

Grammar exercises in Dutch, Finnish, and global textbooks for teaching German as a foreign language

1 Introduction

In current foreign language (FL) teaching and learning, there is no one single methodology as to how to teach foreign languages and their grammar (cf. Funk 2012; Thornbury 2011), and several methodologies are to be found simultaneously in FL teaching materials. Accordingly, we can state that the methodologies used in the FL classroom (audiolingualism, grammar-translation method, communicative approach including task-based/supported language learning) are no longer used solely in their original form, but in a combined and eclectic way. This means that they still have an influence on the content of FL textbooks (for an overview see McDonough and Shaw 2012: Ch. 2) and on grammar exercises. For instance, the influence of audiolingualism is still to be seen in language teaching materials as use of de-contextualised drills, gapped sentences, and substitution tables in grammar learning (cf. Littlejohn 2012; Neuner 1994).

Textbooks play a central role in FL teaching and learning both from the perspective of teachers and learners. They have a strong impact on learning activities as well as on the linguistic and cultural content transmitted in the classroom. Moreover, they are used as a major source when FL teachers design their teaching and select activities which they consider to be suitable for their learners (Harwood 2010; McGrath 2006; Richards 2014). Textbooks guide teachers and learners on how grammar is presented and practised in language lessons and also outside the classroom (cf. Garton and Graves 2014a; Littlejohn 2012; McGrath 2006; Richards 2014), when learners do their homework. By examining FL textbooks, assumptions can be made as to how grammar is learned in the classroom context since there is evidence that teaching materials have an influence on their users (see e.g. Andon and Wingate 2013; McGrath 2002; Tomlinson and Masuhara 2010).

However, if the impact of teaching materials is as strong on teaching practices, as stated above, and if grammar holds a traditionally strong position in FL teaching, then the question arises as to what the teaching materials are exactly. This calls for an in-depth analysis of grammar in FL textbooks. The lack of research on FL textbooks is surprising considering how central a role

they play (Garton and Graves 2014b; Guerrettaz and Johnston 2013; Harwood 2013; Littlejohn 2011; Tomlinson and Masuhara 2010; Tomlinson 2012). Both micro-evaluations of the use of FL textbooks, for instance, learner experiences of textbooks (cf. Ellis 2011), empirical studies (cf. Ellis 1997), and comprehensive international analyses of FL textbooks (e.g. Tomlinson et al. 2001) are not common in the field of FL educational research (cf. Garton and Graves 2014b; Tomlinson 2012; Tomlinson and Masuhara 2010). In order to gain a broader picture of the ways in which grammar is taught and learned, an international comparison of FL textbooks is needed. In recent years, teaching materials of English have especially attracted attention (Garton and Graves 2014a; Gray 2010; 2013b; Harwood 2010, 2013). However, materials for teaching languages other than English have been explored less (see e.g. Gray 2013a). Possible reasons for the lack of research on such FL textbooks are difficulties in finding either objective or comparable research criteria suitable for local conditions (e.g. Roberts 1996; Tomlinson and Masuhara 2010), or criteria that would be generalisable or useful to teachers worldwide (Harwood 2010: 12). These are the reasons why we decided to examine textbooks for another language, namely German. Although our focus is on German as a foreign language (henceforth GFL), the relevance of this study is not restricted to this language alone since the methodology used here is applicable to language teaching materials for other languages. Moreover, our results can be used as a reference point in other such future studies. The exercise types can give an insight into the methodology of FL textbooks and how exercises and activities are modified by textbook authors to reflect local needs in a specific country (cf. López-Barrios and de Debat 2014; Richards 2014).

Our aim is to examine the kind of grammar exercise types, the proportion of each type and the kind of grammar learning promoted in Dutch, Finnish, and global textbooks for German as a foreign language for young adolescent learners (13–15 years). All the teaching materials available in 2015 in both countries for this learner group are included in our study. The terms textbook or course book are used here to encompass all printed materials used in German FL classrooms in Finland and in the Netherlands. The textbooks provide the basis for classroom activities and also for self-study before and after lessons (cf. Harwood 2010; Richards 2014; Tomlinson 2011; see Section 3.1). In our textbook analysis, the grammar exercises are classified, and the number of exercises per exercise type is counted (see Section 3). This analysis enables us to reflect on pedagogical criteria for effective grammar exercises and compare these criteria with the approach to learning that is manifested by the exercises in the textbooks (see Sections 2 and 4). Aspects to consider are what kind of learning is elicited by

grammar exercises in the textbooks and whether the ideas are in line with current general pedagogical principles such as discovery, learner-centredness and reflection on language(s).

2 The role of grammar and grammar exercises in FL textbooks

Grammar plays a well-established role in the FL classroom, in textbooks and other teaching materials, and in language tests (see e.g. Nation and Macalister 2010: Ch. 5; Tomlinson 2012). This is apparent in several ways. For instance, in many language courses, grammar is used as the major unit of progression (Nation and Macalister 2010: Ch. 5). Moreover, in the table of contents of FL textbooks, the domination of grammar is clearly to be seen in almost every unit (see e.g. Tomlinson et al. 2001), and texts and activities of FL textbooks are usually built around grammatical structures (see e.g. Andon and Wingate 2013; Nation and Macalister 2010: Ch. 5). In addition, students often expect grammar to be the focus of FL language lessons (cf. Canagarajah 1993). The study of Peacock (1997) revealed that learners rate grammar exercises even more highly than their teachers do. Although grammar exercises in textbooks play a very important role in FL classrooms, they have rarely been studied (see e.g. Funk 2014; Littlejohn 2011; Neuner 1994).

Earlier studies into FL teaching materials for German show that the number of grammar and grammar exercises in textbooks is extensive. In her analysis of grammatical content in five Dutch GFL textbooks, Tammenga-Helmantel (2012) concluded that they contain a relatively high percentage of grammar exercises (up to 25%). However, grammar is hardly ever integrated in productive skills training. Both inductive and deductive grammar exercises are found. Majjala (2010) analysed the presentation of grammar and grammar exercises in Finnish and global GFL textbooks for adult education. She found that the majority of grammar exercises are reproductive (blank-filling exercises) and/or stimulate recognition (underlining, subcategorization, marking) with only relatively few productive, reflective/analytical or contrastive exercises. A widely used exercise type is to manipulate sentences following a given example, for instance, to build sentences/dialogues according to a certain pattern. Funk (2014) analysed exercise types in a selection of current textbooks for teaching German as a foreign language which are used globally. Mostly mechanical grammar practice, consisting mainly of gap-filling exercises, was found in the textbooks in his study. He concluded that these grammar exercise types are de-contextualised and without any connection to communicative goals.

Analytical and reflective grammar exercises are not common in GFL textbooks (e.g. Maijala 2010).

