

# Inductive and deductive approaches to teaching EFL grammar: Teachers' attitudes

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University of Zagreb

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Master's thesis

*Inductive and deductive approaches to teaching EFL grammar:  
Teachers' attitudes*

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Sveučilište u Zagrebu

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Odsjek za anglistiku

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## Diplomski rad

*Induktivni i deduktivni pristupi podučavanju gramatike engleskog kao stranog jezika: Stavovi nastavnika/ca*

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## ABSTRACT

Teaching choices are significantly influenced by teachers' attitudes and teaching conditions. This study explored teachers' attitudes towards teaching grammar, focusing on the difference between deductive and inductive approaches to teaching in a foreign language classroom at the high school level. Furthermore, the study aimed to compare (a) teachers' attitudes towards specific approaches and (b) their actual classroom practices, in order to see if there was a mismatch between the two. Finally, the study analyzed which teaching conditions act as additional factors influencing teaching choices. Teaching conditions included learners' interests, learners' language level, available materials and aids, time necessary for preparation and time necessary for realization, as well as anything that teachers had to add. The study was conducted on 65 participants, using an online questionnaire. The participants were high school EFL teachers from Croatia. They were presented with seven teaching scenarios, which they had to rate according to (a) how good they considered the approach and (b) how often they used it in their classroom. Additionally, the participants were asked to indicate how much specific teaching conditions influenced their teaching choices. The assumption was that teachers would find the inductive approaches more appropriate and effective, but would report using deductive approaches more often, due to specific unfavorable teaching conditions. Results showed that most teachers preferred inductive approaches. For most of the hypothetical scenarios presented in the questionnaire, the preferences did match the reported teaching practices. However, the discrepancy occurred in scenarios which were closer to the inductive end of the spectrum. The teachers who preferred the inductive approach in theory, mostly opted for the deductive approach in practice, due to teaching conditions which acted as interfering factors.

Key words: deductive approach, grammar, inductive approach, teachers' attitudes, teaching conditions

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## Inductive and deductive approaches to teaching EFL grammar: Teachers' attitudes

### 1. Introduction

Teaching grammar never fails to pose new challenges to teachers. It is often debated among all participants in the process of acquiring a foreign language. Teachers, learners, researchers, and all other language enthusiasts have always had differing attitudes towards teaching grammar. Throughout EFL teaching history, various theories of teaching grammar have come and gone and various methods have been used to raise future language users. A big part in this process is played by teachers and their attitudes towards different teaching approaches. The attitudes teachers have towards this topic could be a result of interplay between many factors, such as teaching experience, teaching conditions, or learner profile. Additionally, teaching conditions are potentially an interfering factor, making teachers use an approach they might not prefer in theory.

The topic of this research study is an analysis of teachers' attitudes towards different approaches to teaching grammar, with a focus on the difference between the deductive and the inductive approach to teaching. The study aimed to compare (a) teachers' attitudes towards specific approaches and (b) their actual classroom practices, in order to see if there was a mismatch between the two. Finally, the study analyzed which teaching conditions act as additional factors influencing teaching choices.

A lot is already known about the advantages and disadvantages of deductive and inductive approaches to teaching. There is extensive research on the effectiveness of these two contrasting approaches. However, what seems to be missing from current knowledge is information about teachers' attitudes towards different approaches to teaching grammar. Additionally, what has not been addressed is the relationship between what teachers consider a good approach, and what they actually use in the classroom. This research study will contribute to a better understanding of teachers' attitudes, as well as the conditions that influence whether or not they act on their beliefs when it comes to using certain approaches in their classrooms.

This topic is relevant to student teachers who are entering foreign language classrooms for the first time, with extensive formal knowledge and training, but very little practical experience.

Research on attitudes regarding grammar instruction held by more experienced teachers has the potential to serve young teachers in navigating their transition from training to teaching. The topic is also relevant to teachers who are continually working within more than one context, and therefore within several different teaching conditions.

## **2. Teaching grammar**

### **2.1. Theoretical background**

On every level of education, majority of learners face challenges when dealing with studying and acquiring grammar. These difficulties do not always stem from the sheer complexity of the matter. It is often due to the teaching approach itself, especially when explicit grammar presentation in foreign language classrooms is done in a dull and non-engaging way.

According to Lambert and Tucker (1972), when immersed in the target language environment, learners acquire grammar more quickly. Therefore, students who have access to intensive meaningful input on a daily basis are usually overall more successful when it comes to appropriate grammar usage. This leads to the question of teaching grammar in schools. Classroom teaching, in most cases, does not provide students with intensive input. What we see most in classroom teaching is the very conventional, deductive approach. This approach is characterized by the presentation of rules followed by practice, on examples devoid of authentic context. Although this practice has its advantages, it should ideally be supplemented with extensive comprehensible input. So how necessary and/or helpful is initial grammar presentation in itself? How should grammar rules be introduced in order to create a quality basis for acquisition and retention?

In order to begin discussing approaches to teaching grammar, it is necessary to establish what is considered *grammar* and, additionally, what it means to teach, learn, and *know* grammar. Generally speaking, Richards and Reppen (2014) say that grammar can be viewed both as knowledge and as an ability. When we talk about grammar as knowledge, the focus is on “rules for sentence formation and text compilation” (Richards & Reppen, 2014, p. 5); and grammar as an ability refers to “how grammar is used as a resource in the creation of spoken and written texts” (Richards & Reppen, 2014, p. 5). There are many definitions of grammar and this variety is what makes the operationalization of teaching that more difficult. The



definition of teaching grammar provided by Ellis (2009) accounts for this variety, including the application of “any instructional technique that draws learners’ attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it” (Ellis, 2009, p. 84). The attitudes about *instructional techniques* mentioned here have been continually changing throughout TEFL history.

The effectiveness of different approaches to teaching grammar has always been a controversial topic among researchers dealing with instructed SLA, especially in Europe, where learning English is common for the majority of its citizens. According to the Education First (2019) Proficiency Index, Europe has the highest proficiency in English across the world. This is, of course, due to various factors, some of which include mobility programs and overall recreational use of the language (through online access to social media, games, news, music, films, and more). Besides these, according to Coumel and Schurz (2020) the nature of instruction is also expected to play a significant role in L2 English attainment. In the last few decades, theory and research started highlighting student-centered and communicative approaches and methods. Coumel and Schurz (2020) point out that during the 1960s and 1970s, the dissatisfaction with structured, grammar-centered methods and the need to facilitate communication within European countries gave rise to the development of the communicative approach. With time, the core principles of communicative language teaching (communication, authenticity, context, learner-centeredness) were adopted, resulting in the creation of the Common European Framework of Reference (2001). This framework led to the action-oriented approach, according to which language learners are “social agents, performing tasks strategically in a social context and using their own competences in order to achieve a desired result” (Coumel & Schurz, 2020, p. 2). Coumel and Schurz (2020) claim that today, the action-based approach in language teaching underlies second and foreign language curricula applied in EFL classrooms throughout Europe. As far as teaching grammar is concerned, this means promoting the inclusion of implicit teaching and the inductive methods within explicit teaching.

The key distinction addressed in this paper is the one between two types of explicit instruction: deductive and inductive. In the inductive approach, learners discover rules by themselves, which is “a principle rooted in consciousness-raising tasks” (Sharwood Smith, 1981, p. 160). Consciousness-raising is supposed to make learners aware of certain features through increasing their salience. Teachers who adopt a mainly inductive approach to

grammar instruction usually provide extensive input and encourage learners to discover and formulate rules on their own. For example, a teacher using this approach would provide examples of texts that include particular grammatical features and invite learners to examine the grammatical features of texts. One way in which this can be achieved is through activities in which students compare two texts on the same topic or situation, but which differ in their use of particular grammatical features, suggest Richards and Reppen (2014). An inductive approach is, therefore, driven by the concept of guided noticing, i.e., consciousness rising, as mentioned above. Richards and Reppen (2014) highlight some aspects of this practice which are beneficial for attainment. Consciousness of the features of the input can serve as a trigger which activates the first stage in the process of incorporating new linguistic features into one's language competence. The extent to which items are 'noticed' depends on the "frequency of encounter with items, the perceptual saliency of items, instructional strategies that can focus the learner's attention as well as the kind of task the learner is taking part in" (Richards & Reppen, 2014, p. 13). An example of a guided noticing activity is for the teacher to give out texts or short excerpts with contextualized target sentences, and to ask students to see how many examples they can find of a particular form or grammatical pattern. These are then examined more closely to observe the functions they perform at both the sentence and the text level (Richards & Reppen, 2014, p. 13). When using an inductive approach to grammar, a practical and simple thing to do is the so-called textual enhancement (e.g., underlining or color coding), which can be used to help students 'notice' forms or features they may not be aware of. However, this in itself is not usually sufficient and needs to be coupled with questions or tasks that "prompt the students to reflect on or analyze the function of the highlighted items in a text" (Richards & Reppen, 2014, p. 13).

On the other hand, in a deductive approach, a rule is first presented to the learner, which is then followed by practice and production. A deductive, rule-driven lesson usually starts off with the teacher presenting information about a particular grammatical feature – its terminology, rules of formation and the role it plays in cohesive texts. After the introduction, isolated or contextualized examples are examined and followed by similar, most often drill-like exercises. An example of a deductive teaching-oriented activity is for the teacher to present the name, form, and usage context of a verb tense. The students then practice the tense on drill-like exercise sentences, referring back to what was presented at the beginning of the lesson. The deductive approach is based on the assumption that through presentation and practice, grammar knowledge is proceduralised which in time leads to natural usage in

authentic language use. Thornbury (1999) suggests a number of advantages of the deductive approach: Firstly, it gets straight to the point, and can therefore be time-saving. Many rules – especially rules of form – can be more simply and quickly explained than elicited from examples. This will allow more time for practice and application. Furthermore, a deductive approach respects the intelligence and maturity of many, especially adult, students, by acknowledging the role of cognitive processes in language learning, claims Thornbury (1999). Additionally, it confirms many students' expectations about classroom learning, particularly for those learners who have an analytical learning style. Finally, Thornbury (1999) highlights that this approach allows the teacher to deal with language points as they come up, rather than having to anticipate and prepare for them in advance.

Much like implicit and explicit language teaching, inductive and deductive approaches to teaching are not mutually exclusive. In other words, language teachers are “likely to employ a combination of several approaches depending on their perception of the context and the perceived merits of each of the approaches” (Graus & Coppen, 2017, p. 576). As Ellis and Shintani (2014) explain, the learning of grammar is a complex, multifaceted, and lengthy process and no single pedagogical approach can claim priority in teaching. Teachers need to acknowledge that learners have different learning styles, especially when it comes to grammar. Some students prefer having clear rules and formulas presented to them before dealing with contextualized and/or authentic discourse. These learners prefer to see logical relationships, rules, and structure, explain Richards and Reppen (2014). On the other hand, some learners welcome ambiguity and do not require formulas in order to feel confident in testing out new grammar structures.

Both deductive and inductive approaches have advantages and are beneficial for grammar attainment if used in the right circumstances. Teachers' attitudes towards whether or not to opt for either of the approaches depend on many factors. Some factors may be associated with teachers' own learning experience, some with formal training, and others may depend on specific teaching conditions and/or learners' needs and abilities. Studying teachers' attitudes and beliefs is important because their prior knowledge and personal understandings of teaching practices have an influential role in developing their teaching style. No matter what the nature of teachers' attitudes is, they significantly influence the teaching process. Therefore, they have been the subject of a lot of research concerning teaching. As an introduction to discussing teachers' beliefs, Pourhosein and Banou (2017) define beliefs in general as phenomena that help people make sense of the world, impacting how new

information is understood, and whether it is accepted or rejected. Beliefs depict memories and adjust our understanding of occurrences. Beliefs are subjective and experience-based. Teachers' beliefs have "a greater effect than the teachers' knowledge on planning their lessons, on the types of decisions they adopt, and on classroom practice" (Pourhosein & Banou, 2017, p. 78). Woods (1996), as cited in Pourhosein and Banou (2017), defines teachers' beliefs as the information, views, values, anticipations, theories, and thoughts about teaching and learning that teachers make over time and bring with them to the classroom; and characterizes them as follows: They "include the existence of abstract entities, are evaluative, have a high degree of episodic/anecdotal materials, have different degrees of strengths, range from strong to weak, and have a high degree of overlap." (p. 79). Teachers' beliefs can be described in terms of their overall characteristics. Kagan (1992) describes teachers' beliefs as tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students, classrooms, and the academic material to be taught, which are generally stable and do not change and, obviously, reflect the nature of the instruction the teacher provides to students. Johnson (1994) points out that while beliefs are not easy to define or study, educational research on teachers' beliefs share three basic assumptions. These assumptions are: (1) Teachers' beliefs influence perception and judgment; (2) Teachers' beliefs play a role in how information on teaching is translated into classroom practices; (3) Based on these assumptions, it seems essential to take the teachers' attitudes into consideration when doing research on teaching English as a foreign language.

