I've been doing more EAP* teaching, so we don't do much grammar in EAP, but now I'm doing more low level teaching and having to go back to that sort of thing. So I think it's structure from the very start, and the structure needs to be there for the students to build up from that. We have students here who are doing EAP and making mistakes that should have been fixed up way back in level 1 or 2. Losing the marks in EAP is because they haven't got that grounding, it hasn't been solidified before they start.*

I: Yet another question on the survey was: What is your view regarding the use of grammar exercises in class? How helpful are they?

Views ranged from very helpful to slightly useful.

Interview Q 4: Do you think that teachers' views on the use of grammar exercises are linked to how prepared they are to teach grammar?

R8: *It's all linked to it. I've developed a feeling that they are very necessary, but those who do functional grammar or more communicative style of grammar – they don't feel that structured exercises are helpful, so definitely the views of the teacher are going to make a lot of difference as to how they are going to portray it in class.*

I: Another question from the survey was: How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?

Of the 21 respondents, 7 said games, 8 said the grammar had to be relevant to students. Only one mentioned that teacher attitude towards grammar can influence student interest and motivation.

Interview Q 5: What do you think?

R8: *That's interesting. Yes, well, that would show that the teacher was enthusiastic about it, and I try to show it more, because I use different colours all the time and I highlight the grammatical point and write above the verbs or nouns, highlight them, so students will know what parts of the sentence there are, and I guess that might portray to them a bit more enthusiasm about learning the grammar, so when they see it in colours and it's highlighted for them, I think it points it out a bit more and it's repeated. Repetition is also a good thing, revision too, shows that the teacher is prepared to thrash it out a bit to get them to really think about it first, to work with them so they understand. I think that's how a teacher can make it more motivating, because then they know it's really an important thing for the teacher to get it across to them, so more interesting – it's difficult – well games of course are good, as long as the games are well understood and the instructions are given clearly and really get them to understand the instructions. I think that's one of the important parts, making sure that they totally understand. With my class, just the last period I've been teaching, it's very important for them to understand what the instruction actually is. When I first started this class the others would be working away and one would be looking around with a vacant look in his eyes. When I asked him 'Have you finished?' he said 'I don't know'. So, I've just had to focus on him and explain it painstakingly. Luckily it's a small class, so I can do that and this is what's necessary. If they don't get that, they get left behind in the woods, they'll stay in the woods the whole time.*

I: **Interview Q 6: Would you like to add any further comments to this discussion?**

R8: *I'm not sure how other teachers are prepared these days. I know we did CELTA**. I did CELTA and we did a fair bit of grammar in that. There have been some PDs that we've had for grammar which have been good (a long time ago). But some of that was over the top for what we had to teach. It needs to be really relevant to what we're*

teaching, so more PDs would be good. The more we get, the more people are going to be aware of it. You've also got to think about the philosophy of teachers too. If you're dealing with a tough grammarian, some of the teachers are going to be a bit resistant.

I: Thank you very much.

***EAP = English for Academic Purposes**

****CELTA = Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults**

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT 10

I: ***Interview Q 1: What is your opinion of the grammar teaching program in this language school?***

R10: *I think generally the grammar teaching program is good, but I think it might be clearer if it was set out so it was clear to the teachers (not necessarily to the students, but to teachers) what should be taught at which levels, so by the end of a particular level students should be across this, this and this, because you assume at certain levels they are familiar with particular grammar and they may not necessarily be aware of that grammar. I don't think that I've ever had that as a skills lesson because I usually only teach Monday/Tuesday, so the grammar that I've taught has basically just been patches from the textbook so in a whole lesson, rather than a full two-hour grammar and vocab session, which probably suits me, to be honest.*

I: A question we had in the survey was: What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?

All the respondents agreed that grammar was of some importance. However, answers ranged from central, essential, important to need basic knowledge to manipulate the language.

Interview Q 2: How do you think that teachers' grammar knowledge affects how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English?

R10: *I hadn't thought about that to be honest. In my own experience, the greater your grammar knowledge the more central I think you would find the role of grammar in teaching. For example, when I first finished my CELTA, I would have said my grammar knowledge was a lot better, I would have probably said that grammar was central to teaching. Now I would say I'm not so confident in all my grammar, so I would probably be leaning towards the basic knowledge end of the spectrum. I think, like a lot of skills, especially when I had almost a year off, you lose skills, forget things, or are unsure about which is the best way to teach things, and without that confidence, I think it's human nature to lean towards things that you are good at and that you feel confident in and like doing, so I definitely would say if my grammar knowledge was better, I would definitely be moving it from need a basic knowledge up to a more central role.*

I: Another question we had on the survey was: Of the many and varied grammar teaching approaches, which one do you prefer and why?

Some respondents mentioned grammar in context, while others preferred the communicative approach.

Interview Q 3: Is the communicative approach adequate for grammar teaching and do teachers need to be very knowledgeable about grammar to teach English using the communicative method?

R10: *I would definitely say it's adequate. I'm not sure for all grammar whether it's the best method, but I would certainly say it's adequate. And I wouldn't say you had to be very knowledgeable – I'd say a basic knowledge is probably enough to use that method for the teacher. It depends largely on the teacher but it also depends on the class which method is going to be the most useful.*

I: Yet another question on the survey was: What is your view regarding the use of grammar exercises in class? How helpful are they?