Doughty and Williams (1998) analysed the grammar teaching practices of teachers of English as L2 and outlined three models for integrating form and meaning in second language teaching. Their first model is sequenced, i.e. explicit formal instruction is given first and is then followed by mechanical focus-on-form activities. In practice, this involves presentation of grammar which is then mostly followed by controlled activities such as listening and repeating, matching and filling in blanks with a conscious focus on grammar rules. As a result, learners concentrate on form and not on meaning (Ellis 2011; Newby 2014; Tomlinson 2011; Tomlinson 2012). The second model of Doughty and Williams (1998) reflects the conventional PPP approach, i.e. presentation, practice, and production, that is, explicit formal instruction of grammar is given first. After that follows controlled practice of the grammar items and extensive communicative practice allowing more time for learners to digest the declarative information than in the first model. In the third model, form and meaning are integrated and taught simultaneously with or without explicit grammar instruction.

The question then arises as to what ideal grammar exercises in FL textbooks should be like, and whether these are to be found in textbooks. Ideal grammar exercise types should take into account the characteristics of the learner group, for instance, age, learning style, motivation, and prior knowledge (cf. Sercu 2013). Usually in a learner-centred approach, the level of difficulty should be located within the learner's zone of proximal development, which means that the exercises should not underestimate or overestimate what the learner can do. In addition, they should be based on content that the learner perceives as relevant. Since FL textbooks are usually designed for broad public use, teachers have to select the activities that best suit the specific needs of their learners and try to take account of different learning styles (cf. Richards 2014). For the teacher, it becomes a kind of puzzle to choose a suitable combination of the exercises to include for each group of learners. The teacher often has to rewrite textbook activities in order to make them suitable for the target group (Harwood 2010; McGrath 2002; Masuhara 2011; Richards 2014). For instance, FL textbooks usually do not contain any (or at least not many) activities for kinaesthetic learners, who learn more effectively through physical activities (cf. Tomlinson et al. 2001).

As indicated above, FL learners (and teachers) often expect a controlled approach to grammar.

The teaching and learning of grammar in classroom settings is generally regarded as accuracy-oriented. This implies that learners are required to construct utterances which are grammatically acceptable. These expectations do not completely meet the goals of modern FL teaching and learning determined by the research terms of discovery, learner-centredness and reflection on language, or language awareness. Teaching grammar using a discovery approach usually involves activities in which learners are asked to work out the rules from examples, i.e. the inductive approach (Tomlinson 2011). The discovery approach usually requires the teacher to act as a mediator in order to make grammar learning reflective and to promote language awareness. Accordingly, FL textbooks should “encourage in learners habits of observation and [to] help them to use such observation in the comprehension and formulation of rules for the use of forms” (Carter, Hughes and McCarthy 2011: 91).

In FL teaching, the aim should be that learners progress from strongly teacher-supported, controlled exercise types towards more open-ended practice with automatic and free use of the foreign language. In other words, this progress involves moving gradually from mostly reproductive to productive practice (cf. Neuner et al. 1981; Sercu 2013). The purpose and justification of conventional form-focused practice including repetition is the expectation that, at some stage of learning, declarative knowledge becomes procedural (cf. DeKeyser 1998). Therefore, open-ended practice can be described as “the final stage of the skill-learning process”, which means developing a skill that is already thoroughly learned (Dörnyei 2009: 289–290). Consequently, it is presumed that FL textbooks for beginners should include mostly receptive and reproductive exercises, and productive open-ended exercises are less common (e.g. Aski 2005). Despite the fact that controlled activities do not seem to have long-term effects on language learning (e.g. Boers et al. 2016; Ellis 2008: Ch. 16), they are widely used in FL textbooks and even expected by teachers and learners. This could, in the worst case scenario, mean that classroom time is wasted in doing controlled exercises, endless drills, filling in blanks and manipulating sentences isolated from context (Tomlinson 2011). It seems that the greatest benefit from form-focused instruction is obtained when it is embedded in communicative activities (Ellis 2008: Ch. 16; Funk 2014; Newby 2014), that is, when grammar teaching and learning occur in a meaningful context (e.g. Aski 2005; Boers et al. 2016; Borg and Burns 2008).

Accordingly, we conclude that the ‘ideal’ grammar exercise should be learner-centred and help students:

- to focus on meaning and/or form (see e.g. Ellis 2011);
- to reflect on the differences and similarities between the source language, target language and other learned languages (López-Barrios and de Debat 2014; Ros i Solé 2013), and in this way raise awareness of foreign languages and cultures (Graves and Garton 2014);
- to discover grammatical rules autonomously;
- to produce the target language also in open-ended practice and to use the target language communicatively with peers (Andon and Wingate 2013; McDonough and Shaw 2012, Ch. 2).

In this article, we analyse Dutch, Finnish, and global GFL textbooks in order to find out what kind of grammar learning they promote, and then, on the basis of our analysis, we test whether they fulfil the criteria outlined above.

3 Research project: Analysis of grammar exercises

3.1 General remarks

In analysing course books, it is important that one is familiar with the teaching context of the country in question to understand the broader context in which course books are produced (see e.g. Harwood 2010: 18; Harwood 2013; McDonough and Shaw 2012: Ch. 1). As teacher educators and teachers of German as a foreign language, we, the researchers of the study, have teaching experience in secondary education in Finland and the Netherlands. For this reason we focus on textbooks for adolescent learners in these two countries (beginners' level, CEFR-level A1–A2).

In both countries, the curriculum for FL teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe 2001). In the Netherlands, only general core curriculum goals for secondary education for reading, listening, writing, and speaking at the CEFR levels, and literature are provided by the state (CVE 2012). Grammar is not mentioned in these exit objectives. Centralized testing takes place only for reading comprehension. It is the responsibility of the teachers or schools to determine how to reach these goals, and with which course materials. In Finland, the core curriculum of basic education gives the framework for the structure of studies and objectives, core content

and general assessment criteria for each school subject (Finnish National Board of Education 2004). On the basis of the core curriculum, each individual school in Finland determines its own curriculum. Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been no central control of the school textbooks used. This has led to a situation similar to the Netherlands in that the publishing houses have a significant influence on the content of school course books and other teaching materials. In both countries, textbook writers have a free hand with only very general instructions concerning the domains of language teaching plus a minimum of content prescribed per domain (CVE 2012: 24; Finnish National Board of Education 2004). In the Finnish curriculum, the core content for grammar is defined in the following way to be: “sentence formation and main grammatical principles characteristic of the language in question, from the standpoint of communication.” (Finnish National Board of Education 2004: 147). The Finnish and Dutch curricula are in line with the language curricula around the world that generally emphasise communication (Garton and Graves 2014b; McDonough 2012: Ch. 1). Since global GFL textbooks lack guidelines on exit objectives and other local requirements, it is expected that the general guidelines given in the CEFR play an important role in forming their linguistic and cultural content.