In order to begin studying teachers' beliefs and attitudes, one must first understand where they come from. The attitudes teachers hold accumulate from a variety of sources. Pourhosein and Banou (2017) sum up these sources as follows: (1) teachers' experience as language learners, (2) their experience from teaching, (3) teachers' personality, and (4) education-based or research-based principles. In some cases, it is thought that teachers' attitudes develop over the course of their career. In other, it is believed that future teachers carry beliefs and attitudes from their student days into formal training and then eventually into their own classrooms. In these cases, claims Lortie (1975), these beliefs may act as filters to what future teachers are exposed in their teacher education program. Richards, (1998) says that the belief systems of preservice teachers "often serve as a lens through which they view both the content of the teacher development program and their language teacher experiences." Additionally, Joram and Gabriele (1998) say that it is essential that teacher educators take prior beliefs into account because any new material taught will have to compete with, replace, or otherwise modify the folk theories that already guide both teachers and students. For example, and

Hollingsworth (1989) points out, in many countries around the world, the approach to teaching English has changed over the years from an emphasis on overt grammar instruction in the past to a more communicative approach in recent years. This means that many teachers are now being trained to use an approach which is different from how they have been taught English in school.

Furthermore, teachers' beliefs often include conceptualizations of ideal situations that differ from classroom reality. However, whether or not these situations can be carried out perfectly, they still steer the approaches in a certain way, with a vision of coming closer to the ideal. Pourhosein and Banou (2017) explain that teachers' attitudes guide teachers in adopting strategies for coping with their teaching challenges, as well as shaping language learners' learning environment, their motivation, and their language ability. This kind of conceptualization of teachers' beliefs and attitudes lays the foundations for further research into the subject.

## **2.2. Previous research**

Studies on teachers' attitudes are not rare in the field of EFL research. They cover a range of topics, such as attitudes about specific classroom practices, teaching philosophies, assessment and evaluation, etc. Research studies on the topic of approaches to teaching grammar are also very common. Most often they deal with the effectiveness of different methods, but there are also those dealing with teachers' or students' attitudes towards specific teaching practices.

As previously mentioned, it is essential that teacher educators take prior beliefs about teaching approaches into account, because any new material taught will have to compete with or replace common beliefs and attitudes that already guide teacher trainees. Prior beliefs often act as filters through which newly presented teaching theories will be viewed, and possibly distorted. This phenomenon was described in a study by Alamarza (1996). She presented how teacher trainees interpreted the theoretical models presented in the teacher education program according to their own previously acquired beliefs. The participants of this study responded differently to the method they were being trained to use – the minority accepted it, while the majority rejected it because it conflicted with their own beliefs about teaching. This demonstrated the intensity of the impact that attitudes about approaches to teaching can have,

even when preservice teachers are presented with a different approach from their instructor. Farrell (1999) revealed more about belief systems of preservice teachers. He emphasized the need for reflective assignments within teacher training programs which would serve to unlock preservice teachers' beliefs. Prior experiences which shape these, often tacit, beliefs can be made conscious and integrated into the curriculum, claimed Farrell (1999). What he asked for is that teacher education courses would provide space and means by which student teachers could "bring up and examine their pre-training knowledge in order to see how it relates to teacher education knowledge, so that learning is more meaningful" (Farrell, 1999, p. 1). The case study of four preservice teachers in Singapore focused on the mismatch between how the participants were taught grammar and how they are now trained to teach it, which was tested using the difference between inductive and deductive approaches to teaching grammar. An interesting thing happened, where five pre-service teachers (a representative sample of the class) all chose to use an inductive approach in their lesson, even though most of them had conflicting feelings about it. The study concluded that "the fact that these five representative pre-service teachers came to the same conclusion after trying an alternative approach to teaching grammar than what they experienced when they were learning English grammar is a testament that the reflective assignment was useful as a tool for them to question their prior beliefs and experiences as students of English" (Farrell, 1999, p. 12). This once again demonstrated the need for researching teachers' beliefs and attitudes and raising awareness of the impact they potentially have on classroom reality. Building on the topic of the duality between inductive and deductive approaches to teaching, it is useful to consider the results of a recent research study done across nations and teaching levels. Coumel and Schurz (2020) investigated teaching practices which are likely to vary according to factors such as educational level and supra-national differences. Their goal was to compare the type of instruction in lower vs. upper secondary schools and among as many as 615 teachers across Sweden, Austria, and France. The study's objective was to compare the type of ELT grammar instruction in order to see whether predominating teaching practices coincide with the general level of proficiency in a given country. The research was designed to assess teachers' use of planned vs. incidental form focus, implicit vs. explicit, and inductive vs. deductive instruction. Coumel and Schurz (2020) argued that both the educational level and a country's language policies and ideologies may be determining factors in the type of instruction applied in English language teaching. One of the primary ideas was that learners of English as a foreign language are exposed to various types of extensive input which influences language attainment. The question is how can that be used to its advantage in classroom-based

instruction and/or used to start rethinking common approaches to language instruction. The researchers concluded that despite the common ground in English language teaching throughout Europe, actual teaching practices are likely to vary widely between teachers and across school types, educational levels, and countries. The results of the study showed that despite the fact that “the Swedish, Austrian, and French national curricula all advise teachers of English to adopt the communicative action-oriented approach and to approximate the students’ level to B2 across years of secondary school, self-reported teaching approaches differ across countries and educational levels” (Coumel & Schurz, 2020, p. 15). Although the type of instruction certainly impacts attainment, establishing a direct link between reported ELT practices and the countries’ proficiency levels was concluded to be a premature conclusion. Rather, the different approaches applied in teaching were concluded to be “reflecting different ideologies and language policies in the respective geographical context” (Coumel & Schurz, 2020, p. 15). Another study worth mentioning is one by Graus and Coppen (2016). The objective of this study was to gain insight into the beliefs on teaching grammar of teacher trainees enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education programs at Dutch universities of applied sciences. They used a questionnaire based on four construct pairs from SLA literature: meaning- versus form-focused instruction, focus on form (FonF) versus focus on forms (FonFs), implicit versus explicit instruction, and inductive versus deductive instruction. Overall, respondents were found to prefer form-focused, explicit, inductive instruction, and FonFs. However, higher-year undergraduates’ and postgraduates’ results showed a trend towards a preference for more meaning-focused and implicit instruction, and FonF. When learner level was factored in, however, these forms of language instruction were “considered subordinate to more traditional form-focused approaches for teaching higher-level language learners” (Graus & Coppen, 2016, p. 571). In line with the developments of the past few decades in SLA research, during the course of their education, student teachers seem to have become increasingly aware of the possibilities and importance of a focus on meaning, and implicit and more reactive teaching techniques, abandoning the traditional paradigm of awarding grammar a central role in the foreign language classroom. An intriguing finding, however, was that when learner level had been taken into consideration, students showed a distinct preference for form-focused instruction and FonFs for teaching the higher-level pupils. Additionally, they found that “grammatical difficulty also affects beliefs: explicit and deductive approaches are clearly preferred for teaching complex grammatical structures” (Graus & Coppen, 2016, p. 594). This conclusion was in line with the assumption that the choice of approach depends on various factors,

including complexity of structures and age of learners. Another research was focused on the disparity between teachers' attitudes about approaches to teaching. Lacorte and Canabal (2005) examined teacher beliefs and practices concerning interaction in advanced Spanish courses with heritage and non-heritage students. The discussion addressed the instructors' beliefs and perceptions with regard to classroom environment, their role as teachers of advanced-level courses, the students enrolled in these courses, and the contrast between what teachers consider to be the desired interaction in an advanced language classroom, and what actually happens (Lacorte & Canabal, 2005). The general conclusion following this study concerned the relevance of the perceptions and attitudes that teachers bring with them into the advanced foreign language classroom. Lacorte and Canabal (2005) pointed out that awareness of these perceptions and attitudes became especially important when the space was shared by students from a wide variety of personal and academic backgrounds. This is due to the fact that they enter the classroom with quite different needs and attitudes towards learning the foreign language. The study concluded that a critical perspective on interaction in advanced Spanish classrooms "allows the instructor to acknowledge and reconsider certain commonplace 'ideal' visions of the Spanish-speaking languages, literatures, and cultures that may not apply to his or her actual teaching and learning environment" (Lacorte & Canabal, 2005, p. 97). A more recent research study, done by Azkarai, Oliver, and Gil-Berrio (2022) explored the difference between deductive and guided instruction from the perspective of the interactionist hypothesis. This hypothesis holds that "conversational interaction facilitates second language learning by providing learners opportunities to receive meaningful input, modify their output, and attend to language form" (Azkarai, Oliver & Gil-Berrio, 2022). This study followed small group interactions of foreign language learners as they completed communicative tasks following either deductive or PACE (Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency) instruction. They examined the nature of the student group interactions in each class, focusing on the negotiation of meaning strategies and language-related episodes. The study found that the deductive participants used more negotiation of meaning strategies, and produced more language-related episodes than PACE participants (Azkarai et al., 2022).

The research in this study aims to build on the work of others, by adding the attitudinal component and contrasting it to actual classroom teaching practices.



### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Aim**

The aim of this study was to explore teachers' attitudes towards deductive and inductive approaches to teaching English grammar in a high school EFL course. Additionally, the study aimed to compare the attitudes to their teaching practices in the classroom. The study aimed to compare (a) teachers' attitudes towards specific approaches and (b) their actual classroom practices, in order to see if there was a mismatch between the two. Finally, the study analyzed which teaching conditions act as additional factors influencing teaching choices. Research questions were the following:

- Which approach do teachers prefer and why?
- Do preferences match actual (self-reported) teaching practices?
- How much do practices depend on teachers' attitudes towards specific approaches, learners' interests, learners' language level, available materials and aids, time necessary for preparation, and time necessary for realization?

The assumption was that teachers would find the inductive approaches more appropriate and effective, but would report using deductive approaches more often. Specific factors (teachers' attitudes towards specific approaches, learners' interests, learners' language level, available materials and aids, time necessary for preparation, and time necessary for realization) were expected to influence teachers' choices and result in a mismatch between attitudes and actual practices.

#### **3.2. Sample**

The research sample consisted of 65 participants – high school teachers of English as a foreign language in Croatia. Participants were selected and recruited by the researcher, according to the availability principle, i.e., the research sample consisted of a convenient participant sample. High school teachers were selected as participants due to the assumed flexibility in choosing between deductive and inductive approaches. The most common practice is to use more of an inductive approach when working with young learners, and more of a deductive approach when working with adults. High school learners fall in the category

between the two, which prevents age from being the predominating factor affecting teachers' attitudes.

The majority of participants in the sample were from central Croatia, but other areas were also represented (Figure 1). Their working experience ranged from less than five years to more than twenty years of teaching (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Geographical representation of participants