Views ranged from very helpful to slightly useful.

Interview Q 4: Do you think that teachers' views on the use of grammar exercises are linked to how prepared they are to teach grammar?

R10: *Grammar exercises are useful for the foundation. Also for someone who is not overly confident it gives (like me) a chance to review the exercises before class to feel confident in that particular exercise. A good foundation, but I don't always use grammar exercises – or good perhaps to consolidate.*

I: Another question from the survey was: How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?

Of the 21 respondents, 7 said games, 8 said the grammar had to be relevant to students. Only one mentioned that teacher attitude towards grammar can influence student interest and motivation.

Interview Q 5: What do you think?

R10: *To be honest, because my attitude is probably that grammar is a necessary evil, probably my enthusiasm and motivation for teaching grammar wouldn't be extremely high, so probably the students would pick up on that, I imagine, and think "We'll just get through this grammar and then we can do something more relevant or more fun", not necessarily fun but more engaging perhaps. And I also think from what students have told me and from what I understand, a lot of them, in their past, studying English in high school, the English classes for them have meant sitting there for hours on end learning English grammar ad nauseam and they never found that a very satisfying or interesting process, and I know you need to have a good grasp of grammar to be able to use the language, but I think grammar can, unlike listening or speaking, if you really love grammar you can get a grammar text-book, which could be just as useful as spending a lot of time in class. The benefit of being in a class situation, having a native speaker there, having been listening to English for two hours or four hours a day, communicating in English, which I think is a lot more useful for students instead of two hours of grammar which I wouldn't find engaging myself. I've never thought of it, but I imagine it's very true that my attitude definitely influences how much grammar I teach*

and my enthusiasm for 'let's just do this quickly, then we'll practise using it all or we'll look at it in a reading or something'.

I: **Interview Q 6:** **Would you like to add any further comments to this discussion?**

R10: *I always feel like I don't know enough and maybe I can never know enough. At home I've got volumes of English grammar text-books that are door-jamb size and I think I'm never going to know enough or have the answer to every question. But it's very encouraging, quite often in the staffroom you hear teachers saying 'I'm not sure about this. How do I explain that?' I feel I'm not the only one who doesn't know everything about English grammar. I know there are certain people who do know pretty much everything and you could ask them anything, but I always have a great fear of being put on the spot, but I don't feel as a teacher, well ideally you'd know everything, so I would say 'That's something I'd have to check on' or 'Can we come back to that after the break' to buy a bit of time rather than give the wrong answer.*

I: Thank you very much.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT 17

I: ***Interview Q 1: What is your opinion of the grammar teaching program in this language school?***

R17: *Well, it seems to me that it's pretty ad hoc, because even though we've got the basics in the textbook, there's no real direction in how much further to take it with the students. So, I think there needs to be a lot more put into it, consideration of it, and including having professional development programs so that people have the same idea about what grammar points mean and are and how they can be taught.*

I: A question we had in the survey was: What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?

All the respondents agreed that grammar was of some importance. However, answers ranged from central, essential, important to need basic knowledge to manipulate the language.

Interview Q 2: How do you think that teachers' grammar knowledge affects how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English?

R17: *Well I would suggest that the less somebody knows about grammar, perhaps the less they think it's important, because they don't want to be caught out by appearing not to know, so if they don't know much, they'll probably make it a very limited part of their lesson, so they don't have to expand on it.*

I: Another question we had on the survey was: Of the many and varied grammar teaching approaches, which one do you prefer and why?

Some respondents mentioned grammar in context, while others preferred the communicative approach.

Interview Q 3: Is the communicative approach adequate for grammar teaching and do teachers need to be very knowledgeable about grammar to teach English using the communicative method?

R17: *Well, if they're going to get the most value out of it, they certainly need to have a very solid understanding of grammar, because they should be able to put the communication activities into some sort of context, and where they have to use certain grammar to be able to complete a task successfully. So, is it adequate for grammar teaching? No, so I think it's only one part – grammar teaching – I think you need the whole varied number of approaches, including a needs analysis of your students to see what they need, depending on their experience and background etc. etc. So, within the first week or so, you need to work out where they come from and their basic knowledge of grammar background and work out which is the best way for that particular group, or you might even need to set up*

different groups within the class, depending on their needs for grammar, because you don't want to bore some with things they know very well and others can't cope with it at all.

I: Yet another question on the survey was: What is your view regarding the use of grammar exercises in class? How helpful are they?

Views ranged from very helpful to slightly useful.

Interview Q 4: Do you think that teachers' views on the use of grammar exercises are linked to how prepared they are to teach grammar?

R17: *Well, having just grammar exercises is like an easy cop-out. I think they're good for homework, as a back-up to what you've taught.*

I: What if teachers aren't confident about grammar? Do you think that they would put grammar exercises into a program if they're not confident?