In the Netherlands, FL teaching begins with English in primary education. German is learned at secondary school (starting approximately at the age of 13) as a third foreign language and is an obligatory subject for at least two years. All students have English as a final exam subject. In their pre-final year in secondary education, Dutch students can decide whether they want an additional language in their final exam. German is then the most popular foreign language subject (DIA 2016). Other modern foreign languages that can be chosen in certain schools are French, Chinese, Spanish, Turkish and Arabic. For all FL teaching, CEFR-based goals are formulated (CVE 2012); these are slightly higher for English than for German. As far as grammar teaching is concerned, teaching generally occurs in Dutch. We are not aware of any substantial differences between teaching grammar for English or for German. At least, this is not apparent in the teaching materials; Dutch publishing houses develop FL textbooks for German, English, French and Spanish using a uniform format for all languages.

As in the Netherlands, in Finland FL teaching begins in primary education mostly with English. Since Swedish is the second official language of the country, this is a compulsory subject for all students (with Finnish for students who have Swedish as their mother tongue-) and is started mostly after English. Learning German is voluntary in Finnish schools. Students who want to

learn German (usually as a third or fourth foreign language) can begin in primary school (at around the age of 10), in secondary school (at the age of 14) or later in senior secondary school (at the age of 16). Other foreign languages that are mostly chosen in Finnish schools are French, Spanish and Russian. The learning of other foreign languages than English has lost popularity in recent years (see e.g. Kangasvieri 2017). In 1994, 27.3 % of the students at the age of 14–15 learned German, in contrast to 2009 when only 6.7 % of this age group did (Kangasvieri et al. 2011: 11). Finnish foreign language textbooks usually have a pragmatic orientation towards the everyday use of language, which is also emphasized in the national core curriculum (Finnish National Board of Education 2004). Authentic texts are rarely used and the language in FL textbooks is constructed for the purposes of learning grammar and vocabulary.

In Finland and in the Netherlands, there is a strong tradition of producing textbooks for the national school market. In our study, the analysed FL textbooks are books designed for a specific country by local writers, or global books that are localized to meet the needs of the local learners in question. The writers are mostly experienced non-native and native language teachers, not university academics (cf. Richards 2014). In Finland and in the Netherlands, FL course books for German usually consist of a textbook, a student workbook and occasionally a CD for the student, and sometimes extra digital materials such as teachers' guides and assessment files. In the English language teaching (ELT) research literature, students' workbooks are often seen as a supplementary aid that accompany textbooks (see e.g. Harwood 2013; Richards 2014), and there are cultural differences in how teaching materials are structured and how they are supplemented (see e.g. Harwood 2013). Workbooks focus on more controlled activities and are seen as an optional extra (see e.g. Verdelhan and Sercu 2013). Global GFL teaching materials are generally structured in this way. The Finnish and Dutch course materials for German, on the other hand, usually consist of two separate books (textbook and student's workbook). The textbook contains the texts and a grammar and vocabulary overview, and the exercises are provided in the workbook. In Finland and in the Netherlands, the student's workbook (in German *Übungsbuch*, *Übungen*, *Arbeitsbuch*, in Dutch *werkboek*, in Finnish *työkirja*, *harjoituskirja*) is an essential part of learning in the FL classroom and even outside the classroom. In the Finnish books, dialogues are not based on authentic conversations, but are composed mostly by the textbook writers to simulate authentic conversations in real-life contexts (Andon and Wingate 2013; Richards 2014). In the Dutch books, more authentic texts are available. The content of the textbooks is practised in the exercises found in the student's workbook.

The object of this study is to examine all locally used course books (textbooks and student's books) for German as a foreign language available in 2015 for young adolescent learners in the Netherlands and in Finland. As for the global GFL textbooks produced in Germany and used all over the world, we could analyse only a selection. Global textbooks are rarely used in Finnish schools or adapted by Finnish publishers. This might be due to the requirements concerning the intercultural component in the Finnish core curriculum, making a contrastive approach logical. In the Netherlands, some teachers use global textbooks, which facilitates a monolingual approach to FL teaching. In this case, the usage of Dutch in textbooks is considered a distracting factor in the language learning process. Therefore, we concentrate on the global textbooks that are regularly used in the Netherlands. The Goethe Institut Amsterdam was consulted for our selection.

We focus on the textbooks for beginners (CEFR level A1–A2), approximately 13–15 years of age, who have been learning German for a period of two years. From the Netherlands we analysed the following books: *Na klar (NK)*, *Neue Kontakte (NeKo)*, *Salzgitter Heute (SH)*, *TrabiTour (TT)*, and *Mach's gut (MG)*. The Finnish corpus included the books *Studio Deutsch (SD)*, *Super (SU)*, *Echt (E)*, and *Kompass Deutsch Neu (KDN)*. The globally used textbooks for German *Planet (P)*, *Geni@1 (G)* and *Team Deutsch (TD)* [Dutch edition] were part of our investigation. From now on, we use the abbreviations in brackets to designate the analysed textbooks. The components, contents and structure of the course books are described in Appendix 1. Because grammar rules and exercises are found in the workbooks, we limit our analysis to these.

3.2 Research questions and method

Our analysis is content-based, focusing on grammar exercises in Dutch, Finnish, and global GFL textbooks. By examining grammar exercises we aim to find a methodology for how grammar is conveyed in these FL textbooks. The specific research questions are the following:

1. What types of grammar exercises are found? What is the proportion of each exercise type?
2. What kind of pedagogical approach to grammar teaching and learning is promoted by the grammar exercises. Furthermore, do they fulfil the 'ideal' criteria, as outlined in section 2?

To answer the first research question, we provide a framework for the classification of grammar exercises in FL textbooks (see below for the typology used). Our aim is to create local criteria which would be best suited for analysing regionally used books because evaluation lists are difficult to transfer to local contexts (cf. Roberts 1996). In addition, our purpose is to create a typology for the classification of grammar exercises in FL textbooks. Furthermore, we attempt to put this classification into practice. We also present typical examples for the exercise types provided in textbooks for teaching GFL. One particular problem in any analysis of textbooks is to determine the concepts as they can be understood differently by different reviewers (cf. Tomlinson et al. 2001) and be subjective in nature (Richards 2014; Sheldon 1988). In the local materials, grammar explanations and instructions for the exercises are often given in the students' L1. For this reason, it was agreed that the Finnish analyst would evaluate the Finnish books and the Dutch, the Dutch ones. The analysis was first conducted for the Finnish materials and was followed by a methodological calibration session in order to analyse the Dutch and global materials in the same way. This agreement was necessary because of the mother tongue of the evaluators. Finnish and Dutch are very different languages. Dutch is typologically close to German while Finnish is distant, being not even an Indo-European language.