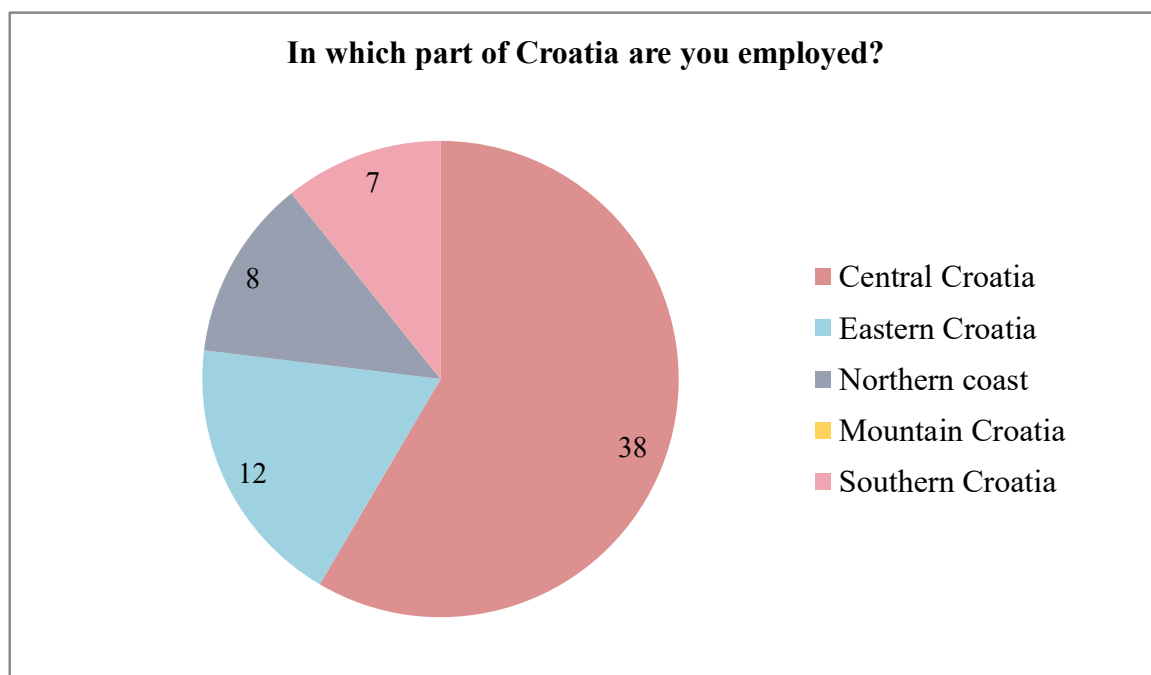
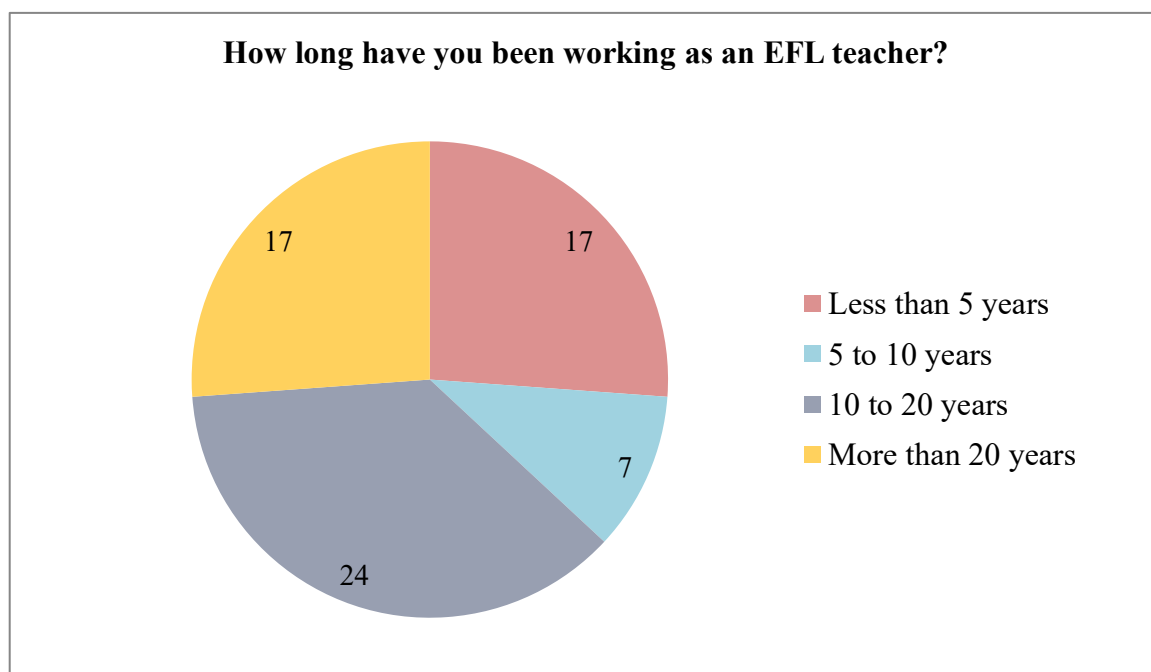


Figure 2: Years of experience among participants



### 3.3. Instruments and procedure

The data was collected during a period of three months in 2021 (school year 2020/2021) by means of a web-based questionnaire in the participants' native language, designed and conducted using Google Forms. The questionnaire was distributed to teachers in online groups on social media (Facebook and LinkedIn). Additionally, teachers from different regions in Croatia were contacted by email and asked to participate in the study. They were given a description of the study and the link to an online questionnaire. Since the research was done solely online, the participants were informed at the introduction of the questionnaire that by submitting the online form they were agreeing to the terms of using their data in the research.

Since it is impossible to investigate all kinds of practices within inductive and deductive approaches, as well as all the factors that influence the choice between the two in practice, only specific constructs were captured. In the operationalization of the target constructs, hypothetical situations were created in order to illustrate the possibilities of using different degrees of deductive and inductive approaches. The questionnaire was made up of twenty items, including different types of questions. Before participants responded to those items, they were asked to give consent and indicate (1) the geographical area where they teach, (2) number of years of experience in teaching, and (3) the institution where they received the qualifications for teaching English as a foreign language. The biographical information served to answer the question of whether or not certain attitudes and practices can be generalized according to teaching experience, professional qualifications, or geographical location. The main part of the questionnaire consisted of a five-point Likert scale which participants used to rate seven teaching scenarios according to (a) how good they consider the approach and (b) how often they use it in their classroom. This would answer the question dealing with attitudes or ideas about what might be considered 'good' instruction and compare it to the extent to which teachers act on their beliefs in practice. Additionally, participants were asked to rate other factors (learners' interests, learners' language level, available materials and aids, time necessary for preparation, and time necessary for realization) according to how much they believe those factors influence their decision making when it comes to choosing a teaching approach.

Potential obstacles in gathering the data were the following. Firstly, the issue could have been the percentage of contacted teachers willing to fill out the questionnaire. However, enough

data was collected for it to be considered a representative sample of the English teaching population in Croatian high schools. Another potential obstacle was the centralization of the research sample, with majority of teachers being in close proximity to the faculty in Zagreb. As a way to minimize the possibility of this happening, the questionnaire was offered to as many teachers as possible in as many areas as possible in Croatia. Any potential ethical issues were avoided by making sure the questionnaire was anonymous.

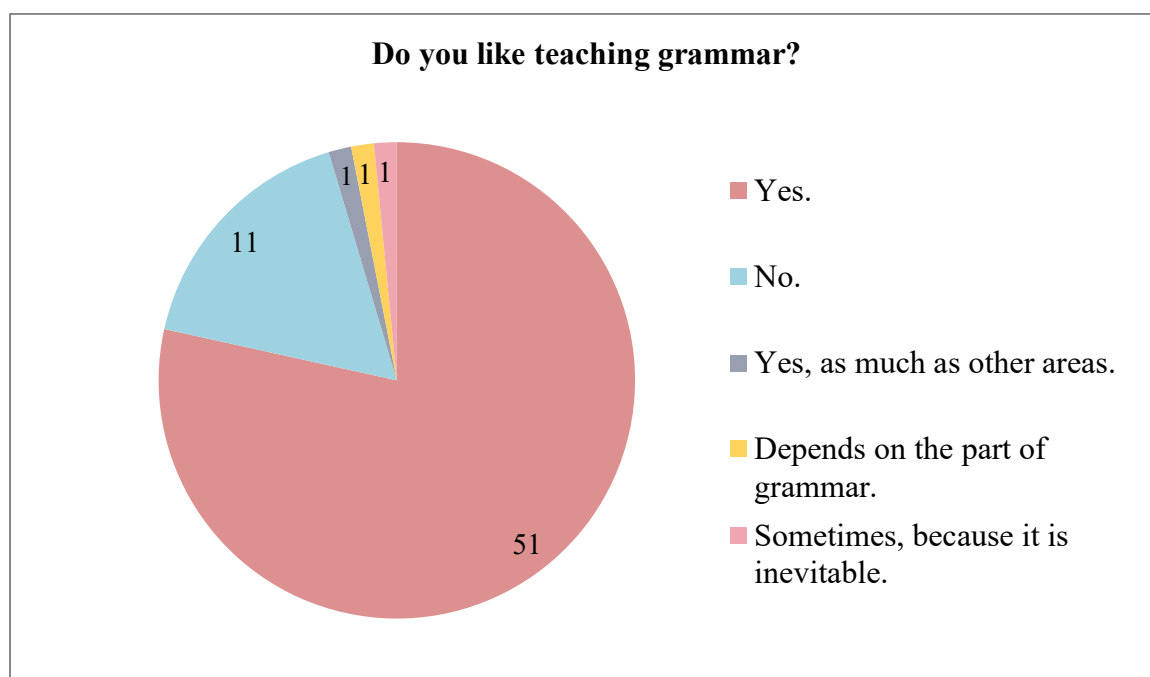
The data collected was analyzed primarily as a whole, i.e., what was observed were the percentages of the research sample which answered specific questions in a specific way. This part dealt with quantitative data and produced generalized quantitative results. The second part dealt with qualitative data, i.e., the answers to open ended questions about unique circumstances that influence the choices teachers make. Finally, a comparison between data was made in order to see if there were any patterns and if results could be generalized according to the geographical location of the school they teach in, years of experience in teaching, or the institution in which teachers acquired their teaching qualifications.

The original questions and answers were translated into English. The original questionnaire can be found in the Appendix.

#### **4. Results and discussion**

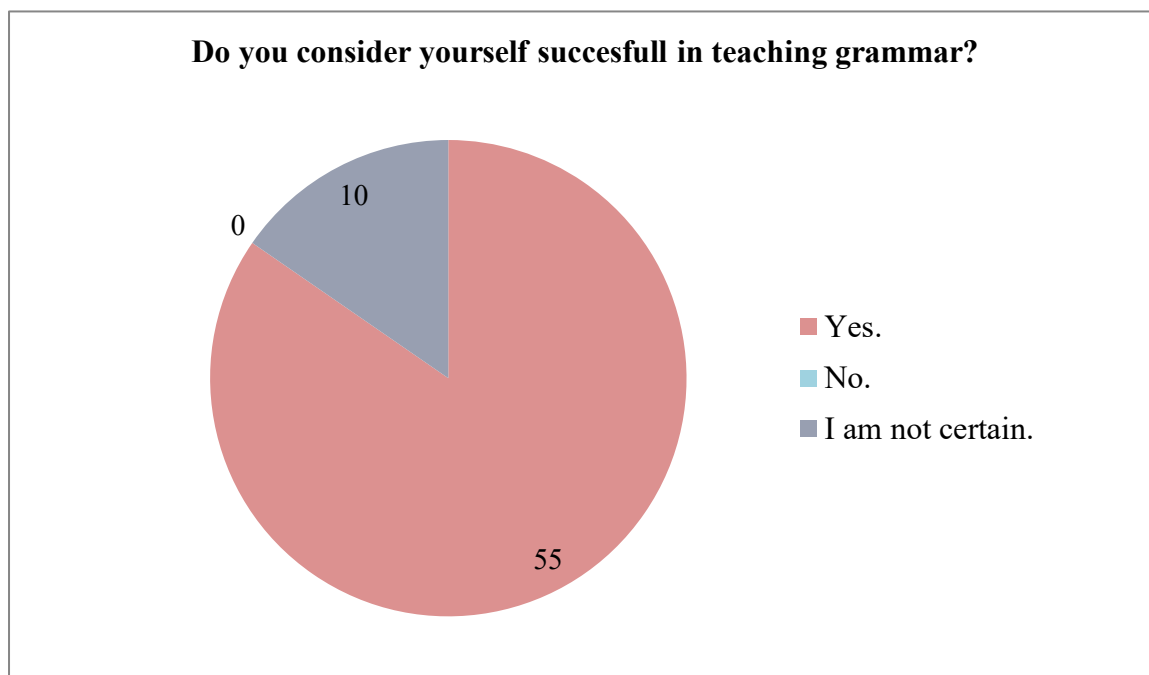
The first question asked was, “*Do you like teaching grammar?*” This question was meant to encourage teachers to reflect on their feelings about teaching and activate subjective thoughts and attitudes, which should have, ideally, motivated the participants to provide honest and more elaborate answers. The prediction was that reflecting on this question would make teachers defend their attitudes and beliefs and/or explain why the conditions they teach in are preventing them (if they are preventing them) from doing what they love in the way they believe is best. Figure 3 shows the results. Fifty-one participants (78%) answered that they love to teach grammar. A minority, eleven of them (17%), indicated that they do not, while the rest (5%) provided answers such as “Sometimes, because grammar is necessary” or “It depends on which part of grammar it is”.

Figure 3: Responses to whether participants like teaching grammar



The following question required more self-reflection, and in this case – critical self-assessment. The question was, “*Do you consider yourself successful in teaching grammar?*” This question was supposed to make teachers vocalize why they are being unsuccessful (if they consider themselves to be unsuccessful). The results (Figure 4) reveal an interesting (and hopeful) phenomenon - none of the 65 teachers considered themselves unsuccessful. Fifty-five participants (85%) believed they were successful, and ten of the participants chose the *I am not certain* option.