R17: *I think they would have some, because they would have to have, e.g. in the textbook they would have to do a certain amount, but I still say some people would probably tend to avoid it, depending on their personality, so the more confident people are, the more likely they are to do it, but also what sort of grammar exercises they are. Are they just rote learning answers type of exercises, or something a bit more in depth? So perhaps a teacher's grammar knowledge would determine what type of grammar exercises they would choose, whether they have the basic ones (like in Murphy) or something more complex (like "Grammar in Context" or something like that), and it also depends on the level of the students, of course.*

I: Another question from the survey was: How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?

Of the 21 respondents, 7 said games, 8 said the grammar had to be relevant to students. Only one mentioned that teacher attitude towards grammar can influence student interest and motivation.

Interview Q 5: What do you think?

R17: *Well I certainly think if a teacher does seem keen on anything, including grammar, that can encourage the students, whereas if the teacher makes it obvious that it's their weak point or they're not interested or it isn't important, then that would lead the students to think that perhaps that's the case, so I think teacher attitude is very important in how interested the students are and motivated about learning grammar, but certainly they have to make it seem relevant, so it would depend on what sort of activities they have to do and how relevant it seems within the context, but I do think games are very good and very motivational. I've seen students get really excited about grammar games, but maybe it's because, as a teacher, my attitude towards games is that I love games and get them all excited*

about it, so it could be any game, not just grammar. It doesn't really matter – I get excited about having a game. So I think there is something in that – teacher attitude, but the students have to see its relevance, somehow, so it would be to complete a task successfully.

I: ***Interview Q 6: Would you like to add any further comments to this discussion?***

R17: *Well, I think every teacher comes from a different background from what they've learned regarding grammar, right back from when they were at school and then in their study how much did they study grammar, like when I was doing my study we had to study discourse analysis and stuff like that, which I thought was quite interesting. It was a different sort of angle on grammar and then I know, despite my education and study, when I first started actually teaching, particularly when I was teaching "Cambridge First Certificate" with a whole group of European students who were very pedantic about grammar, that's when I came face to face with the fact that I had very limited knowledge really of how to explain grammar. I've got a deep, ingrained understanding of grammar because of my pedantic father for a start with grammar being correct, so I know what is correct, but how to actually explain why is another thing. So the in-depth parts of explaining grammar, certain types of clauses or things like that – that's where I come into trouble, because I find that difficult to explain in a clear way to students. So I think there needs to be a much greater emphasis on how to teach grammar for teachers right at the beginning before they start, and ongoing through the years to refresh, because you might not have to teach something, one particular type of grammar might not come up for six months, then you have to refresh your memory about how to best teach some rules, so I think it's an ongoing professional development. At least once a year there should be some sort of grammar workshop by an expert. Demo lessons – I think demo lessons on how to teach it – even if not with students, it could be demo lessons to the teachers, just to get ideas on how to explain it and what are the best texts and activities to use, so a much more organised system regarding the teaching of grammar would be very useful for everybody and benefit the students long-term.*

I: Thank you very much.

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT 23

I: ***Interview Q 1: What is your opinion of the grammar teaching program in this language school?***

R23: *I've just been a relief teacher here and then I've been on the timetable for one five-week module, but I didn't know there was a grammar teaching program, because every time I've come in, I've just grabbed the book and you do what you have to do for the day. When I taught the five weeks, I guess I realised that there were certain grammar structures or features throughout the book, so then I realised, I had a better concept of what the five-week program was about.*

I: So, were you given an induction?

R23: *Yes, but I wasn't told about any grammar program. I was shown where the different books are, the resources, but then I got a shock. When I was teaching the grammar for five weeks, we were using what was in the book, say modals, but then sometimes it wasn't that great because it assumes certain knowledge which maybe most of them haven't got, so then you've got to go and get some more exercises, so then I'm looking through the books and having to ask teachers what books to use, because I'd never done this before.*

I: A question we had in the survey was: What is your view of the role of grammar in English teaching and learning?

All the respondents agreed that grammar was of some importance. However, answers ranged from central, essential, important to need basic knowledge to manipulate the language.

Interview Q 2: How do you think that teachers' grammar knowledge affects how they view the importance of grammar in teaching English?

R23: *I guess the first thing is teaching here, while you're using the textbook, you have to teach the grammar as it is presented in the book. Recently I examined the textbooks because I'm doing studies at Deakin and I came to find out it is actually a really good book. I'm very positive about it because I've had to study it, and how the grammar is taken from the texts, so it's contextualised and I think that's really great. I guess it's just so fast that it seems to me there's just so much they have to learn so quickly – that concerns me.*

I: That's about the students. What about from the teacher's point of view? This is really about teachers' grammar knowledge and how that affects how they view the importance of grammar in their teaching.

R23: *Well, I know that my knowledge is not great, so I had to try to make sure I got advice from other teachers if I had problems comprehending it or explaining it. Sometimes you can understand it, but when a student asks you why, and they want to know exact reasons, as some of our students do, I had troubles explaining to them. But that's only here. I'm also teaching at – I volunteer in the migrant program, and of course there, grammar's usually taken in context, so because they're there, they're trying to get the students to speak everyday language.*

I: Another question we had on the survey was: Of the many and varied grammar teaching approaches, which one do you prefer and why?

Some respondents mentioned grammar in context, while others preferred the communicative approach.

Interview Q 3: Is the communicative approach adequate for grammar teaching and do teachers need to be very knowledgeable about grammar to teach English using the communicative method?