In our study, the definition of 'exercise' and particularly 'grammar exercise' caused problems, since it is difficult to separate lexical and grammatical items. We agreed that a grammar exercise is an activity that requires learners to use a specific grammatical item or structure and which is explicitly expressed in the instructions for the exercise, that is, the exercise is explicitly designated as grammar. After studying the data, the typology for the grammar exercises emerged. On the basis of this method, we classified and counted the exercises. For each exercise type, the number of exercises per type is given. The quantitative analysis indicates where the emphasis lies. Only grammar exercises have been classified, and each exercise has been classified uniquely, that is, it has been allotted to only one exercise type. The typology we created for the grammar exercises is as follows; examples of each type are provided when the results of the study are presented below.

A Choose-the-correct-answer exercises (*choosing*)

In these activities, learners are, for example, asked to choose from a selected set of possible answers, or to search for a particular grammatical construction in a text, or to select the correct grammatical form.

B Fill-in-the-blank exercises (*filling in blanks*)

With fill-in-the-blank exercises, we refer to gapped sentences to be completed; for example, learners are asked to write the correct forms of certain verbs into the paradigm, or to add articles to sentences.

C Written exercises (*sentence building*)

In these activities, learners are asked to construct sentences, mostly using words/phrases supplied by the material, in writing ready-made blocks or according to a certain (sentence) pattern. Transformation activities, such as writing sentences based on a model, rewriting a text, building sentences/questions based on given words, are also included in this category.

D Communicative oral grammar exercises (*dialogue building*)

In these communicative exercises, learners are asked to construct a dialogue or sentences orally with a partner or in a group. They are guided to use a certain grammatical structure. Common instructions given in this exercise type are, for example, 'Discuss on the basis of the dialogue given' or 'Replace the highlighted words in the role-play'.

E Combining exercises (*combining*)

In combining or matching exercises, learners are required to combine sentences or parts of sentences. Instructions often given for this exercise type are, for example, 'Combine pronouns with the correct verb forms' or 'Combine the beginnings and ends of the sentences'.

F Grammar games

In grammar games, learners are asked to play with language. In most cases, grammar games are controlled and learners are provided with a "model" as to how they should use the language. A common instruction is, for example, 'Play Bingo' using a certain grammatical structure.

G Translation exercises (*translating*)

Learners are asked to translate sentences into the mother tongue or into the target language. A common instruction for translation exercises is, for example, 'Explain in your own words' or just 'Translate'. Clearly, this exercise type is found in local books only since the use of the mother tongue is necessary.

H Reflective/analytical exercises (*analysing*)

In these exercises, learners are encouraged to discuss the grammar rules and notice how the new language is introduced by using metalanguage in their L1. The workbooks can guide reflection with instructions such as ‘What do you notice?’

I Revision exercises (*revising*)

In revision exercises, learners are asked to repeat grammar rules, mostly using the “minigrammar” provided at the end of the workbook.

Our evaluation regarding research question 2 is inevitably more subjective in nature (cf. Tomlinson et al. 2001). For instance, the questions ‘Do the grammar exercises assist learners in the process of learner-centred meaning construction?’ and ‘Do the exercises encourage learners to independently discover and explore linguistic phenomena and to reflect on language?’ are difficult to answer at the level of the individual exercise. Our aim is, above all, to answer these questions globally and to provide an overall picture of the pedagogical approach to grammar learning which emerges from the composition of grammar exercises in the Dutch, Finnish, and global GFL textbooks in the study.

3.3 Research findings

Before presenting our results and analysis of the exercise types, certain general remarks on the grammatical content in the Dutch, Finnish, and global course books for German as a foreign language are given. In order to gain a clearer picture of the grammar exercises, illustrative examples are given (the examples are translated into English by the authors, M.M. and M.T-H.)

3.3.1 Dutch GFL textbooks

The Dutch course books provide grammatical structures mostly in two or more blocks per chapter. The first block usually consists of repeating familiar grammar structures and the subsequent blocks present new grammar items. These are in most cases marked with symbols of their own. Both inductive and deductive approaches to introducing new grammar are found in the Dutch books. The productive writing and speaking exercises do not explicitly focus on grammatical rules, but seem to be related to the vocabulary and useful phrases (in German *Redemittel*) introduced in the unit. Integration of grammar into productive exercises is rarely

encountered. Table 1 presents an overview of the grammar exercises in the Dutch workbooks.

Table 1. Number of exercises per exercise type in the Dutch GFL books.

Exercise type	Neue Kontakte	Mach's gut	TrabiTour	Salzgitter Heute	Na Klar
A Choosing	1 (0.9%)	16 (9.5%)	12 (8.9%)	23 (17.2%)	10 (6.4%)
B Filling in blanks	66 (56.4%)	67 (39.6%)	84 (62.2%)	79 (59.0%)	87 (55.4%)
C Sentence building	3 (2.6%)	50 (29.6%)	4 (3.0%)	13 (9.7%)	5 (3.2%)
D Dialogue building	2 (1.7%)	18 (10.7%)	1 (0.7%)	3 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)
E Combining	0 (0.0%)	6 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.5%)	1 (0.6%)
F Grammar games	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
G Translating	9 (7.7%)	4 (2.4%)	12 (8.9%)	2 (1.5%)	6 (3.8%)
H Analysing	35 (29.9%)	8 (4.7%)	12 (8.9%)	10 (7.5%)	46 (29.3%)
I Revising	1 (0.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.5%)	2 (1.3%)

As Table 1 shows, all of the exercise types are found in the materials, with the exception of grammar games (F). Examples 1–3 illustrate the most common exercise types in the Dutch books: filling-in-blanks exercises (B), analysing (H), and choosing (A). Filling-in-blanks exercises (B) are the most frequently used exercise type in all the Dutch teaching materials. Example 1 presents a typical exercise type (B) from the Dutch corpus.

(1)

Vertaal en vul het Duitse woord in de juiste vorm in. [Translate and fill in the German word in the correct form.]

1. hebben Wir ____ ganz viele Hobbys.
2. zijn Mein Vater ____ ein Anfänger. [---] (NeKo 1–2: 99)

With newly introduced grammar, a variety of exercises is used to practise the new structure, and in almost all cases blanks-filling exercises are found. On the other hand, when repeating previously introduced grammar, blank-filling exercises are often used exclusively. Choosing (A) is the next widely used exercise type, see (2). It is frequently used in verb conjugation and adjective declension, for instance, the correct case form of an article.

(2)

Streep de foute vorm van het werkwoord door. [Strike out the incorrect form of the verb.]

1 *Hör/Hört* mal zu, Peter und Lisa!

2 *Lauft/Läuft* so schnell ihr könnt, Kinder! [---] (SH2: 82)''

Type (H), analysing, is used mainly in those books which present new grammar inductively (NeKo, NK). When grammar is introduced inductively, learners are asked to induce and formulate the grammar rule or to analyse it. These exercises are very predictable, sometimes even dull, not challenging enough and do not encourage learners to reflect on grammar (cf. Newby 2014), as the example in (3) shows.