Figure 4: Responses to whether participants consider themselves successful in teaching grammar

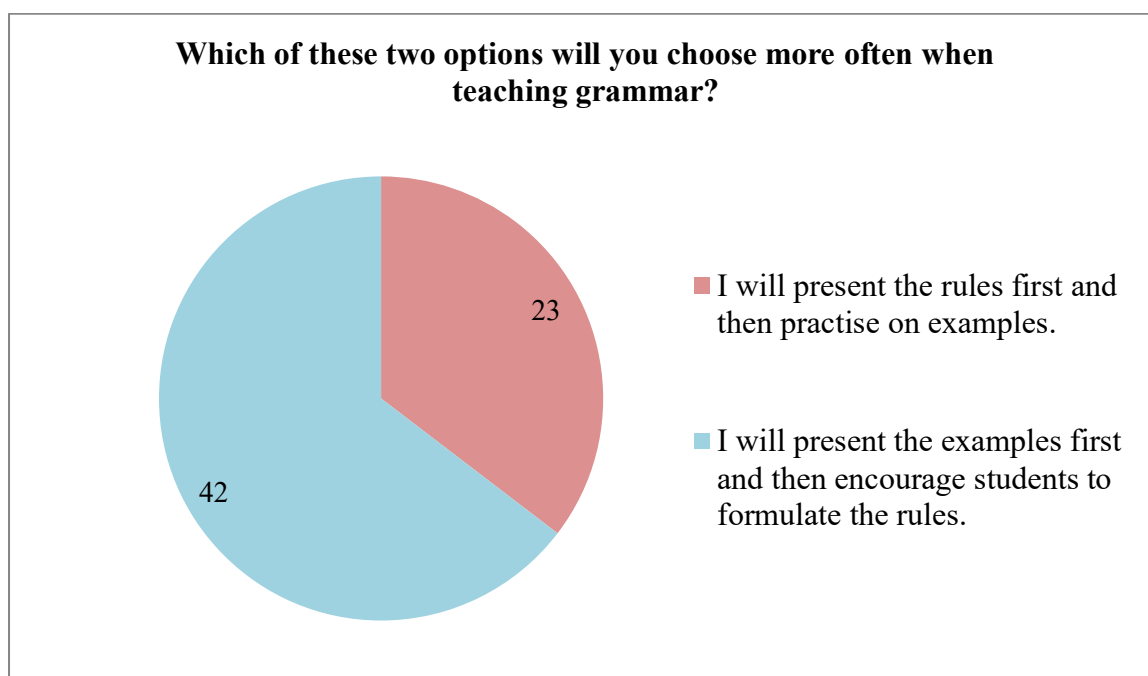


Next, the teachers were asked to briefly describe their approach to teaching grammar. This was an open-ended question and teachers were free to express their thoughts in their own words. Some answers reflect the teaching approaches dealt with in this study. Some of the answers the participants offered were as follows. One teacher described their approach with “Rules, explanation, example, use in context”. Another mentioned “Short explanation and after that a lot of exercises on practical examples”. One participant wrote “Rule + exercise + communication” and another wrote “Rules – examples – drill through tasks”. All of these answers show a very clear preference for the deductive approach. There was a total of 20 answers (31%) that fit this category. There were also a couple of vague answers like “The classic approach”, “The traditional approach”, or “Classic, frontal and rudimentary approach”, which most likely refer to a deductive type of teaching. On the other hand, as expected, there were answers that reflected an inductive approach to teaching – a total of 17 (27%) that fit this category. For example, one participant wrote: “An implicit approach – the learners are encouraged to figure out the rules from examples”. Another teacher explained that his/her students create rules on their own and then compare them to the rules in the textbook, ask questions about what remains unclear, and later practice on examples. A similar explanation was found in a different teacher’s answer. S/he said that as an introduction into grammar content, a reading or listening task was introduced. Students made their own conclusions, and the teacher guided them towards formulating rules of usage. Then they would use the text to

consolidate what had been learned. The concept of guided discovery is a key characteristic of the inductive approach and these teachers are actively using it in their classrooms. Most answers fall into one of these two categories and resemble the examples listed above. The rest either give a vague answer or describe an approach that combines teaching inductively and deductively, depending on the situation.

With the next question, the focus shifts explicitly to the main duality dealt with in this study: the choice between inductive and deductive approaches. In order to avoid confusion about technical terms, the question was posed as follows: *When you teach new grammatical concepts, will you more often choose to a) present the rules and examples first and then do practice exercises or b) first provide examples of usage (e.g., a text) and then encourage learners to discover the underlying rules themselves?* The majority of participants (42 participants, 65%) chose the second option (Figure 5), which confirms the results from the previous open-ended question. This does not fit the assumption that the majority of teachers in general tend to lean towards a deductive approach in practice. In the second part of the questionnaire, these findings will be broken down into more specified results which will therefore be more suitable for detailed analysis.

Figure 5: Number of participants opting for either inductive or deductive approach



What followed was a series of seven short hypothetical grammar teaching scenarios (A-G), which teachers had to rate on a scale from 1 to 5 according to (a) how “good” they considered

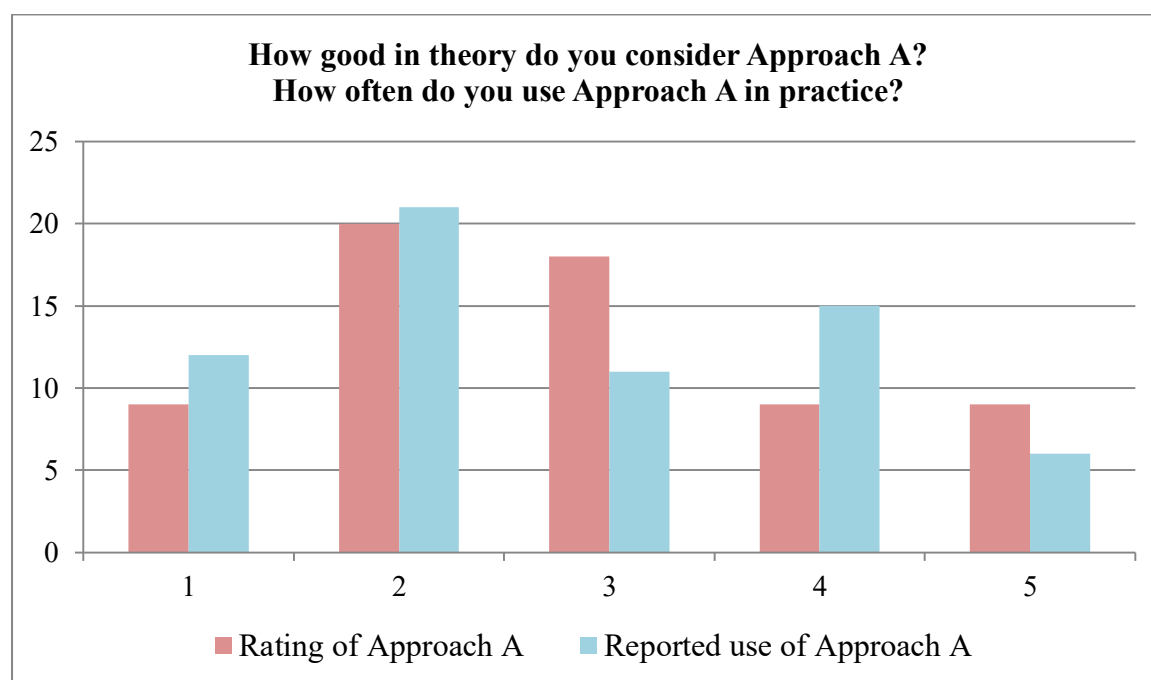
them (in theory), and (b) how often they themselves had a chance and/or chose to teach them in their classroom. The scenarios were constructed in a way that reflected different *intensities* of inductive and deductive approaches, with the first and the last being as opposite as possible. Listed below are the seven scenarios, with Figures 6 to 12 showing the results of this part of the questionnaire.

*Approach A: I will present the name, meaning, and form of the new grammar concept. Then I will provide a couple of isolated examples. After that, the students will do exercises similar to the examples I provided. Later, we will transition to exercises in form of text, which will contain target structures.*

The first scenario described a textbook example of a classic deductive grammar lesson. This is the way that most working teachers today have been taught foreign language grammar while they were in school, but it is now generally considered outdated.

The results for *Approach A* are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Comparison of rating of *Approach A* and reported use of *Approach A*



As expected, *Approach A* turned out to not be very popular in theory, and there was not a majority that indicated they often use it in practice. However, a slight mismatch can be seen in the number of teachers who rated the approach with a 4 (9 participants, 14%) and the number of teachers who report using it quite often (15 participants, 23%). This finding matches the



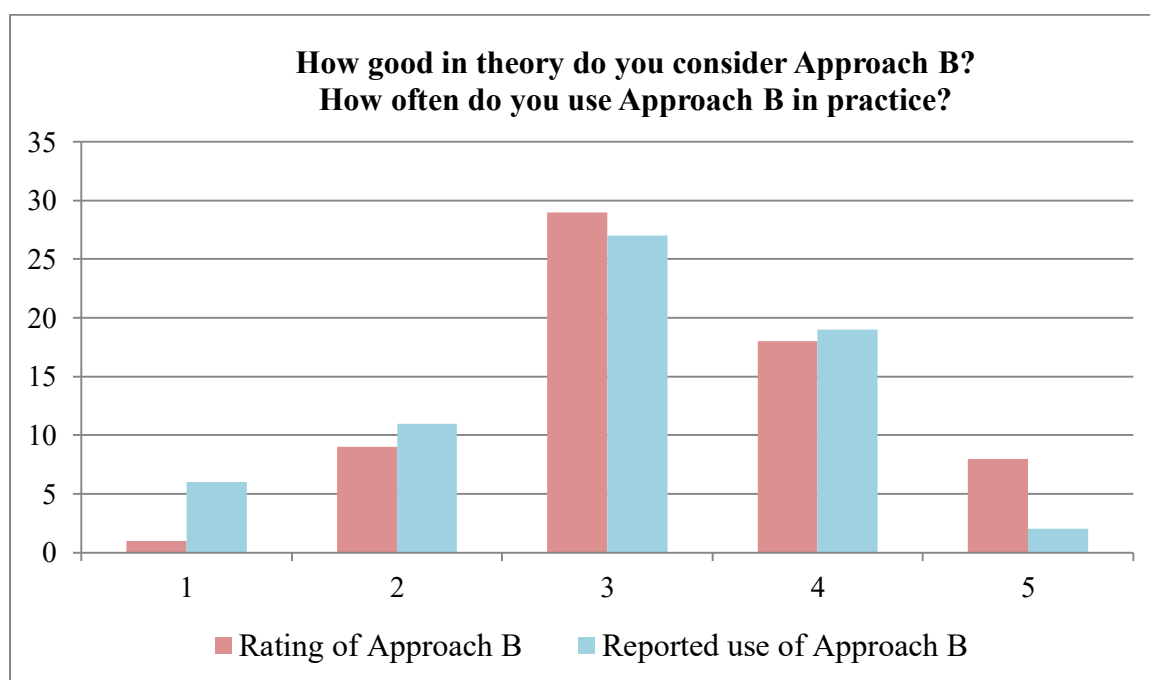
assumption that teachers' attitudes sometimes do not match their practice. This means that, even though teachers are aware that this might not be the ideal way of teaching, it is sometimes the best option at hand.

The next scenario leaned a little more towards an inductive type of teaching. It skipped introducing isolated sentences and instead utilizes contextualized examples in the form of a larger body of text.