R23: *Hm. Right this very week in my studies I'm looking at the different ways grammar has been taught in the past, so because this is new to me, I didn't know there were so many different approaches. When I went to school, when I was learning languages, we did do grammar – I learned French and German. From my readings, it looks like having grammar in context is the best way to teach it, because it looks like there's a lot of evidence for that. Students will see where the grammar comes from. From my own experience, and I'm still reading all about the pros and cons.*

I: Yet another question on the survey was: What is your view regarding the use of grammar exercises in class? How helpful are they?

Views ranged from very helpful to slightly useful.

Interview Q 4: Do you think that teachers' views on the use of grammar exercises are linked to how prepared they are to teach grammar?

R23: *Here at this school – a lot depends on the assessment, so it's assessment-driven. When I had to teach the five weeks, I was aware of the test (I hadn't been so aware before), so I was very much aware that I have to teach the grammar that is going to be tested, or cover the areas, so I felt a duty that I had to ensure the students do exercises and try to understand it.*

I: Another question from the survey was: How can teachers make grammar more interesting and motivating for students?

Of the 21 respondents, 7 said games, 8 said the grammar had to be relevant to students. Only one mentioned that teacher attitude towards grammar can influence student interest and motivation.

Interview Q 5: What do you think?

R23: *When you're under pressure, you really have to keep moving. It's only in the second session of the day that you can do other things. It just seems because of time constraints, you couldn't spend as much time on an area as you wanted to, but I guess if the teacher's more knowledgeable and has more games or experience, as a teacher coming in, I just had to ask other teachers for help, otherwise I'd be sitting there for hours looking through it. So I guess a bit of extra background for teachers and in-servicing would be useful.*

I: So do you think that teacher attitude towards grammar can make a difference to whether the students are interested?

R: *Yes, I think it's vital, yes.*

I: ***Interview Q 6: Would you like to add any further comments to this discussion?***

R23: *I've done the CELTA course – a few years ago and I also did some Adult Education classes on grammar. I think it's very important, even if the grammar's taught in context, because unless the teacher knows the words to use so they can express it, you still need to know the language of grammar. So I know my grammar knowledge is deficient. I've even bought some grammar books. So when students ask me, I can at least refer to them and try to answer their questions.*

I: Thank you very much.

Interviewer Note: When the interview was over, this respondent mentioned that grammar was difficult for her (as a maths teacher) because answers are not always cut and dried (like mathematical answers). She requested that this comment be recorded.

Appendix 10 Phase 2: Survey - respondents' scores (Section B)

This table show respondents' individual raw scores out of a total of 75 possible marks (left hand side) and conversion to a percentage mark (right hand side).

Key:

✓ = number of correct answers per respondent

? = number of answers with insufficient information per respondent

NA = number of answers not attempted per respondent

X = number of incorrect answers per respondent

Respondent and gender	✓	?	NA	X	TOTAL		✓	?	NA	X	TOTAL
							%	%	%	%	%
1 F	62	3	4	6	75		83	4	5	8	100
2	Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study										
3 F	54	8	8	5	75		72	11	11	6	100
4 M	57	3	1	14	75		76	4	1	19	100
5 F	60	7	0	8	75		80	9	0	11	100
6 F	56	9	0	10	75		75	12	0	13	100
7 F	63	4	2	6	75		84	5	3	8	100
8 M	62	5	0	8	75		83	6	0	11	100
9 F	64	7	2	2	75		85	9	3	3	100
10 F	46	8	0	21	75		61	11	0	28	100
11 F	63	6	4	2	75		84	8	5	3	100
12 M	53	9	0	13	75		71	12	0	17	100
13	Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study										
14 F	56	6	5	8	75		74	8	7	11	100
15 F	69	6	0	0	75		92	8	0	0	100
16 F	63	6	4	2	75		84	8	5	3	100
17 F	62	10	0	3	75		83	13	0	4	100

Respondent and gender	√	?	NA	X	TOTAL		√	?	NA	X	TOTAL
							%	%	%	%	%
18 F	58	9	0	8	75		77	12	0	11	100
19 F	52	6	0	17	75		69	8	0	23	100
20 F	63	6	0	6	75		84	8	0	8	100
21	Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study										
22	Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study										
23 F	39	2	19	15	75		52	3	25	20	100
24	Did not participate in Phase 2 of the study										
25 F	73	2	0	0	75		97	3	0	0	100
26 F	55	8	2	10	75		73	11	3	13	100

Summary of range of percentage scores and averages for each answer category

Category	Range	Average
√	52% - 97 %	78.04%
?	3% - 13%	8.24%
NA	0% - 25%	3.24%
X	0% - 28%	10.48%

Appendix 11 Professional Development in Grammar - Session 1

The word that and its grammatical functions

Devised by: G MacFarlane 2012

Presented: 13/09/2012

Duration: 1 hour

The following items are included in Appendix 11:

11.1 PowerPoint Slides and Facilitator's Notes

11.2 Participant Handout 1

11.3 Participant Handout 1: Facilitator's Copy

11.4 Participant Handout 2

11.5 Participant Handout 2: Facilitator's Copy

11.6 Participant Handout 3

11.7 Participant Handout 3: Facilitator's Copy

11.8 Participant Handout 4

11.1 PowerPoint Slides and Facilitator's Notes

GRAMMAR P.D.

