Two aims of this thesis are to define communicative competence in English that is necessary for Japanese high school learners of English and to identify the types of instruction for English grammar which support communicative competence in the language. My experiences as a learner of English and a teacher trainee have offered me ample opportunity to reflect on these issues.

In my junior high school, reading comprehension was mainly conducted through translation. Students used workbooks to learn English grammar. Even in the classes with Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs), the students were too passive to communicate with other students and the teachers.

When I was a high school student, there were hardly any opportunities for communication and learning English grammar. Almost all of the class consisted of translation. Again, the students had passive attitudes in the classes with ALTs.

In the 2nd grade of high school, I attended a so-called "cram school" for English learning. At the cram school, the participants got motivated because they had to speak only English in the classes. However, they did not gain confidence in their knowledge of English grammar because the learning of it was not systematic.

In university, there were many English classes and the students used materials that were written in English. However, the classes were conducted by Japanese teachers in Japanese. Several English classes were taught by English native speaker teachers; however, the teachers rarely pointed out the students' mistakes. Therefore, the students remained unsure of their English abilities.

When I was a 4th year student of the university, I went to a high school for teaching practice. In my first English class, I introduced some activities in order to improve the students' passive attitudes. However, the idea was not accepted by my supervising teacher, and I was forced to revert to the traditional curriculum of translating the textbook. Predictably, the students had passive attitudes toward my English classes.

Interestingly, when I was a junior and senior high school student, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) had stated objectives for teachers to foster students' language skills in a good balance. However, the coursework I experienced in no way matched these objectives of the Course of Study. It is no wonder that the students in my classes did not acquire English communication skills.

In 2009, the MEXT announced the new Course of Study for high school, to begin implementation in 2013. The overall objectives of the Course of Study are as follows: "To develop students' communication abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information, ideas, etc., deepening their understanding of language and culture, and fostering a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages." (The new Course of Study English version published by the MEXT, 2009) Moreover, the MEXT has recently
emphasized the importance of grammar instruction in the Explanations of the new Course of Study. Therefore, teachers will have to recognize the importance of grammar instruction.

In Europe in the 1990s, communicative language teaching (CLT) was developed in order to raise learners’ communicative competence (CC). Indeed, the concept of CC and a notional/functional syllabus were key to the development of CLT. CC had been proposed earlier, in 1972, by Hymes. After that, many researchers tried to elaborate on CC. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) identified four components of CC: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Their idea of CC was very influential in language teaching. However, these components are not parallel, as grammatical competence supports the other three competences.

A notional/functional syllabus consists of two categories: notions and functions. The “notions” category refers to what meanings learners want to convey such as time, sequence, quantity, location, frequency and so forth. “Functions” refers to what people want to do with the language, such as make a request, denial, offer, complaint, and so on.

CLT has two versions in its implementation: a strong version and weak version. In the weak version, grammar explanation and drill practice are carried out. As a result, this version can be said to be eclectic in integrating the traditional type of instruction. The strong version has two approaches: content-based instruction and task-based instruction. Content-based instruction applies a topic/theme syllabus. One of the well-known approaches of this type is immersion. Task-based instruction uses a task syllabus. In this instruction, learners can learn language as a tool for carrying out tasks.

However, CLT has been criticized, because learners’ accuracy level in grammar is not promoted very much. Also, there are difficulties in its implementation in EFL situations because of both cultural and practical reasons.

For decades, teachers and researchers have discussed the “form” or “grammar” of a language. Many types of grammar instruction have emerged, but teachers cannot directly instruct learners in the linguistic forms of the target language. Therefore, some researchers point out the importance of noticing. The ideas of “focus on form” (FonF), “consciousness raising” and “noticing” have been influential in recent language teaching.

In EFL situations, noticing is important for learners because noticing promotes the process of proceduralization. In this process, declarative and explicit knowledge are replaced with procedural and implicit knowledge. In communicative language use, the latter knowledge is used rather than the former knowledge. Therefore, a goal of foreign-language instruction is to provide opportunities for proceduralization to occur. It can be said that FonF is good way to achieve this goal.

There are many types of instruction based on FonF. Among them, “input processing” and “dictogloss” are easily applicable to high schools in Japan. Teachers do need some daily preparation to implement these types of instruction. However, it can be said that learners of these systems notice the relationships between form and meaning, and more readily experience proceduralization through these types of instruction.