*Approach B: I will present the name, meaning, and form of the new grammar concept. Then I will provide examples in context (in the form of a text containing target structures). After that, the students will do exercises similar to the example text I provided.*

The results for *Approach B* are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Comparison of rating of *Approach B* and reported use of *Approach B*



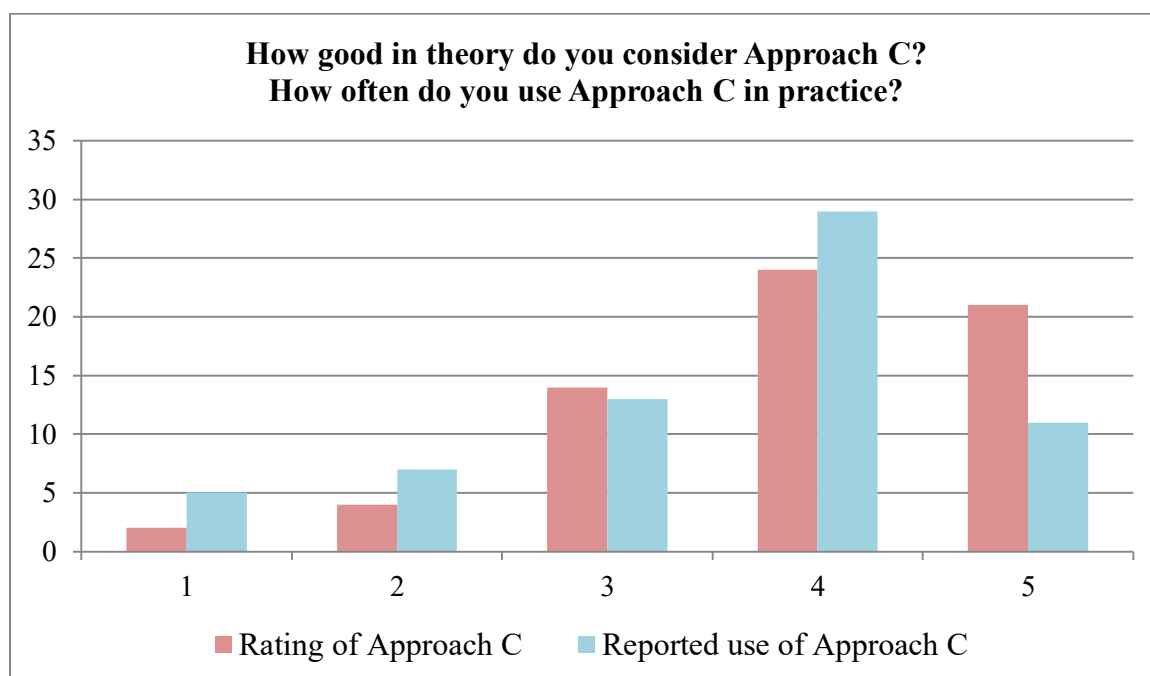
Evidently, *Approach B* was seen as an improvement compared to *Approach A*. Most teachers (29 participants, 45%) rated it as a 3 or 4 out of 5. The values were consistent in the usage graph as well. This type of approach is also often found in school textbooks, so it is not surprising that teachers mostly considered it effective in theory, as well as practical to use. However, it is worth mentioning that very few teachers found it the best possible option – only 8 out of 65 (12%) participants gave it the highest score.

With the third scenario, the narrative shifted from the deductive to the inductive approach to teaching, with the first example being the most tentative version of the approach.

*Approach C: I will present a couple of isolated sentences containing the target structure. I will encourage the students to figure out the meaning of sentences and to make conclusions about when and how the target structure is used. After that, students will do exercises in the form of isolated sentences that contain target structures. Later, we will transition to contextualized exercises.*

The results for *Approach C* are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Comparison of rating of *Approach C* and reported use of *Approach C*



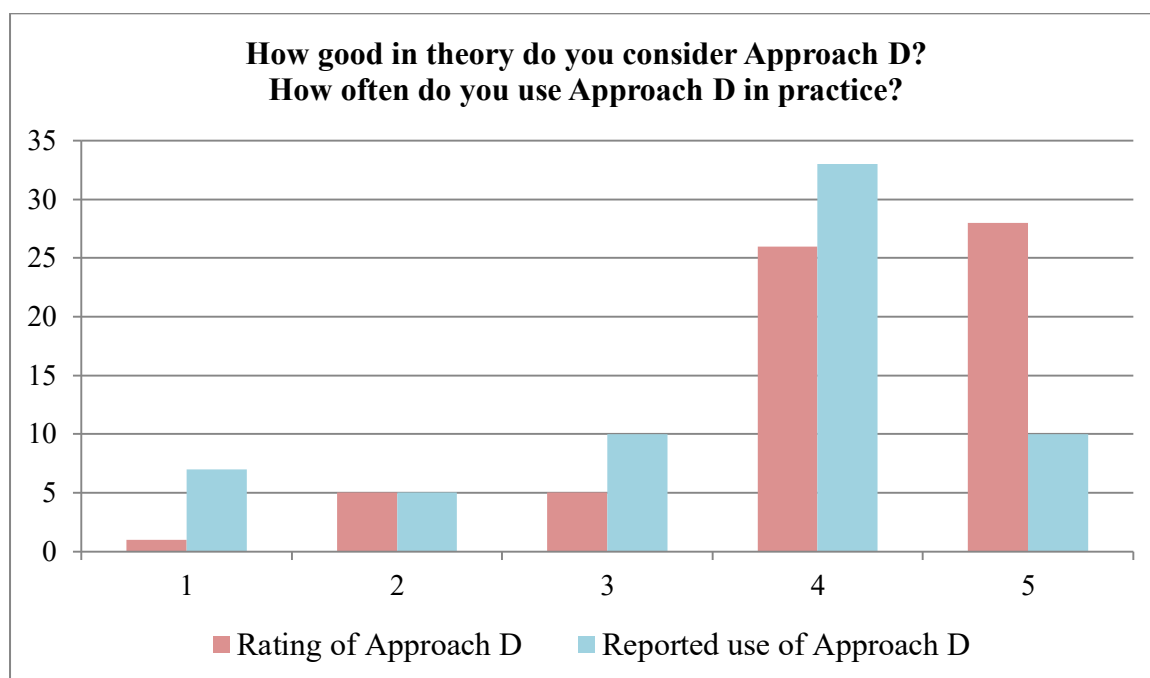
The rating of *Approach C* was in line with the assumption that teachers would consider the inductive approach to teaching grammar to be very good in theory. There is a significant increase in participants who rated the scenario as a 4 or 5 out of 5 (45 participants, 69%). What was surprising to a certain extent was the number of teachers indicating that they often (4 out of 5) use this approach in practice. It was expected that less teachers would opt for an approach that relies on students' active engagement in the initial part of the grammar lesson.

The following scenario went a little further and indicated using bodies of text instead of single isolated sentences as a starting point for presenting the target structure. This would, hypothetically, require even more active student engagement.

*Approach D: I will present a text containing the target structure. I will encourage the students to figure out the meaning of the text and to make conclusions about when and how the target structure is used. After that, the students will do exercises similar to the example text I provided.*

The results for *Approach D* are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Comparison of rating of *Approach D* and reported use of *Approach D*



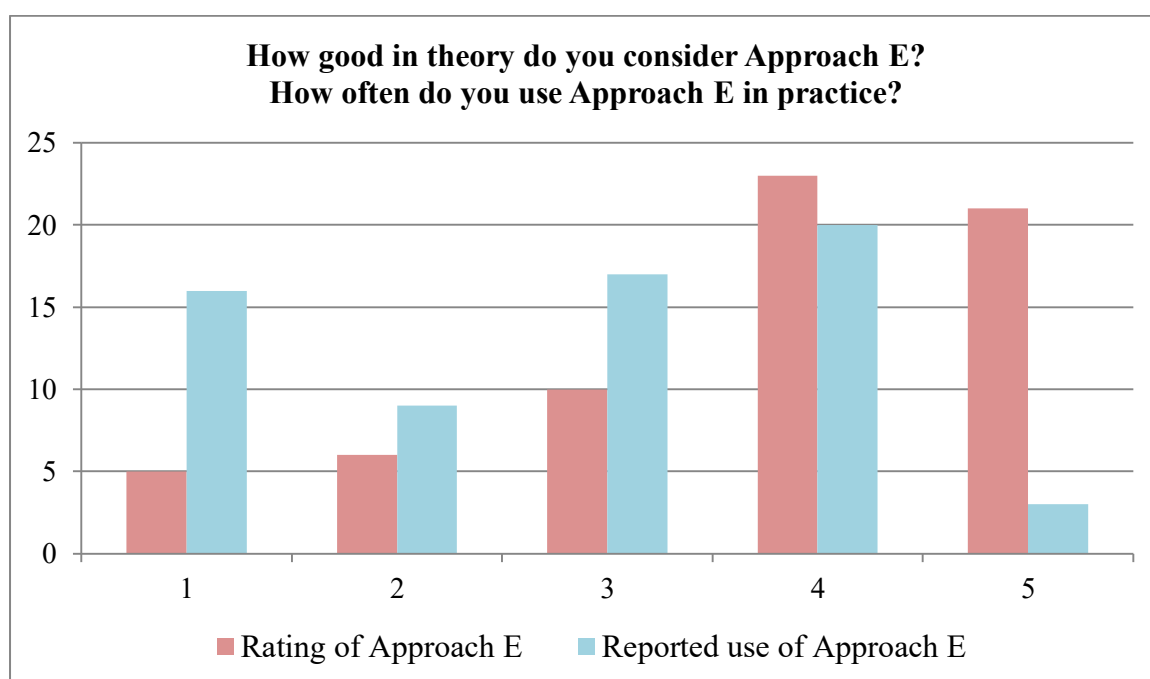
Contextualized input was evidently seen as a very desirable factor in teaching grammar. *Approach D* saw an even bigger increase in support among participants, as 54 teachers (83%) rated it as a 4 or 5 out of 5. However, this is where the anticipated mismatch came to light. Even though the majority of participants rated it as very good or excellent, a smaller number of participants (43 of them, 66%) reported using it often or very often, with only 10 of them (15%) indicating that they use it in the classroom very often.

The next scenario took a sharper turn from traditional grammar teaching approaches. It included the active usage of a target structure by students before it is formally introduced by the teacher. It described an inductive type of approach which, unlike the two presented before, utilized a lot more exposure to the target structure's form and meaning before attempting to draw conclusions about rules.

*Approach E: I will assign a task that requires spontaneous use of the target structure (e.g., group work on the topic of what the world will look like in a hundred years). While the students are doing the task, I will monitor the work to see whether students are already familiar with the way the target structure is used. If they are not, I will help them by offering the target structure. At the end of the lesson, I will emphasize the structure used in the task and present its name, meaning, and form.*

The results for *Approach E* are shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Comparison of rating of *Approach E* and reported use of *Approach E*



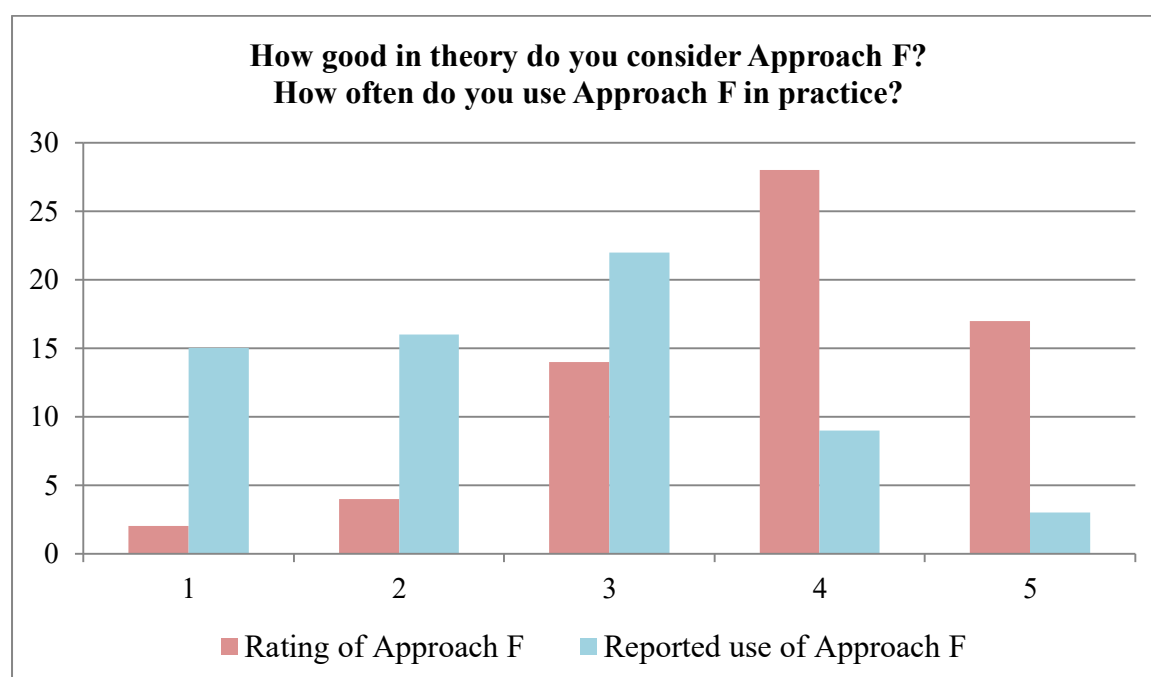
*Approach E* is the definition of spontaneous, yet guided and supported learning. Therefore, it is in theory a very effective way to go about introducing new grammar concepts. Forty-four participants (68%) rated it as a 4 or 5 out of 5. However, a shift is seen in the second graph, where teachers were almost evenly divided between using this kind of approach rarely and using it often. The reason for this mismatch might be the fact that this kind of lesson would require consciously taking a risk and trusting that students would take initiative in their learning. It would also require giving up control over the lesson, which is generally difficult when there is limited time and very specific goals that must be met. This potentially leads to sticking to tried and tested methods, even when an approach seems good in theory.

The next approach also included providing input before the target structure is formally presented.