(3)

a Lees het gesprek en markeer de vormen van *fahren*. [Read the dialogue and mark the forms of the verb *fahren*.] [---]

b Vul het schema zo veel mogelijk in. Gebruik daarvoor de zinnen van a. Markeer de vormen die anders gaan dan *wohnen*. [Fill in the table if it is possible using the sentences in a. Mark the cases which are different from *wohnen*] (NeKo 3: 37)

Combining exercises (E) and revising exercises (I) are rarely found in Dutch workbooks, although the former are found in *Mach's gut*. Translation exercises (G), both into Dutch and into German, are found in all the Dutch books. However, their usage ranges from 2 in *Salzgitter heute* to 12 in *TrabiTour*. *TrabiTour* uses translation exercises as a way of scaffolding, leading towards semi-guided reproduction and blank filling. There are significant differences between the materials in the frequency of the exercise types in the Dutch books. Generally, new grammar is practised with blank-filling exercises combined with two or three other exercise types; each textbook opts for its own combination of exercise types. *Mach's gut* is an exception among the Dutch books because it provides a great variety of exercise types.

Regarding research question 2, it can be observed that grammar is still introduced in a rather traditional way. The textbooks adopt a focus-on-form approach and usually concentrate on presentation and practice. Grammar is rarely integrated into productive exercises (cf. Newby 2014). There are some productive exercises but they seem to be meaning-oriented, that is, they mostly deal with the thematic vocabulary presented in the unit in question and do not focus on grammatical forms. In other words, the newly introduced grammar is not ‘put into practice’ in these productive exercises. Naturally, this is not a problem from a language learning perspective where basic skills are acquired. However, when grammar is not integrated, there is a risk that in productive tasks learners cannot transfer that knowledge into procedural knowledge. On the other hand, grammar is introduced inductively, especially in *Neue Kontakte* and *Na Klar*; however, as indicated above, this is not challenging for learners to master (cf. Funk 2014; Newby 2014; Tomlinson 2012). By using translation exercises, the Dutch teaching materials can contrast L1 and L2, but this is not utilised, for instance, in reflective exercises.

3.3.2 Finnish GFL textbooks

The general concept of Finnish GFL textbooks is that they comprise texts, mostly dialogues, which have been designed to illustrate certain grammatical structures and vocabulary. Grammar rules are presented, mostly inductively guided by the book, in one or more blocks per chapter after vocabulary exercises, and are usually marked with special symbols. The exercises in a unit mostly focus on the grammatical structure presented in the unit and usually only one grammatical item is practised per exercise.

Table 2. Number of exercises per exercise type in the Finnish GFL books.

Exercise type	Studio Deutsch	Super	Echt!	Kompass Deutsch Neu
A Choosing	7 (3.8 %)	14 (6.3 %)	10 (4.8 %)	7 (3.0 %)

B Filling in blanks	55 (30.6 %)	100 (44.6 %)	75 (36.2 %)	73 (30.8 %)
C Sentence building	75 (41.7 %)	49 (21.9 %)	35 (16.9 %)	66 (27.8 %)
D Dialogue building	25 (13.9 %)	40 (17.9 %)	54 (26.1 %)	51 (21.5 %)
E Combining	3 (1.7 %)	4 (1.8 %)	5 (2.4 %)	8 (3.4 %)
F Grammar games	4 (2.2 %)	0 (0.0%)	8 (3.7 %)	10 (4.2 %)
G Translating	9 (5.0 %)	16 (7.1 %)	20 (9.7 %)	17 (7.2 %)
H Analysing	1 (0.6 %)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (1.7 %)
I Revising	1 (0.6 %)	1 (0.4 %)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4 %)

As Table 2 shows, there are no significant differences among the Finnish workbooks in the number of exercise types. In the Finnish books just as in the Dutch ones, the most frequently used exercise type is filling in blanks (B). In the second and the third most common exercise types (C, D), learners are asked to construct sentences and dialogues using a particular grammatical structure by writing or speaking after a given model. The books *Echt!* and *Kompass Deutsch Neu* provide more oral exercises and grammar games than the other books. Just as in the Dutch materials, translation exercises are occasionally used in Finnish books. There are very few exercises in which learners are asked to analyse.

In general, the emphasis in the mechanical blank-filling exercises clearly lies on finding the correct forms in the texts, which should be familiar to learners before they fill in the gaps. Common instructions are “Write the verbs in the correct column.” (S 8: 66) or “Write the forms of the verbs *haben* or *sein* in the text.” (SD 2: 88). The most common exercise type in category C in the Finnish books is building sentences, see (4). Learners are expected to construct written sentences by using the content, words and structures supplied by the course books. Examples

4–5 illustrate that the contribution of learners is guided and the focus is on one grammatical item at a time (cf. Ellis 2011).

(4)

Muodosta lauseita. [Construct sentences.]

Example: Stefan – Julias Adresse – auf/schreiben. [---] (S 8: 97)

(5)

Schreibe. Mitä itse teit viime viikolla? Kirjoita vihkoosi ainakin viisi lausetta. Käytä laatikon verbejä perfektissä. [Write down what you did last week. Write at least five sentences in the perfect tense. Use the verbs in the box.] (SD 2: 68)

Controlled oral exercises, which function like the writing exercises described above, are often used in Finnish workbooks. Oral exercises in the Finnish corpus are most frequently found in *Echt!* and *Kompass Deutsch Neu*. After instructions, learners are given a model for forming sentences orally by using the words and grammar supplied by the materials. Learners are often asked to focus on the use of a certain grammatical item, for instance, “Talk to your partner and make sentences together; remember to use the accusative.” (S 9: 40). Example 6 illustrates one of the most frequently used oral exercise type in the Finnish corpus.

(6)

Keskustele mallin mukaan. Vaihda alleviivattuja sanoja. [Discuss on the basis of the dialogue given. Replace the underlined words.]

A: Wo ist das Buch?

B: Es ist da!

A: Wo ist der CD-Spieler?

B: Er ist nirgends (Levittele käsiäsi)! [Show that you are puzzled!]

[German words supplied in a box] (S 8: 145)

Similarly, in grammar games, the skill of speaking is practised in a controlled way to gain a certain communicative outcome (cf. Ellis 2011). Playing with grammar often means dice games in which the grammatical item presented in the unit is practised, e.g. “Play Bingo [with possessive pronouns]” (SD 2: 23). In the choosing exercises (A), a particular grammatical item that has been presented in the unit is practised, e.g. “Choose the correct possessive pronoun.” (S

8, 68) The aim is to use a predetermined grammatical feature and practise it more or less communicatively (cf. Ellis 2011).

Finnish learners of German often have difficulties in placing the finite verb in second position in the main clause and respectively in putting the finite verb at the end of a subordinate clause. Grammar exercises that stress placing the finite verb in second position in the main clause are very common, such as in (7).

(7)

”Sprich mit dem Partner. Ralf ja Mona keskustelevat koulunkäynnistään. Käy parisi kanssa keskustelu niin, että aloitat lauseet tummennetuilla sanoilla.” [Ralf and Mona talk about school. Discuss with your partner and make sentences beginning with the words written in bold.]