The word that and its grammatical uses

Developed by G MacFarlane
2012

SLIDE 1

Facilitator: Welcome ...

Facilitator: Brief Session Outline - The word that and its grammatical uses

Facilitator: From the study Phase 2 Section B, the sentence for parsing was:

(go to slide 2)

Results from research studies, which are of a considerable number, would seem to suggest that the average human adult needs between seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

SLIDE 2

Facilitator: Results from research studies, which are of a considerable number, would seem to suggest that the average human adult needs between seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

(go to slide 3)

5% did not attempt this item

33% identified this item correctly

62% identified it as something it was not.

SLIDE 3

Facilitator: For this session, we'll concentrate only on the word ***that*** because of the 21 people who took part, 33% identified this item correctly, 5% did not attempt it and 62% identified it as something it was not.

(go to slide 4)

In general, how many parts of speech could the word that be identified as?

Discuss in groups of 2 or 3 for 3 minutes, then report back to whole group.

SLIDE 4

Facilitator: In general, how many parts of speech can you think of for the word that?

Facilitator: Can you discuss this in groups of 2 or 3 for just 3 minutes, then I'll ask you to report back to the whole group.

After 2 minutes, ask groups for their answers. List answers on board.

Distribute Participant Handout 1 and go through it with the whole group.

NB - give fuller treatment of determiners to participants as follows

- Facilitator:** Determiners include all the following:
1. Articles (the, a, an)
 2. Demonstratives (this, that, these, those)
 3. Possessives (my, your, his/her/its; our, your, their)
 4. Quantifiers (some, any, no, each, every, either, neither, enough)

(go to slide 5)

This is the shop that I told you about.

Some scientists claim that the globe is warming.

Which is which? Why?

SLIDE 5

Examine the difference between relative pronoun and conjunction in these two sentences.

Facilitator: One is a conjunction; one is a relative pronoun. Which is which?

Facilitator: Discuss in groups of 2 or 3.

After 2 minutes, ask groups for their answers.

Facilitator: What did you come up with? Why?

After discussion, refer participants back to Handout 1 as follows:

Answers: (1st sentence) **relative pronoun** refer to **pronoun 4**
(2nd sentence) **conjunction** refer to **conjunction 1**

(go to slide 6)

Results from research studies, which are of a considerable number, would seem to suggest that the average human adult needs between seven to nine hours of sleep per night.

SLIDE 6

Facilitator: Therefore, if we look again at the sentence for parsing from the grammar review Phase 2 Section B, what is the word that in the sentence for parsing?

Answer: that is a conjunction. It does not refer to a preceding noun nor to a noun phrase, and the sentence can be inverted

(go to slide 7)

That the average human adult needs between seven to nine hours of sleep per night would seem to be suggested by results from research studies, which are of a considerable number.

SLIDE 7

Facilitator: This is the inverted sentence

Facilitator: In a sentence with a relative clause using ***that***, (example on slide 5) inversion is not possible: ***That I told you about is the shop.*** - does not work.

Distribute Participant Handout 2 and refer to Handout 2 - Facilitator's Copy for instructions.

Distribute Participant Handout 3 and refer to Handout 3 - Facilitator's Copy for instructions.

(go to slide 8)

THANK YOU

SLIDE 8

Thank the participants and draw the session to a close.

Distribute Evaluation Sheet – Participant Handout 4.

Ask participants to fill in now and hand in before leaving.

11.2 Participant Handout 1

Participant Handout 1 - adapted from Hornby, A. S. (2010). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (7th ed.). Oxford: OUP.

Grammar item	Uses	Examples
Determiner (pl 'those') a.k.a. demonstrative adjective	1. used for referring to a person or thing that is not near the speaker or as near to the speaker as another.	1. Look at <u>that</u> man over there. <i>How much are <u>those</u> apples at the back?</i>
	2. used for referring to sb/sth that has already been mentioned or is already known about.	2. I was living with my parents at <u>that</u> time. <i><u>That</u> incident changed their lives. Have you forgotten about <u>that</u> money I lent you last week?</i>
pronoun (pl 'those') 1, 2, 3 a.k.a. demonstrative pronoun	1. used for referring to a person or thing that is not near the speaker or as near to the speaker as another.	1. Who's <u>that</u> ? <i><u>That's</u> Peter over there. Hello. Is <u>that</u> Mary? <u>Those</u> look riper than these.</i>
	2. used for referring to sb/sth that has already been mentioned or is already known about.	2. What can I do about <u>that</u> ? <i><u>That's</u> exactly what I think. We used to visit Peru. <u>Those</u> were good trips.</i>
	3. (formal) used for referring to people or things of a particular type.	3. <u>Those</u> present were in favour of change. <i>There are <u>those</u> who say she shouldn't have got the job.</i>
	4. used as a relative pronoun to introduce a part of a sentence which refers to the person, thing or time you have been talking about.	4. Where's the letter <u>that</u> came yesterday? <i>Who was it <u>that</u> won the U.S. Open? The watches <u>that</u> you gave us keep perfect time.</i>