*Approach F: A couple of lessons before explicit teaching of the target structure, I will expose the students to materials containing the target structure. During the lesson for which the teaching of the target structure is planned, I will present a text containing the target structure. I will encourage the students to figure out the meaning of the text and to make conclusions about when and how the target structure is used. After that, the students will do exercises similar to the example text I provided.*

The results for *Approach F* are shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Comparison of rating of *Approach F* and reported use of *Approach F*



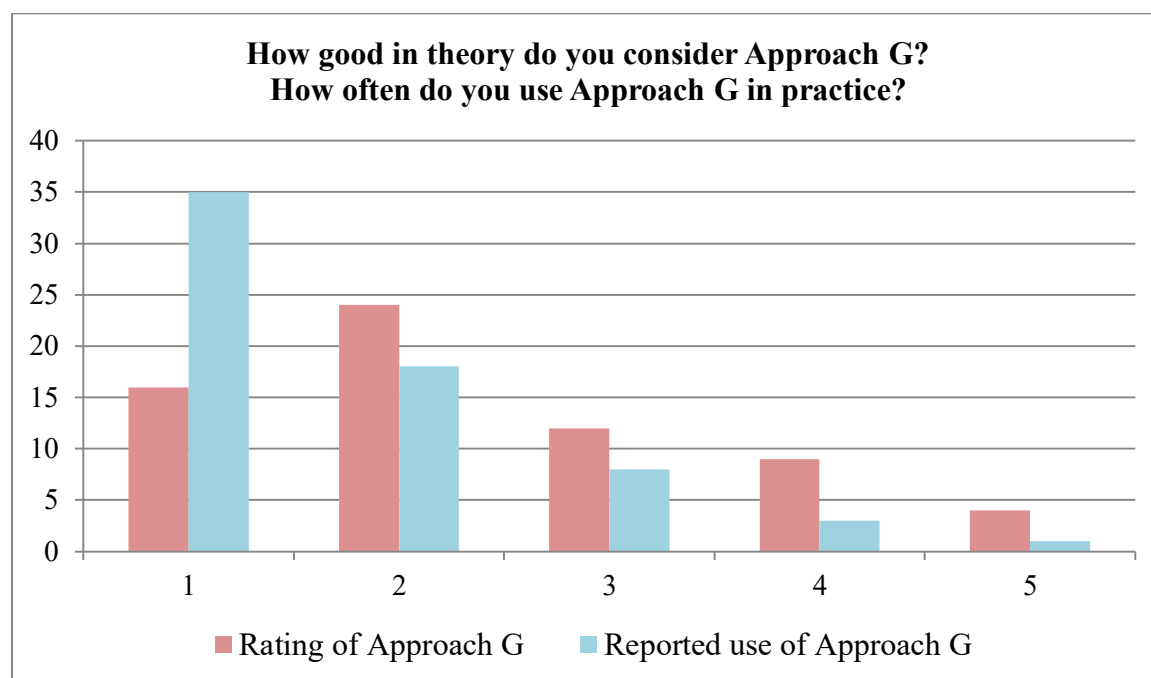
*Approach F* could be characterized as a tamer version of *Approach E*. However, there is still a risk that input may not be comprehensive enough and that students would not benefit from it without the teacher stopping and explaining the grammar concept on the spot. In this case, the two graphs show very different results. The majority of teachers recognized this approach as very good or excellent (45 participants, 69%), but only a small number (12 participants, 18%) reported using it often or very often.

The last approach falls on the extreme end of the approach spectrum. It skips grammar presentation completely and relies exclusively on the students' ability and motivation to formulate and internalize grammar rules on their own.

*Approach G: I will not explicitly teach any of the grammar structures. I will expose the students to various materials which contain the target structures. Because of the continuous exposure, the students will eventually internalize the target structures. The exercises will be in the form of contextualized sentences and texts with mixed grammar structure.*

The results for *Approach G* are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Comparison of rating of *Approach G* and reported use of *Approach G*



*Approach G* was evidently considered very risky and the scenario was intentionally created that way. It was assumed that teachers would find this kind of approach effective only in very specific conditions, including advanced learner profile, smaller class sizes, less specific criteria, and more time available for teaching. All of this is reflected in the results in both graphs, and, as expected, even more in the one dealing with use. The teachers were aware that this was probably not a good way to attempt teaching grammar in their context.

Since *Approach A* and *Approach G* were made to represent the ends of a spectrum – the former being the most conservative and traditional and the latter being controversially lenient – it was almost necessary to address this with a further question and get a closer look at the teachers' attitudes on the two. The question was simply *What do you consider to be the main advantages and disadvantages of the first (A) and the last (G) approach?* This question was included in order to bring about explicit awareness of core values of both deductive and inductive approaches to teaching. The question encouraged critical thinking by making

teachers reflect on both the strengths and the issues associated with each approach. The middle position often seems like the safest choice, but it is very useful to question and rethink approaches so that one is able to choose the most appropriate option for their specific group of students.

Many participants recognized the two scenarios as extremes. They mentioned “too much” and “too little” in the context of rules, engagement, motivation, and more. *Approach A* was seen as boring and old-fashioned by many, while *Approach G* made a lot of teachers skeptical about successful acquisition. A total of 19 participants described these approaches as being in some way extreme. However, they pointed out their qualities as well. A total of 24 participants (35%) described the advantages of *Approach A*. *Approach A* was thought to be a good basis for further learning and appropriate for students of all levels of linguistic aptitude. Also, in favor of *Approach A*, one of the participants pointed out that students' learning styles affect (as they should) the teacher's choice of the grammar presentation method: “... some students like to know how the language functions and why they use a certain grammatical concept when they do”. *Approach A* was also seen as the optimal choice for groups with lower proficiency. They pointed out that students' prior knowledge needed to be taken into consideration: “If students can barely understand English vocabulary, it is very hard to present target grammatical concepts in contextualized examples and expect students to induce how a certain structure is formed and used”. Similarly, participants also highlighted the importance of metalinguistic knowledge. One explained that “explicitly naming the grammar structure makes it easier for students to draw conclusions: *present* = now, *continuous* = ends in *ing*, etc.” On the other hand, a total 33 participants (51%) described the disadvantages of *Approach A*. In the context of using *Approach A*, one participant said that grammar acquisition needs to be “a tool for language production, and not only be learned for the sake of learning it”, which referred to a common practice of presenting a rule only to use it in a sentence that was made specifically to test the memorization of the rule. Another downside mentioned was a lack of opportunity to make connections with what was learned before, as the grammar concept is often presented in isolation.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is *Approach G* – an example of an implicit inductive approach. A total of 25 participants (38%) described the advantages of *Approach G*. One of the participants noticed that *Approach G* is “good because students do not resist learning grammar, because they are acquiring it implicitly”. Several participants noticed that *Approach G* mimics first language acquisition. They pointed out that this kind of learning “feels

natural”. However, a total of 40 participants (62%) described the disadvantages of *Approach G*. The downside is that there is much less time and input, as well as chance for output, than in L1 acquisition, and therefore, the teacher cannot be certain that acquisition is taking place. This argument was repeated throughout the answers. When talking about *Approach G*, many teachers mentioned motivation, focus, and aptitude in students. They said that these factors were necessary for this kind of approach to be effective, because “students with a natural aptitude for language often already know how to use certain grammar structures – the teacher only needs to make them aware of their knowledge and systemize the explicit rules of usage”. However, even in these cases students might lack the confidence to use the grammar structures freely, since they were not given a structured introduction. Several teachers pointed out the importance of the teacher in providing guidance and support in acquiring new structures, which is missing in *Approach G*. This is especially important if there are exceptions to rules. Additionally, *Approach G* carries the risk of students making false conclusions about rules of usage. Furthermore, as one teacher noticed: “The downside of *Approach G* is the fact that the students who do not have a natural aptitude for languages will feel even more pressured and it will have a demotivating effect. *Approach G* is more appropriate for elective classes.” Participants said that this approach “makes it necessary for teachers to check acquisition and intervene in time to avoid internalizing incorrect rules.” Furthermore, several teachers mentioned one of the teaching conditions that hinders quality acquisition the most – and that is the lack of time. Public high schools in Croatia get two to three class periods per week for English, and this is, according to both teachers and researchers, not nearly enough for being able to put in practice the teaching practices that are in theory optimal for language acquisition. Participants said that “in the conditions where we only get two to three periods per week, little can be done using spontaneous exposure to language, because you simply don’t have time – what we would need is continuous exposure on a daily basis in order to succeed in the acquisition of material.” Another teaching condition that is rarely mentioned, but very often drastically affects the success of a lesson, is discipline. One of the participants said this: “One thing is not taken into consideration here – and that is discipline. Unfortunately, modern methods make it easier for students to lose focus and that is where discipline becomes an issue, this is reality. Students cannot focus, let alone make their own conclusions.” This is the reality of teaching, especially in high schools, and it needs to be taken into consideration. Two teachers noticed that *Approach G* is only good for “ideal” students and those who are very motivated to learn; which one summed up by simply saying



that “*Approach G* is utopia”. This points to inherent flaws of the mainstream schooling system, where the average student is far from motivated.

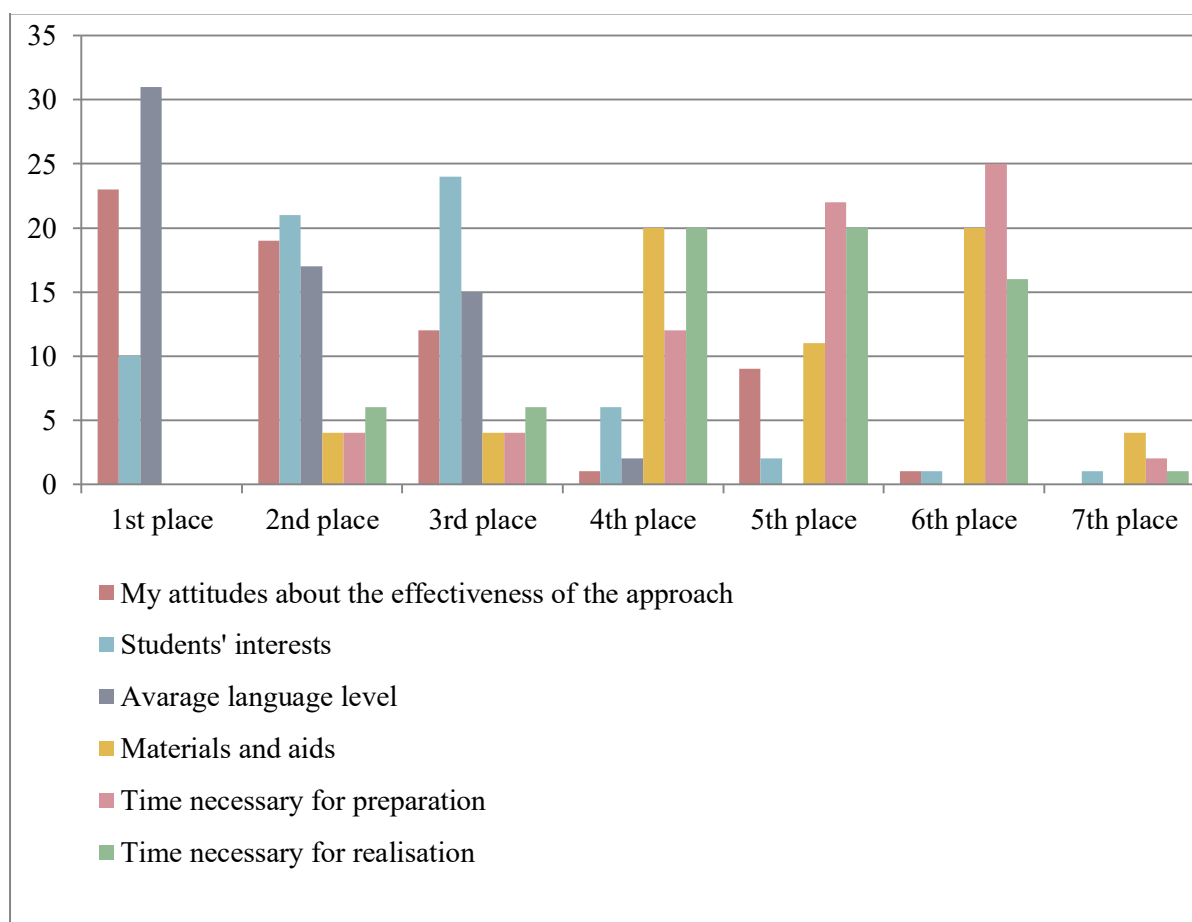
The comparison of the two approaches wraps up this part of the questionnaire. The assumption was that there will be certain discrepancies between how teachers rate an approach in theory and how often they use it in practice. An accompanying assumption was that the main factor for this discrepancy will have been the teaching conditions which hinder practical operationalization of certain approaches, which proved correct, as teachers listed various factors related to student types, allocated teaching hours, or flaws of the approach itself.