Examples: Ich habe **heute** einen Mathe-Test. Ich habe **morgen** zwei Stunden Latein, ugh. [-- -]” (SD 1: 83)

In general, the approach in Finnish books does not display great variety. Still, more variation in exercise types can be found in the Finnish than in the Dutch course books. The pedagogical approach to grammar learning that emerges from the Finnish books is focus on forms with guided and controlled practice, consisting mostly of blank-filling and choosing exercises. In the Finnish books, reproductive grammar exercises, in which learners are required to use the grammar rule in question, mostly follow directly after the guided discovery of the rule in question. This is clearly the PPP approach with the emphasis on presentation and practice. The results indicate that activities in the Finnish textbooks promote the use of language in daily life situations, that is, grammar exercises include the scaffolded and guided production of language in order to communicate (cf. Newby 2014; Tomlinson 2011). This is in line with the Finnish core curriculum. The communicative approach can also be seen, for instance, in the sentence-building dialogue and game-like exercises in which learners are usually expected to work with peers.

3.3.3 Global GFL textbooks

Whereas in the Dutch and Finnish teaching materials the grammar rules and exercises are

provided in the workbooks, in the global GFL teaching materials both textbooks and workbooks involve practising grammar. In the global course books, grammar is generally found throughout the chapter, in short blocks. A grammar overview is mostly given at the end of the chapter or at the end of the textbook. Both inductive and deductive introduction of new grammar is found. In general, grammar is integrated into productive exercises although the relation to previously introduced and practised grammar is not always stated explicitly.

Table 3. Number of exercises per exercise type in the global GFL books.

Exercise type	Team Deutsch	Planet	Geni@l
A Choosing	12 (9.3%)	25 (26.6%)	16 (22.5%)
B Filling in blanks	66 (51.2%)	38 (40.4%)	32 (45.1%)
C Sentence building	24 (18.6%)	23 (24.5%)	11 (15.5%)
D Dialogue building	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.4%)
E Combining	6 (4.7%)	1 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)
F Grammar games	2 (1.6%)	1 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)
G Translating	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
H Analysing	18 (14.0%)	6 (6.4%)	11 (15.5%)
I Revising	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Similar to the Dutch and Finnish course books, the blank-filling exercise (B) is the type most frequently found in the global books. These exercises often have a non-traditional layout in that they consist of tables to be filled in, have extra graphic options or are combined with a game-like element, as (8) shows.

(8)

5 Suchrätsel

- a Markiere die zehn Verben.
 b Schreibe fünf Sätze mit Verben aus dem Rätsel.
 Diese Wörter helfen dir.

oft – viel – ein Comicheft – schnell – seinen Freund – Meine Mutter – Englisch – um sieben Uhr – im Wörterbuch – einen Ferrari – Michael-Schumacher – Boris – Unsere Lehrerin – Mein Vater – Flo

O	M	S	P	R	E	C	H	E	N	T	L
F	E	R	N	S	E	H	E	N	K	E	E
A	U	F	S	T	E	H	E	N	P	S	S
H	G	Z	L	A	U	F	E	N	B	S	E
R	A	A	J	P	A	B	H	O	L	E	N
E	I	N	L	A	D	E	N	F	M	N	O
N	A	C	H	S	C	H	L	A	G	E	N

Infinitiv	3. Person Sg.	Beispielsatz
<u>fahren</u>	_____	<u>Michael Schumacher fährt einen Ferrari.</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

[Puzzle a) Find and highlight the ten verbs. b) Write five sentences using the verbs from the puzzle.] (G1: 49, from © genial, Deutsch als Fremdsprache für Jugendliche, Arbeitsbuch A1 ISBN 978-3-12-606261-9, with the kind approval of Ernst Klett Sprachen GmbH, Stuttgart, 2017, first edition published 2002 by Langenscheidt KG, Munich, Germany.

Sentence building exercises (C) and analysing exercises (H) are also popular, as presented in (9).

(9)

Ergänze die wenn-Sätze. [Construct sentences with *wenn*.]

a) Du ärgerst dich immer, (wenn – Schwester – anzieht – deine – deine – Sachen) [---] (P2: 73)

Dialogues with grammar, translation and repetition through self-study exercises are sporadically found. Unlike the Dutch and Finnish textbooks, no fixed patterns can be observed in the order in which the global GFL books use the types of grammar exercises. Moreover, grammar is not practised as a set of exercises (as we see in the Dutch and Finnish materials), but grammar exercises focus on a single pattern, are spread out over a chapter and fit in with the preceding vocabulary exercises and the topic of the chapter. In other words, they constitute a thematic unit and are not considered as a structure to be practised intensively, i.e. with more than one exercise.

Regarding research question 2, it can be concluded that the analysed global textbooks adopt the focus-on-form approach by integrating grammar into productive skills exercises so that grammar is not a goal in itself. Blank-filling exercises are made meaningful, attractive and probably more motivating through the layout and by including game-like elements. For instance, the exercise (10) below combines the selection of the correct form of the question word *welch* 'which' with a calculation puzzle.

(10)

2. Was passt zusammen?

Setze ein: *Welcher – Welches – Welche – Welchen.*

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a) _____ Tier kann sprechen? | 1 Deutschland. |
| b) _____ Monat ist der erste im Jahr? | 2 Der Papagei. |
| c) _____ Frau war ein Filmstar? | 3 Der Koala und das Känguru. |
| d) _____ See gibt es in Italien? | 4 Marlene Dietrich. |
| e) _____ Land in Europa kennst du? | 5 Der Januar. |
| f) _____ Tiere leben nur in Australien? | 6 Den Gardasee. |

Rechenrätsel: $a + b + c + d + e - f = 15$

[Fill in the blanks.] (P2:19, from © Planet 2, ISBN 978-3-19-011679-9, with the kind approval of Hueber Verlag, Munich, Germany)

In the global GFL textbooks, grammar is sometimes introduced deductively, sometimes inductively, the latter giving learners the opportunity to discover the grammar rules themselves. Reflection on language in grammar exercises is seldom found; similarly, there are no grammar exercises with a contrastive and reflective approach that could encourage learners to make comparisons with their mother tongue.

4 Discussion

From the results of our study, it can be concluded that, in general, grammar exercises seem to mainly rely on deductive processing since they consist mostly of completion and matching. In the Dutch, Finnish, and global GFL textbooks, blank-filling exercises are still the most common exercise type. Table 4 summarizes the exercise types most frequently found in the corpus.

