

THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR

1. The important point is that the study of grammar as such is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning to use a language.

(from L. Newmark 'How not to interfere with language learning' in Brumfit, C. J. and Johnson, K, (eds-) The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 165)

2. The language teacher's view of what constitutes knowledge of a language is...a knowledge of the syntactic structure of sentences... The assumption that the language teacher appears to make is that once this basis is provided, then the learner will have no difficulty in dealing with the actual use of language...There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that this assumption is of very doubtful validity indeed.

(from H. G. Widdowson, 'Directions in the teaching of discourse' in Brumfit, C. J. and Johnson, K. (eds.) The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching, Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 49-50)

3. The persistence of grammar-based instruction in many teaching contexts in the world, despite its relative failure to produce effective language users, is partly due to the fact that it creates conditions where teachers feel secure as they can predict the language that will be needed and they feel comfortable with their roles as knowers.

(from Ali Shehadeh, 'Task-Based Language Learning and Teaching: Theories and Applications.' in Edwards C. and Willis J. (eds) Teachers Exploring Tasks in English Language Teaching, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

4. It might be better to think of the teacher's role as less one of *covering* the grammar than of *uncovering* the grammar. That is, facilitating the natural processes of emergence: not forcing the grammar in, but letting the grammar out.

(from Scott Thornbury 'Uncovering Grammar', Macmillan Heinemann, 2001. p. 57)