The following question aimed to further investigate the reasons behind teachers’ choices of an approach in general. The question was: *Which of the following factors influence your choice of the approach used in class the most? (Order them according to importance)*. The options were: *my beliefs about the efficacy of an approach, students’ preferences (is it interesting/fun), average level of proficiency in the group I’m teaching, additional resources (smart board, printer, ...), time required for planning/preparing for the lesson, time required for executions, and something else*. As shown in Figure 13, most participants (31 participants, 48%) chose to put *average level of proficiency in the group* as the primary factor they consider when choosing the teaching approach. This was an expected result, since it significantly impacts ways in which students can be engaged in the lesson and how much they can realistically take from it. The second most chosen option (23 participants, 35%) for the first place were *beliefs about efficacy of the approach*, which was expected, since it covers a range of other implicit factors. The option in second place for the majority of participants (21 participants, 32%) was *students’ preferences*; and *beliefs about the efficacy of an approach* was a close second (19 participants, 29%). It is a very positive indicator that teachers put students’ interests high on their list when choosing a teaching method. This is in line with the communicative approach in general, since it requires students’ active engagement in order to be successful. The same goes for third place. The least important of the suggested factors turned out to be *time necessary for planning/preparing for the lesson*, as indicated by the results for the fourth, fifth and sixth place, followed by *additional resources (smart board, printer, ...)* (green) and *time required for executions* (light blue). The only inconsistent answer was the low priority of time required for execution, since many participants mentioned this factor when giving reasons why extensive input is not a realistic option in public high schools.

These results showed an overall consensus about which factors influence the choice of the teaching approach.

The participants were given an additional option to state any other factors that might influence their decision. They mostly agreed that the ones in the previous question were the main factors, although some did suggest other options. These were: teacher's own experience in teaching a specific grammar lesson, previous success of the approach, motivation and open-mindedness of students towards something different, students' learning independency, class size, how disciplined the group is, is it useful for the state graduation exam and how common the grammar structure is in general. None of these repeated more than once among the participants' answers, but they still show a variety of additional factors teachers consider in their lesson planning.

Figure 13: Comparison of factors that participants considered more and less important when choosing a teaching approach



The assumption was that there would be certain discrepancies between how teachers rated an approach in theory and how often they used it in practice. An accompanying assumption was that the main factor for this discrepancy would be the teaching conditions which hindered practical operationalization of certain approaches. This brings us to the next question, which asked the following. *If you were teaching in different conditions (better or worse), do you think you would mostly use a different approach from the one you are mostly using now?*

Figure 14: Responses to whether participants would change their teaching approach if they were teaching in different conditions

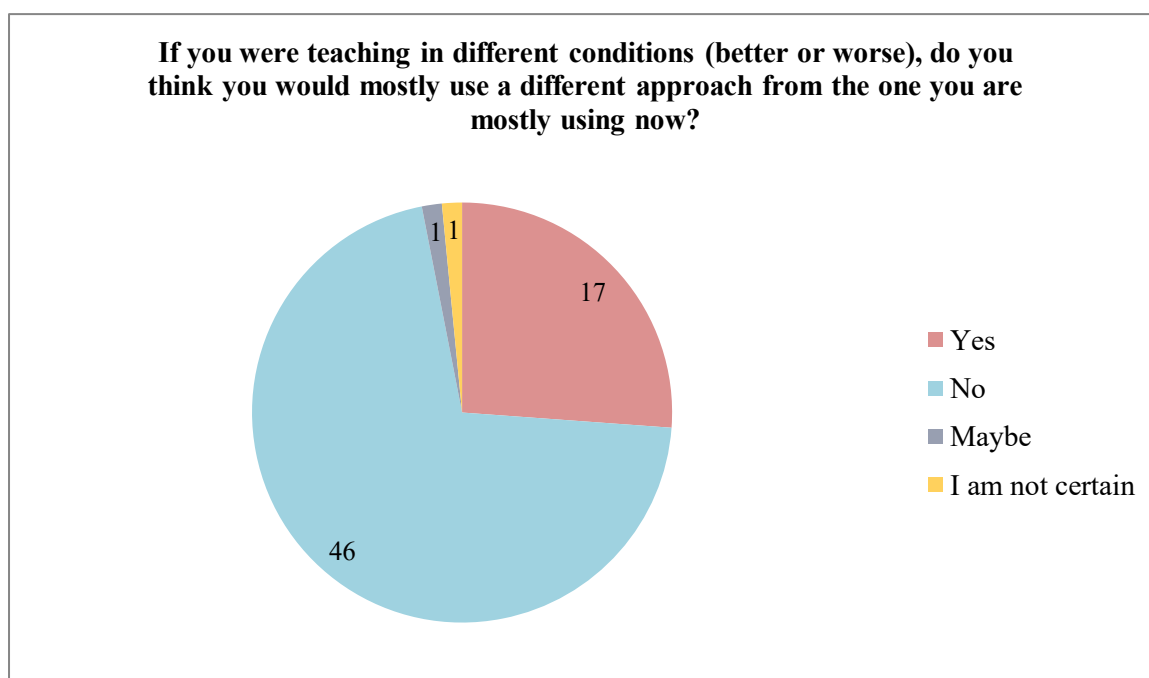


Figure 14 shows that a significant majority (46 participants, 71%) answered that they did not think they would change their approach if the circumstances were different. Others stated that they thought they would or that they were not certain. These answers are consistent with the results from previous questions, where participants claimed that the primary factor they considered when choosing an approach was their own belief about its efficacy, no matter what other teaching conditions were. The participants were then asked to further explain their answer to the previous question, if they found it necessary.

Several teachers were certain that they would change their approach if they were working with students who have better prior knowledge. One of the participants explained that students who come to high school with a weaker basis make it necessary for teachers to fill in the missing knowledge. On the other hand, when students are well prepared, the teaching can

be done through more output-based tasks like debates. Another teacher mentioned that they hold higher expectations for students with better background knowledge. Other teachers mentioned the availability of projectors and printers as a factor that determines some of their practices. One pointed out that they would like to use the smartboard and the digital version of the textbook if they were available. On the other hand, one teacher commented that they did not believe that technological resources are a crucial factor in increasing teaching quality: “they do make things easier, but my approach has not changed significantly when technology started advancing; it enriched it, but the approach was more or less the same”. One participant compared teaching in a grammar school (*gimnazija*) and in a vocational school (*strukovna škola*): “The approach definitely has to be adapted because the students are different – with different interests, motivation, and plans for the future. The type of student I teach affects my choice of approach the most. The same goes for expectations – I try to encourage every student to realize their potential, no matter what their educational orientation is.” One participant claimed they thought they would manage in any kind of conditions and that the most important thing is to motivate the learners, no matter what the approach was. Several participants reiterated the problem of not having enough school hours in a week. One participant stated that “if they had more hours available, they could afford more time for more extensive contextualization.” Another common concern was the discipline and focus of the groups. A couple of participants highlighted that their approach would probably be different if the students were more patient and focused. Finally, some teachers simply relied on their experience and said that the approaches they had used “in their 20-year-long career have proved effective in various teaching conditions”

In comparison with the results of previous research studies described earlier, the results of this study are similar in several ways. First of all, they highlight the importance of inquiring about and analyzing teachers’ attitudes, primarily because they can often significantly impact classroom practices and, on the other hand, sometimes not match them at all. Furthermore, they showed that teachers prefer inductive approaches in theory, even though in reality certain teaching conditions must be present in order for the teacher to opt for this kind of approach to teaching.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to explore teachers' attitudes towards deductive and inductive approaches to teaching EFL grammar in a high school foreign language classroom. Additionally, the study aimed to compare (a) teachers' attitudes towards specific approaches and (b) their actual classroom practices, in order to see if there was a mismatch between the two. Finally, the study analyzed which teaching conditions act as additional factors influencing teaching choices. The assumption was that teachers would find the inductive approaches more appropriate and effective, but would report using deductive approaches more often, due to specific unfavorable teaching conditions. Results showed that most teachers preferred inductive approaches. For most of the hypothetical scenarios presented in the questionnaire, the preferences did match the reported teaching practices. However, the discrepancy occurred in scenarios which were closer to the inductive end of the spectrum. The teachers who preferred the inductive approach in theory, often opted for the deductive approach in practice, due to teaching conditions which acted as interfering factors. According to the results, teachers agree that the inductive approach is beneficial, although it requires certain conditions to be present, such as background knowledge, motivation, and discipline, as well as time available for implementing the approach.

In light of the research questions, several things are to be highlighted. Which approach do teachers prefer and why? This question was answered consistently throughout the entire questionnaire. As far as teachers' preferences are concerned, the majority of teachers try to avoid traditional *ex cathedra* approaches, i.e., deductive type of teaching. This attitude was consistently expressed throughout the questionnaire. In theory, they prefer inductive approaches. The reasons for this were summed up as a wish to include students in the process of teaching grammar and avoid making them passive observers. The second question concerned the issue of whether preferences match actual teaching practices. For most of the hypothetical scenarios presented in the questionnaire, the preferences did in fact match the reported teaching practices. However, the discrepancy occurred in hypothetical scenarios which were closer to the inductive end of the spectrum. These results show that teachers are aware of the benefits these approaches potentially bring, but are unable to carry them out in their classroom due to interfering factors, such as lack of time and/or non-ideal student profiles. Several participants stated that their approach varies according to how difficult the material is. More complex concepts require that the material be presented in a clear way, which directly translated into a deductive type of teaching; while simpler and more salient

structures allow for an inductive type of teaching. Another significant factor were students' interests. Participants highlighted the importance of active student engagement. In some cases, they were mentioned in the context of the groups being unfocused and hard to motivate – and therefore hard to teach. In others, teachers pointed out that they tried to cater to students' interests in order to make the best of the little time they have during the school week. All in all, the participants showed a great deal of awareness when it comes to benefits (as well as downsides) of both types of approaches.

Contrary to the initial assumption, their practices did not deviate significantly from their preferences. The cases that did show certain discrepancies were the ones dealing with the inductive approach and they only served to prove that established teaching conditions in public high schools are far from ideal. As far as additional factors influencing teaching choices are concerned, the majority of teachers chose the learners' language level and the learners' interests as most influential.

There are some limitations of the study. Firstly, the sample size might be considered small, considering the size of the teacher population in Croatia. It is possible that a bigger sample would have shown clearer results. Similarly, a particular majority of participants were located in central Croatia, so a more diverse sample would be needed to confirm the findings. Furthermore, since the topic of teaching grammar, as well as teachers' attitudes and beliefs in general, is very complex and depends on many external factors – a more detailed survey or an interview would certainly aid in the clarification of specific points of the research.

The potential implications of the research for theory and practice are manifold. This research study aimed to contribute to existing knowledge on the topic by providing data on the realities of classroom teaching which have to be taken into consideration in order to make informed choices when training new teachers. There are also certain implications for challenging popular assumptions. Teachers' practices are thought to reflect their knowledge and attitudes about the optimal ways of creating learning opportunities. However, teaching conditions often hinder the implementation of desirable teaching practices. Furthermore, the results highlight the importance of reflecting on one's beliefs and practices, which are sometimes inherited from past experiences as students, rather than acquired during training. Finally, the present research has the potential for creating a basis for further research – a similar but larger scale study could be done in order to retest the assumptions.

All in all, the participants displayed great effort in expressing their attitudes and justifying their beliefs with experience-based arguments. The goal was to make these attitudes matter – to bring about awareness of how impactful their attitudes can be in shaping them as teachers, as well as how teaching conditions often disable teachers from practicing what they know would be best for their students. This study hoped to encourage rethinking of established models of English instruction with the aim of creating the optimal teaching environment and raise independent, proactive, and motivated learners.