Table 4. Most common exercise types used in Dutch, Finnish, and global GFL textbooks

Dutch textbooks	Finnish textbooks	Global textbooks
1. blank-filling (39.6–59.0 %)	1. blank-filling (30.8–44.6 %)	1. blank-filling (40.4–51.2 %)
2. analysing (4.7–29.9 %)	2. sentence building (16.9–41.7 %)	2. sentence building (15.5–24.5 %)
3. choosing (0.9–17.2 %)	3. dialogue building (13.9–26.1 %)	3. choosing (9.3–26.6 %)
4. sentence building (2.6–29.6)	4. translating (5.0–9.7 %)	4. analysing (6.4–15.5 %)
5. translating (1.5–8.9 %)	5. choosing (3.0–6.3 %)	5. combining (0.0–4.7 %)

The percentage of fill-in-the-blanks exercises in the corpus, ranging from 30.8 to 59.0 %, is quite noticeable. On the whole, the distribution of grammar exercise types reveals a traditional core of exercises (blank-filling exercises), supplemented by communicative (sentence/dialogue building, type F) and awareness raising (analysing, type D) exercises. Boers et al. (2016) obtained similar results. In their study, almost 85 % of phrase-focused exercises in recent ELT textbooks were matching and gap-filling.

Grammar learning in the Dutch and Finnish GFL textbooks is sequenced mostly according to the following pattern. Firstly, explicit instruction or strongly guided discovery of grammar items takes place, i.e., grammar items are derived from examples and texts included in the books. This means that learners are asked to fill in blanks and/or tables following the grammar rule, or to answer questions related to it. Secondly, the grammar items are practised mechanically by filling in blanks or choosing. Thirdly, communicatively oriented practice of the forms may be used by building sentences or dialogues (cf. Doughty and Williams 1998; Littlejohn 2011; Newby 2014). The emphasis clearly lies on presentation and practice. This suggests that FL textbooks, in general, should provide more frequent opportunities to produce language and to communicate with peers using that language (cf. Tomlinson et al. 2001). In the analysed textbooks, the “focus on forms” approach is usually found, with explicit grammar instruction focusing on one grammatical item at a time followed by controlled practice of the item. Semi-guided or free productive practice is rare. Productive exercises in Finnish GFL books are strongly guided, more than in the global and Dutch materials. This might be related to the typological distance between the Finnish and German languages (see below). Although productive exercises are found in Dutch GFL books too, speaking and writing exercises are

generally based on newly introduced vocabulary, not grammar. On the basis of our data, it seems that, in general, in FL textbooks, the traditional form-focused PPP approach of grammar teaching and learning still prevails and is widely used (similar results were obtained in the study of Andon and Wingate 2013). Based on our experience as German teachers, we can say that Finnish L1 students need much more guided practice and explanation of grammar, since sentence structure is very different in Finnish compared with Germanic languages. There is less variation in grammar exercise types in Dutch and global GFL books, which is probably due to these languages being strongly related.

Our study shows that translation exercises, in which the learner's L1 is used in addition to the target language to support learning, are found in locally used Dutch and Finnish textbooks. This type of exercise can help to raise language awareness, to contrastively analyse the languages and can be beneficial especially in reflecting and analysing similarities and/or differences between the L1 and the target language. These exercises seem to function both with an L1 similar to the target language German (Dutch) and with an L1 very different from the target language (Finnish). For learners with Finnish as L1, learning foreign languages such as German is challenging since their mother tongue is not an Indo-European language but belongs to the Finno-Ugrian language family. In practice, this means that, as Finnish is very different from other European languages, many items of German grammar that are transparent, for instance, to Dutch learners of German, are more difficult for Finns to comprehend. Some examples of this difficulty are articles, gender, three different pronouns for third person singular (in German *er/sie/es*), prepositions, and separable verbs, which do not exist in Finnish. However, Finnish students learning German, mostly as their third (L3) or fourth (L4) foreign language, can use their prior knowledge of English and Swedish, which in Finnish basic education are the foreign languages most commonly taught. Exercises with an analytical and reflective approach could be used to explicate the differences and similarities between the L1 and the foreign language (here: German). However, this type of exercise is seldom found.

On the basis of our analysis into GFL teaching materials, it seems that gapped sentences are the most commonly used exercise type. Referring to the composition of exercise types, the following questions arise: Why do gapped sentences and other controlled practice with an excessive focus on language form (cf. Aski 2005; Funk 2014; Tomlinson et al. 2001) still dominate in FL textbooks? Funk (2014) gives the following reasons for their use. They are easy to create, even by inexperienced authors, and they can be made with computer programs. These

mechanical exercises are also easy for both learners and teachers to do and to check in the classroom. In addition, learners can receive feedback immediately and are given the impression that they can actually be effective in the target language. In their review article, Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) found that in several studies there is little evidence for the effectiveness of the most commonly used exercises in grammar learning, that is, gapped sentences and matching exercises. Ellis (2002, 170) also expresses doubts whether learners are able to put their knowledge acquired through controlled exercises into communicative practice.

On the other hand, effective open-ended productive exercises need a great deal of scaffolding of the language in advance and are time consuming for the teacher to develop and to assess after the learners have completed the exercises. Moreover, open-ended practice involves instructional scaffolding and linguistic input from the teacher. It can also be that productive grammar exercises are rarely found in FL textbooks because learners can find them difficult without further vocabulary or help from the teacher. In this area, further investigation is needed. One method of how gap-filling exercises could be made more beneficial for learners is that they are provided with examples of the target phrases before doing the exercise. This was suggested by Boers et al. (2016), who find that adult English textbook users are not adequately provided with contextualized examples or any other help from the textbook. In other words, our findings confirm earlier studies. In particular, the large number of gapped sentences can be explained by language teaching practices: blank-filling exercises are convenient both for teachers and learners.

Gapped sentences seem to be overrepresented and perhaps need to be supported by other activities in order to make them more learner-centred and to lead to discovery learning. For instance, when game-like elements are combined with gapped exercises, these might be more appropriate for younger adolescent learners. The exercises should encourage learners to play more often with language and/or use it creatively and communicatively with their peers. According to our study, learners are mostly required to use their linguistic knowledge (provided by the textbooks), and integration with other skills is not required. This approach favours the isolation of grammar teaching from other skills and could be described as an activity block approach, such as, 'first we do grammar, then we learn writing, speaking etc.' However, the analysed global GFL textbooks tend to integrate grammar into meaningful productive exercises more than the Dutch and Finnish textbooks. The integration of grammar is then the responsibility of the teacher.

The common approach to grammar teaching in FL textbooks emerging from our results is a mixture of a traditional and a learner-centred approach. The activities provide mostly guided practice of grammar, without giving opportunities to use the target language creatively and/or analytically. In general, the inductive grammar instruction in the textbooks analysed is rather predictable and not sufficiently challenging for learners (cf. Newby 2014). Grammar exercises based on this kind of instruction do not assist learners in the process of learner-centred meaning construction, for example, by encouraging them to independently discover and explore linguistic phenomena and to reflect on language(s) (cf. Andon and Wingate 2013). When the inductive or discovery approach is used in textbooks, it usually requires learners to find pre-determined answers. In most of the grammar exercises in our corpus, learners are asked to manipulate sentences that are often de-contextualised. After the presentation of grammar rules, these rules are practised mostly with the help of gapped sentences, pattern drills, and sentences to be transformed. These exercise types clearly reflect a form-based, mechanical view of grammar without a specific context. Teaching materials tend to strongly influence FL teaching in that textbooks “aim to ‘micro-manage’ the classroom event by providing detailed guidance on how teachers and learners are to work together” and only seldom “provide ideas that teachers and learners are actively encouraged to critically select or develop” (Littlejohn 2011: 184). Since we cannot know how teachers use the textbook in practice, we can only make assumptions about their pedagogical orientation. However, our analysis gives indications of the pedagogical orientation that the analysed textbooks follow.