Grammar item	Uses	Examples
conjunction	1. used after some verbs, adjectives & nouns to introduce a new part of the sentence	1. <i>She said (<u>that</u>) the story was true. It's possible (<u>that</u>) he has not received the letter. The fact (<u>that</u>) she's older than me is irrelevant.</i>
	2. <u>so</u> ... <u>that</u> used to express a result	2. <i>She was <u>so</u> tired (<u>that</u>) she couldn't think straight.</i>
	3. literary	3. <i>Oh <u>that</u> I could see them again! OR Would <u>that</u> I could see them again!</i>
adverb	1. used when saying how much or showing how long, big etc. sth is with your hands	1. <i>I can't walk <u>that</u> far. It's about <u>that</u> long.</i>
	2. not as much as has been said	2. <i>It isn't all <u>that</u> cold. There aren't <u>that</u> many people here.</i>
	3. used to emphasise how much	3. <i>I was <u>that</u> scared I didn't know what to do.</i>

11.3 Participant Handout 1: Facilitator's Copy

Participant Handout 1: Facilitator's Copy - adapted from Hornby, A. S.

(2010). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (7th ed.). Oxford: OUP.

Grammar item	Uses	Examples
Determiner* (see below p.3) (pl 'those') (followed by a noun)	1. used for referring to a person or thing that is not near the speaker or as near to the speaker as another.	1. Look at <u>that</u> man over there. How much are <u>those</u> apples at the back?
	2. used for referring to sb/sth that has already been mentioned or is already known about.	2. I was living with my parents at <u>that</u> time. <u>That</u> incident changed their lives. Have you forgotten about <u>that</u> money I lent you last week?
a.k.a. demonstrative adjective	1. used for referring to a person or thing that is not near the speaker or as near to the speaker as another.	1. Who's <u>that</u> ? <u>That's</u> Peter over there. Hello. Is <u>that</u> Mary? ('Mary' noun, not 'that Mary') gap between words <u>Those</u> look riper than these.
	2. used for referring to sb/sth that has already been mentioned or is already known about.	2. What can I do about <u>that</u> ? <u>That's</u> exactly what I think. We used to visit Peru. <u>Those</u> were good trips.
	3. (formal) used for referring to people or things of a particular type.	3. <u>Those</u> present were in favour of change. There are <u>those</u> who say she shouldn't have got the job.
	4. used as a relative pronoun to introduce a part of a sentence which refers to the person, thing or time you have been talking about.	4. Where's the letter <u>that</u> came yesterday? Who was it <u>that</u> won the U.S. Open? The watches <u>that</u> you gave us keep perfect time. (rel pron 'that' can't be plural as in 1, 2, 3)
pronoun (pl 'those') (not followed by a noun)	1, 2, 3 a.k.a. demonstrative pronoun	

Grammar item	Uses	Examples
conjunction If in () can be omitted	1. used after some verbs, adjectives & nouns to introduce a new part of the sentence (sentence can be inverted)	1. She said (<u>that</u>) the story was true. <i>It's possible (<u>that</u>) he has not received the letter.</i> (informal: 'that' often omitted after reporting verbs; less often after nouns) <i>The fact (<u>that</u>) she's older than me is irrelevant.</i>
	2. <u>so</u> ... <u>that</u> used to express a result	2. She was <u>so</u> tired (<u>that</u>) she couldn't think straight.
	3. literary	3. Oh <u>that</u> I could see them again! OR Would <u>that</u> I could see them again!
adverb informal 'that' formal 'so' in 2 & 3	1. used when saying how much or showing how long, big etc sth is with your hands	1. I can't walk <u>that</u> far. <i>It's about <u>that</u> long.</i>
	2. not as much as has been said	2. It isn't all <u>that</u> cold. (It isn't so cold) <i>There aren't <u>that</u> many people here.</i> (so many)
	3. used to emphasise how much	3. I was <u>that</u> scared I didn't know what to do. (so scared)

11.4 Participant Handout 2

Participant Handout 2 –Activity A

*Identify the part of speech of the word that in each sentence and justify your choice. Check with someone near you, before reporting back to the whole group.
(5 minutes)*

1. A building that is as tall as the Burj Khalifa must have deep foundations.
2. I will eat that fish later.
3. Is your dog that big?
4. That aunt of mine told me that my cousin was sure that her schoolmate had said that it wasn't that bad that she had dropped the cat that had a limp.

11.5 Participant Handout 2: Facilitator's Copy

Participant Handout 2: Facilitator's Copy –Activity A

Identify the part of speech of the word that in each sentence and justify your choice. Check with someone near you, before reporting back to the whole group. (5 minutes)

1. A building that is as tall as the Burj Khalifa must have deep foundations.

Answer: relative pronoun – refer to list

2. I will eat that fish later.

Answer: determiner – refer to list

3. Is your dog that big?

Answer: adverb –refer to list

4. That aunt of mine told me that my cousin was sure that her schoolmate had said that it wasn't that bad that she had dropped the cat that had a limp.

Answer: determiner, conjunction, conjunction, conjunction, adverb, conjunction, relative pronoun

Facilitator: Are there any questions?