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## SAŽETAK

Stavovi nastavnika/ca i uvjeti podučavanja su neki od faktora koji značajno utječu na odluke o načinu podučavanja. U ovom radu istraženi su stavovi nastavnika/ca o podučavanju gramatike, fokusirajući se pritom na razliku između deduktivnog i induktivnog pristupa podučavanju gramatike stranog jezika na srednjoškolskoj razini. Nadalje, cilj rada bio je usporediti (a) stavove nastavnika/ca o određenim pristupima i (b) ono što nastavnici/e zaista prakticiraju u nastavi, kako bi se utvrdilo postoji li između ove dvije instance nesklad. Konačno, analizirano je koji uvjeti podučavanja djeluju kao dodatni faktori u donošenju odluka o pristupu. Ponuđeni uvjeti uključivali su interese učenika, jezične kompetencije učenika, dostupne materijale i pomagala, vrijeme potrebno za pripremu, vrijeme potrebno za provedbu te bilo što drugo što su sudionici imali za dodati. Istraživanje je provedeno na 65 sudionika, koristeći online upitnik. Sudionici su bili nastavnici/ce engleskog jezika u hrvatskim srednjim školama. Ponuđeno im je sedam scenarija podučavanja, koje su trebali ocijeniti prema (a) tome koliko dobrima ih smatraju i (b) tome koliko često ih koriste u nastavi. Sudionici su na kraju naznačili koji uvjeti podučavanja utječu na njihov odabir pristupa i u kojoj mjeri. Pretpostavka je bila da će više nastavnika/ca smatrati induktivni pristup boljim, ali da će unatoč tome navesti da češće koriste deduktivni pristup u nastavi zbog određenih nepovoljnih uvjeta podučavanja. Rezultati su pokazali da većina nastavnika/ca preferira induktivni pristup. Također, za većinu ponuđenih scenarija podučavanja, preferencije su se poklapale s učestalošću korištenja pristupa u nastavi. Međutim, do nesklada je došlo u scenarijima koji su po karakteristikama sličniji induktivnom pristupu. Nastavnici koji preferiraju induktivni pristup u teoriji većinski su se odlučili za deduktivni pristup u praksi zbog nepovoljnih uvjeta podučavanja.

Ključne riječi: deduktivni pristup, induktivni pristup, podučavanje gramatike, stavovi nastavnika/ca, uvjeti podučavanja

## APENDICES

### Upitnik

Hvala Vam na pristanku na sudjelovanje u istraživanju!

Pred vama je upitnik o stavovima nastavnika/nastavnica prema različitim načinima poučavanja gramatike engleskog jezika u srednjim školama u Hrvatskoj. Svrha upitnika je istražiti i analizirati koje pristupe nastavnici/ce preferiraju i zašto. Opisani pristupi razlikuju se prvenstveno po načinu osvješćivanja gramatičkih pravila, tj. po tome u kojem trenutku, koliko izravno i uolikoj mjeri se pravila naglašavaju. Fokus je na poučavanju učenika srednjih škola zbog pretpostavljene veće fleksibilnosti u odabiru pristupa.

Anketa je anonimna i rezultati će se obrađivati isključivo na kumulativnoj razini. Ispunjavanje upitnika traje 10-15 minuta. U bilo kojem trenutku možete odustati od ispunjavanja. Predajom odgovora pristajete na korištenje podataka u svrhu istraživanja.

Istraživanje se provodi u svrhu pisanja diplomskog rada na odsjeku za anglistiku Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu, pod mentorstvom doc. dr. sc. Stele Letice Krevelj.

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Prvih nekoliko pitanja odnosi se na uvjete u kojima poučavate. Ako ste poučavali u više različitih škola/razreda, molim Vas da naznačite one u kojima imate najviše radnog iskustva te da na temelju tog iskustva odgovarate i na kasnija pitanja.

1. U kojem dijelu Hrvatske radite?
2. Navedite fakultet na kojem ste stekli kvalifikaciju nastavnika engleskog jezika.
3. Koliko dugo radite kao nastavnik/nastavnica engleskog jezika? (bez obzira na vrstu škole i uzrast)
4. Volite li poučavati gramatiku na nastavi engleskog jezika?
5. Smatrate li se uspješnim/uspješnom u poučavanju gramatike?
6. Kako biste ukratko opisali Vaš pristup poučavanju gramatike u srednjoj školi?
7. Kada poučavate nove gramatičke strukture, hoćete li češće ... ?
  - a. prvo predstaviti pravila i primjere pa onda vježbati na zadacima
  - b. prvo dati primjer upotrebe (npr. tekst) pa poticati učenike da sami izvedu pravila

U nastavku ćete pročitati kratke opise sedam (A-G) različitih pristupa uvođenju nove gramatičke cjeline. Na ljestvici od 1 do 5 označite koliko određeni pristup smatrate dobrim (u teoriji) za poučavanje ciljane strukture. Zatim na ljestvici od 1 do 5 označite koliko često određeni pristup koristite u nastavi.

Pristup A: Predstaviti ću naziv, značenje i formu nove gramatičke strukture. Zatim ću dati nekoliko izoliranih primjera. Nakon toga će učenici rješavati zadatke koji su slični primjerima koje sam dao/dala. Kasnije ćemo postupno prijeći na zadatke u obliku teksta koji sadrži ciljane strukture.

8. Koju ocjenu biste, u teoriji, dali pristupu A? Koliko često, u praksi, koristite pristup A?

Pristup B: Predstaviti ću naziv, značenje i formu nove gramatičke strukture. Zatim ću dati primjere u kontekstu (u obliku teksta koji sadrži ciljane strukture). Nakon toga će učenici rješavati zadatke koji su slični primjerima koje sam dao/dala.

9. Koju ocjenu biste, u teoriji, dali pristupu B? Koliko često, u praksi, koristite pristup B?

Pristup C: Predstaviti ću nekoliko izoliranih rečenica koje sadrže ciljane strukture. Poticati ću učenike da pokušaju zaključiti što znače zadane rečenice te kada i kako se koristi ciljane strukture. Nakon toga će učenici rješavati zadatke u obliku izoliranih rečenica koje sadrže ciljane strukture. Kasnije ćemo postupno prijeći na zadatke u kontekstu.

10. Koju ocjenu biste, u teoriji, dali pristupu C? Koliko često, u praksi, koristite pristup C?

Pristup D: Predstaviti ću tekst koji sadrži ciljane strukture. Poticati ću učenike da pokušaju zaključiti što je značenje teksta te kako i kada se koristi ciljane strukture. Nakon toga će učenici vježbati na sličnim kontekstualiziranim primjerima.

11. Koju ocjenu biste, u teoriji, dali pristupu D? Koliko često, u praksi, koristite pristup D?

Pristup E: Zadati ću učenicima zadatak koji zahtjeva spontano korištenje ciljane strukture (npr. grupni rad na temu funkcioniranja svijeta za 100 godina). Tijekom rješavanja zadatka pratiti ću jesu li učenici već upoznati s načinom korištenja ciljane strukture. Ako nisu, pomoći ću im tako da ću ponuditi ciljane strukture. Na kraju sata staviti ću naglasak na strukture koje su korištene i predstaviti naziv, značenje i formu nove gramatičke strukture.

12. Koju ocjenu biste, u teoriji, dali pristupu E? Koliko često, u praksi, koristite pristup E?

Pristup F: Nekoliko sati prije izravnog poučavanja ciljane strukture izlagat ću učenike materijalima koji sadrže ciljanu strukturu. Na satu predviđenom za obradu ciljane strukture, predstaviti ću tekst koji sadrži ciljanu strukturu. Poticati ću učenike da pokušaju zaključiti što je značenje teksta te kada i kako se koriste ciljane strukture koje se pojavljuju u tekstu. Nakon toga će učenici rješavati zadatke koji su slični tekstu koji je korišten kao uvod.

13. Koju ocjenu biste, u teoriji, dali pristupu F? Koliko često, u praksi, koristite pristup F?

Pristup G: Neću izravno poučavati niti jednu gramatičku strukturu. Izlagat ću učenike raznim materijalima u kojima su zastupljene ciljane strukture. Učenici će zbog kontinuirane izloženosti postepeno usvojiti strukture. Zadaci će se sastojati od rečenica u kontekstu i tekstova s miješanim strukturama.

14. Koju ocjenu biste, u teoriji, dali pristupu G? Koliko često, u praksi, koristite pristup G?

15. Što smatrate glavnim prednostima i nedostacima prvog opisanog (A) i zadnjeg opisanog (G) pristupa?

16. Što od navedenoga najviše utječe na Vaš izbor pristupa koje koristite u nastavi? (poredati)

- a. Moji stavovi o efikasnosti pristupa
- b. Interesi učenika (hoće li im biti zanimljivo/zabavno)
- c. Prosječno jezično znanje razreda
- d. Sredstva i pomagala (pametna ploča, printer, ...)
- e. Vrijeme potrebno za pripremu
- f. vrijeme potrebno za provedbu
- g. nešto drugo

17. Postoji li još nešto što utječe na Vašu odluku? Ukoliko da, navedite ukratko o čemu se radi.

18. Da poučavate u drugačijim uvjetima (boljim ili lošijim) mislite li da biste koristili u najvećem dijelu drugačiji pristup od onoga koji sad koristite?

19. Možete pobliže objasniti odgovor na prethodno pitanje.

## The questionnaire

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study!

In front of you is a questionnaire about teachers' attitudes towards different approaches to teaching EFL grammar in high schools in Croatia. The purpose of the questionnaire is to research and analyse which approaches do teachers prefer and why. The described approaches differ primarily according to the way in which students are made aware of grammar rules, i.e. when this happens, how explicitly and how intensely. The study focuses on teaching high school students, because of the presumed flexibility in selecting teaching approaches.

The questionnaire is anonymous and the results will be analysed cumulatively. Filling out of the questionnaire lasts 10 to 15 minutes. You can opt out of participating at any moment. By submitting the answers you are agreeing to the data being used in the study.

The study is being conducted for the purpose of writing a master's thesis at the department of English at Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (University of Zagreb), under the mentorship of dr. sc. Stela Letica Krevelj.

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The first couple of questions deal with conditions in which you teach. If you have taught in more than one type of school and/or levels, please indicate those in which you have the most work experience and based on that answer further questions.

1. In which part of Croatia are you employed?
2. State the faculty at which you acquired the qualification of an ESL teacher.
3. How long have you been working as an ESL teacher?
4. Do you like teaching grammar?
5. Do you consider yourself successful in teaching grammar?
6. How would you describe your teaching approach?
7. When you teach new grammatical concepts, will you more often choose to ... ?
  - a. present the rules and examples first and then do practice exercises or
  - b. first provide examples of usage (e.g. a text) and then encourage learners to discover the underlying rules themselves?

At this point, you will be presented with short descriptions of seven (A-G) different approaches to introducing a new grammar lesson. On a scale of 1 to 5, indicate how good in theory do you consider each approach. Then indicate how often you use in in practice.

Approach A: I will present the name, meaning and form of the new grammar concept. Then I will provide a couple of isolated examples. After that, the students will do exercises similar to the examples I provided. Later we will transition to exercises in form of text, which will contain target structures.

8. How good in theory do you consider approach A? How often do you use approach A in practice?

Approach B: I will present the name, meaning and form of the new grammar concept. Then I will provide examples in context (in form of a text containing target structures). After that, the students will do exercises similar to the example text I provided.

9. How good in theory do you consider approach B? How often do you use approach B in practice?

Approach C: I will present a couple of isolated sentences containing the target structure. I will encourage the students to figure out the meaning of sentences and to make conclusions about when and how the target structure is used. After that, students will do exercises in form of isolated sentences that contain target structures. Later we will transition to contextualized exercises.

10. How good in theory do you consider approach C? How often do you use approach C in practice?

Approach D: I will present a text containing the target structure. I will encourage the students to figure out the meaning of the text and to make conclusions about when and how the target structure is used. After that, the students will do exercises similar to the example text I provided.

11. How good in theory do you consider approach D? How often do you use approach D in practice?

Approach E: I will assign a task that requires spontaneous use of target structure (e.g. group work on the topic of what the world will look like in a hundred years). While the students are

doing the task, I will monitor the work to see whether students are already familiar with the way the target structure is used. If they are not, I will help them by offering the target structure. At the end of the lesson, I will emphasize the structure used in the task and present its name, meaning and form.

12. How good in theory do you consider approach E? How often do you use approach E in practice?

Approach F: A couple of lessons before explicit teaching of the target structure, I will expose the students to materials containing the target structure. During the lesson for which the teaching of target structure is planned, I will present a text containing the target structure. I will encourage the students to figure out the meaning of the text and to make conclusions about when and how the target structure is used. After that, the students will do exercises similar to the example text I provided.

13. How good in theory do you consider approach F? How often do you use approach F in practice?

Approach G: I will not explicitly teach any of the grammar structures. I will expose the students to various materials which contain the target structures. Because of the continuous exposure, the students will eventually internalize the target structures. The exercises will be in form of contextualized sentences and texts with mixed grammar structure.

14. How good in theory do you consider approach G? How often do you use approach G in practice?

15. What do you consider to be the main advantages and disadvantages of the first (A) and last (G) approach?

16. Which of the following factors influence your choice of approach used in class the most? (order them according to importance)

- a. my beliefs about efficacy of an approach
- b. students' preferences (is it interesting/fun)
- c. average level of proficiency in the group I'm teaching
- d. additional resources (smart board, printer, ...)
- e. time required for planning/preparing for the lesson
- f. time required for realization
- g. something else.



17. Is there something else affecting your decision? If yes, describe in short what it is.
18. If you were teaching in different conditions (better or worse), do you think you would mostly use a different approach from the one you are mostly using now?
19. You can further explain your answer to the previous question.