5 Conclusion

There is an observable discrepancy between the research literature on grammar teaching and learning and its actual practice in FL textbooks. Ideally, grammar should be placed in meaningful contexts, and should, above all, be integrated with other skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing (cf. Aski 2005; Boers et al. 2016; Borg and Burns 2008). Whilst ideal grammar learning is linked to concepts such as discovery, learner-centred exploration, and reflection on language(s), the reality in FL textbooks often still involves strongly guided grammar activities, which most likely enhance the mechanical learning of grammar.

In this study, we present a method for classifying grammar exercises in FL textbooks. On the

basis of our results, there is evidence to suggest that the form-focused approach with guided discovery or rule presentation is the most commonly used approach in the analysed GFL textbooks. Regarding the pedagogical criteria for ideal grammar learning, there is a need for more tailor-made and learner-centred grammar exercises in FL textbooks which would involve learners in using the target language and make language learning meaningful for them. To confirm whether this universally holds true, international comparisons of FL textbooks and other teaching materials are needed with future research to include other foreign languages than German. Further research is also needed in order to design and test new exercise types which enhance language awareness and learner-centredness. A further point for discussion is how language textbooks could be developed so that they could be easily modified for the needs of specific target groups. New digital materials seem promising since they might enable a more flexible and meaningful approach to teaching and learning grammar. Easily adaptable materials are needed to meet learners' specific needs because ultimately it is the learner's personal experience that matters.

The discrepancy between the conceptions found in the research literature and the actual content of teaching materials raises the question whether FL textbooks really are based on research (cf. Littlejohn 2011; Sheldon 1988). The huge number of controlled exercises in the form of gapped sentences raises doubts about this. It is easy to agree with the conclusions of other researchers (cf. Harwood 2010; Harwood 2013; Masuhara 2011) that there is still a need for better co-operation between textbook writers, researchers, and publishers. Textbooks play an important role as a kind of teacher education by encouraging teachers to use a wider range of activities. Once again teachers are in a key position to place grammar learning in meaningful contexts, to integrate it with other skills and, above all, to direct it towards language awareness and learner-centredness. It is desirable that FL textbooks would support teachers in doing this.

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Appendix 1. Description of the GFL course books.

Title of the book (abbreviations in brackets)	Year of publication	Components (supplementary components in brackets)	Size	Subdivision	Type of the book	Country of use
Echt! 1 (E 1)	2008	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (156 pages); workbook (261 pages)	14 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Finland
Echt! 2 (E 2)	2012	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (222 pages); workbook (243 pages)	14 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Finland
Kompass Deutsch Neu 7 (KDN 7)	2012	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (221 pages); workbook (228 pages)	16 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Finland
Kompass Deutsch Neu 8 (KDN 8)	2012	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (249 pages); workbook (254 pages)	14 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Finland
Super 8 (S 8)	2012	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher,	textbook in one volume for S 8 and S	12 units (grammar rules and	local	Finland

		teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	9 (175 pages); workbook (243 pages)	exercises included in the workbook)		
Super 9 (S 9)	2012	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	workbook (243 pages)	12 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Finland
Studio Deutsch 1 (SD 1)	2011	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (111 pages); workbook (226 pages)	16 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Finland
Studio Deutsch 2 (SD 2)	2011	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, files with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (140 pages); workbook (224 pages)	16 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Finland
Mach 's gut 1 (MG 1)	2003	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CD for teacher and student, teacher's guide, answer key)	textbook (115 pages); workbook (216 pages)	12 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
Mach 's gut 2 (MG 2)	2004	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CD for teacher and student, teacher's guide, answer key)	textbook (152 pages); workbook (240 pages)	12 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
Na Klar! 1-2 (NK 1-2)	2006	textbook and two workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment	textbook (164 pages); workbook A (91 pages); workbook B	9 units (grammar rules and exercises included in	local	Netherlands

		material, supplementary materials on website)	(117)	the workbook)		
Na Klar! 3 (NK 3)	2007	textbook and two workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment material, supplementary materials on website)	textbook (170 pages); workbook A (91 pages); workbook B (117)	9 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
Neue Kontakte. 1-2 (NeKo 1-2)	2008	textbook and two workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment material, supplementary materials on website)	textbook (144 pages); workbook A (135 pages); workbook B (144)	6 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
Neue Kontakte. 3 (NeKo 3)	2009	textbook and two workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment material, supplementary materials on website)	textbook (144 pages); workbook A (144 pages); workbook B (138)	6 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
Salzgitter heute 1 (SH 1)	2010	textbook and two workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (146 pages); workbook A (86 pages); workbook B (97)	8 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
Salzgitter heute 2 (SH 2)	2011	textbook and two workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment material)	textbook (156 pages); workbook A (92 pages); workbook B (110)	8 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
TrabiTour 1 (TT 1)	2013	textbook and three workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment material, supplementary materials on website)	textbook (119 pages); workbook A (113 pages); workbook B (123 pages); workbook C	9 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands

			(119 pages)			
TrabiTour 2 (TT 2)	2014	textbook and three workbooks (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide, book with answer key and assessment material, supplementary materials on website)	textbook (137 pages); workbook D (136 pages); workbook E (130 pages); workbook F (134 pages)	9 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the workbook)	local	Netherlands
Team Deutsch 1 (TD 1)	2010	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide)	textbook (176 pages); workbook (128 pages)	10 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the textbook)	localised	Netherlands
Team Deutsch 2 (TD 2)	2011	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide)	textbook (175 pages); workbook (127 pages)	10 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the textbook)	localised	Netherlands
Planet (P 1)	2004	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide)	textbook (128 pages); workbook (128 pages)	16 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the textbook)	global	Netherlands
Planet 2 (P 2)	2005	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide)	textbook (128 pages); workbook (128 pages)	16 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the textbook)	global	Netherlands
Genial (G 1)	2002	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide)	textbook (120 pages); workbook (96 pages)	15 units (grammar rules and exercises included in the textbook)	global	Netherlands
Genial 2 (G 2)	2003	textbook and workbook in two volumes (CDs for the student and teacher, teachers' guide)	textbook (120 pages); workbook (104 pages)	15 units (grammar rules and exercises included in	global	Netherlands

				the textbook)		
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