Facilitator: Let's think back to the sentences we've just examined and see if the word that can be substituted with any other word. This will help us to understand what we're dealing with. **Discuss in pairs (5 minutes)**

Elicit from participants the fact that the word that, when used as a conjunction, cannot be replaced by another word, but can sometimes be omitted.

Facilitator: As teachers, can you think of some other examples that you could use in teaching the different uses of the word that? **Group activity (10 minutes)**

Draw this part to a conclusion by asking if anyone would like to share examples.

NB: Participant handout 3 is on the back of handout 2

11.6 Participant Handout 3

Participant Handout 3–Activity B

Below is another set of sentences, some with errors, some without.

- **Identify which sentences are correct and which ones are not.**
- **Where a sentence is correct, can another word be substituted for *that*?**
- **How would you explain these errors to a student or to a class?**

(10 mins. pair work)

1. All what I can see is a shop.
2. They insisted that it was possible to learn grammar successfully.
3. If you are drunk, you can't drive, that is very dangerous.
4. Some people prefer shopping in supermarket that you can see goods on shelf.
5. He is the boy that took my lunch.

11.7 Participant Handout 3: Facilitator's Copy

Participant Handout 3: Facilitators Copy –Activity B

Below is another set of sentences, some with errors, some without.

- Identify which sentences are correct and which ones are not.
- Where a sentence is correct, can another word be substituted for that?
- How would you explain these errors to a student or to a class?

(10 mins. pair work)

1. All what I can see is a shop. **X** that = relative pronoun referring to "all"; it can also be omitted. (See pronoun 4, third example)
2. They insisted that it was possible to learn grammar successfully. **✓**
conjunction – how do you know it's a conjunction? (See conjunction 1, example 1)
3. If you are drunk, you can't drive, that is very dangerous. **X** use because it instead of that; if you want to use that, a new sentence must be made – then that would be pronoun 2
4. Some people prefer shopping in supermarket that you can see goods on shelf. **X** where = "in which".
5. He is the boy that took my lunch. **✓** can also use who (relative pronoun)

Feedback to whole group

Any questions, comments etc?

11.8 Participant Handout 4

Participant Handout 4 - Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. _____

Name of PD session **The word that and its grammatical uses**

Date of session

Name of presenter

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

- very useful
moderately useful
not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

- very useful
moderately useful
not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes No Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

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

Appendix 12 PD Session 1: Participant Evaluation Forms

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 1

Name of PD session **The word that and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

- very useful
moderately useful
not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

- very useful
moderately useful
not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item in the classroom?

Yes No Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development session?

Would have liked a few more practice tasks, especially like Handout 2, Exercise 4. Otherwise good.

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 3

Name of PD session **The word that and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

(left blank – no comment)

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 6

Name of PD session **The word *that* and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

***Useful, practical session, directly related to our teaching needs – thanks
Giovanna.***

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 7

Name of PD session **The word that and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

None really – we need more of this kind of PD.

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 8

Name of PD session **The word *that* and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

The use of students' actual sentences was good.

Length of session was fine.

Information was relevant and well presented.

Maybe a little more time could be given for people to work together.

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 10

Name of PD session **The word *that* and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

None, but more grammar PD in the future, please.

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 12

Name of PD session **The word *that* and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

***Give participants notes and questions prior to session – then participants
bring explanations / answers to sessions for discussion.***

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 16

Name of PD session **The word that and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

Absolutely

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

***Couldn't improve on it. Very clear. Gave us adequate input and examples
to evaluate our knowledge gained in session. More of the same, please!!***

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 17

Name of PD session **The word *that* and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

***Perhaps some more examples of activities we could use to teach the
students initially.***

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 18

Name of PD session **The word that and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

***I don't know that I have any suggestions... Perhaps if we had been
encouraged to bring examples of students' writing / questions...***

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 20

Name of PD session **The word *that* and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No

Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

Very useful session. It would be good to have more examples, but our time is limited. But overall it was very good. Thanks Giovanna.

Evaluation of Professional Development

Respondent No. 25

Name of PD session **The word that and its grammatical uses**

Date of session **13/09/2012**

Name of presenter **Giovanna MacFarlane**

1) How useful was this session to you for your own knowledge?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

2) How useful was this session to you for teaching purposes?

very useful

moderately useful

not useful

3) Do you now feel more confident in your ability to tackle this grammar item
in the classroom?

Yes

No


Not sure

4) What suggestions can you make to improve this professional development
session?

***The only aspect we didn't discuss was stress, which also distinguishes the
different word classes.***

Appendix 13 Research Authorisation Documents

13.1 HREC Minimal Risk Ethics Application Approval

<p>Social Science Ethics Officer Private Bag 01 Hobart Tasmania 7001 Australia Tel: (03) 6226 2763 Fax: (03) 6226 7148 Katherine.Shaw@utas.edu.au</p>	
<hr/> <p>HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK</p>	

21 December 2011

Dr Thao Le
School of Education
Locked Bag 1307
Launceston Tasmania

Student Researcher: Giovanna MacFarlane

Dear Dr Le

Re: MINIMAL RISK ETHICS APPLICATION APPROVAL
Ethics Ref: **H0012170 - Preparedness of English language teachers to teach English grammar**

We are pleased to advise that acting on a mandate from the Tasmania Social Sciences HREC, the Chair of the committee considered and approved the above project on 6 November 2011.

Please note that this approval is for four years and is conditional upon receipt of an annual Progress Report. Ethics approval for this project will lapse if a Progress Report is not submitted.

The following conditions apply to this approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval.

1. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval, to ensure the project is conducted as approved by the Ethics Committee, and to notify the Committee if any investigators are added to, or cease involvement with, the project.
2. Complaints: If any complaints are received or ethical issues arise during the course of the project, investigators should advise the Executive Officer of the Ethics Committee on 03 6226 7479 or human.ethics@utas.edu.au.
3. Incidents or adverse effects: Investigators should notify the Ethics Committee immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

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4. Amendments to Project: Modifications to the project must not proceed until approval is obtained from the Ethics Committee. Please submit an Amendment Form (available on our website) to notify the Ethics Committee of the proposed modifications.
5. Annual Report: Continued approval for this project is dependent on the submission of a Progress Report by the anniversary date of your approval. You will be sent a courtesy reminder closer to this date. **Failure to submit a Progress Report will mean that ethics approval for this project will lapse.**
6. Final Report: A Final Report and a copy of any published material arising from the project, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of the project.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Shaw
Acting Executive Officer

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13.2 Participant Information Sheet

Locked Bag 1307 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 6324 3696; Fax: (03) 6324 3048
Email: T.Leo@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/educ



Faculty of Education – University of Tasmania

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Title: Preparedness of English language teachers to teach English grammar

You are invited to participate in a research study which examines the preparedness of teachers of English to teach English grammar. This study is being undertaken by the chief investigator, Dr Thao Le and Giovanna MacFarlane, who is an Ed.D. student at the University of Tasmania. The data will be collected by Giovanna MacFarlane for her doctoral dissertation under Dr Thao Le's supervision.

The purpose of this study is (i) to investigate which grammar aspects English language teachers have difficulty understanding and therefore teaching and (ii) to write a professional development program to assist teachers for the task of teaching grammar confidently and effectively.

As a teacher of English language, you are invited to participate in this study. Your involvement will be beneficial to you and to other teachers of English in the sense that the insights gained from this research can be useful to universities to enhance the quality of their teacher training with respect to the preparation of prospective teachers to understand and to teach grammar.

There is **no** foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort affecting your participation in this project. Please note that participation in this study is voluntary and any research data gathered will be kept confidential. The identity of participants will also be kept confidential. Further, if you choose to participate, you are entitled to withdraw from the study at any time, and any data or part of the data that you may have contributed will also be withdrawn. All data used in this study will be kept in a locked and secure filing cabinet and in password protected computers in the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, and will be destroyed five [5] years after completion of the study.

Your participation in this study will involve the following:

Phase 1 - Inventory-keeping:

You will be asked to keep an inventory of grammar points covered in a five-week teaching period along with an indication of how easy or difficult it was to teach any particular point. If students ask questions related to these grammar points, you should also record in the inventory the question and your responses.

Phase 2 – Written Survey:

You will be asked to complete a written survey in two sections. The first section will be made up of questions asking for your opinion on various aspects of grammar teaching. The second section will constitute a brief grammar review based on grammar items identified in inventories.

Phase 3 - Interview:

Some participants will be asked to take part in face-to-face interviews. Participants invited to take part in interviews will be contacted by email to arrange an appropriate time and date and will need to allow 30 minutes for the interview. Participants will be given the opportunity to review and correct interview transcripts before analysis takes place.

A copy of the paper reporting the results of the work will be made available to you and to those participants who indicate an interest in the final outcomes.

Any questions that you wish to ask will need to be answered to your satisfaction before you participate in this project.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either

Dr Thao Le Thao.Le@utas.edu.au or phone (03) 6324 3696

or Giovanna MacFarlane phone 0407 876 913.

Either would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you.

The Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network has approved this study (Reference number: H0012170). If you have any concerns about the manner in which the project is conducted, you may contact the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) on (03) 6226 7479 or at human.ethics@utas.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Thao Le

Giovanna MacFarlane

13.3 Participant Consent Form

Locked Bag 1307 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 6324 3696; Fax: (03) 6324 3048
Email: T.Leo@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/educ



Faculty of Education – University of Tasmania

CONSENT FORM: Participants

Title of Project: Preparedness of English language teachers to teach English grammar

1. I have read and understood the Information Sheet for this project.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves sharing my experiences and challenges in teaching grammar by participating in the following activities:
 - keeping an inventory of grammar points taught including level of difficulty arising therefrom
 - filling out a survey including a grammar review
 - taking part in a face-to-face interview, if invited to do so
4. I understand that there are no foreseeable risks in my participation in this study.
5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for at least five years, and will be destroyed when no longer required.
6. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
7. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.
8. I understand that the researchers will keep my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researchers will be used only for the purposes of the research.
9. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and, if I so wish, may request that all the data or any part of the data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research.

Name of Participant:

Address:

Email and phone no.:

Signature:

Date:

Statement by Investigator

I have explained the project & the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Name of investigator _____

Signature of investigator _____ Date _____