Teaching grammar and the question of knowledge [1]

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Despite the fact that in many countries a great deal of classroom time and self-study is devoted to the learning of grammar, it appears that very little theoretical consideration is given in teacher education programmes either to the nature of the grammatical code which is to be acquired by learners nor to theories of how grammar is learnt in school-based contexts. As stated earlier in this volume, the theories of Krashen are given prominence by many teacher educators, yet since they contradict very strongly ways in which grammar tends to be taught in many European countries, it is unusual to find teacher educators who advocate the implementation of Krashen's views when it comes to the teaching of grammar. Alternative theories, such as cognitive views of learning, did not figure in the pre-workshop survey of theories. Whilst the label "communicative" was invoked, largely to refer to the format of certain classroom activities, teacher educators at our workshop did not, on the whole, see communicative grammar as offering a coherent approach to the learning of grammar.

In discussing grammar, I shall focus on two questions simultaneously: firstly, what kind of approaches to learning and teaching grammar can be proposed which are in line with theories and principles of "post-communicative" teaching and views of learning? Secondly, is it possible to find a common theoretical core which links grammar to what, on the surface, would appear to be a quite different area of teaching/learning-related topics dealt with in this book, such as learner autonomy and cultural awareness? The first question is linked to the "coherence of principles" part of the project title; the second question relates to "cohesion of competences".

In order to do this, I shall focus on the general issue of knowledge and, in doing so, shall make use of the three *savoir* categories used in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*: *savoir*, *savoir-faire*, *savoir-être*. So far these categories of knowledge have been applied to the area of culture (see Anne-Brit Fenner's chapter on "Intercultural awareness" in this volume); I shall suggest that they are applicable, though in somewhat different ways from culture, to examining both the theory and practice of the teaching and learning of grammar. Figure 1 shows the terms and corresponding approaches which will be referred to in following discussions.

Figure 1: *Savoir* and grammar

Types of knowledge	Approaches to grammar
Savoir	Traditional grammar
Savoir-faire	Communicative grammar
Savoir-être	Cognitive grammar

Knowledge

As can be seen from the above chart, the word *savoir* is present throughout. That is to say, knowledge, its storage, utilisation and acquisition are at the core of all theories of learning; without knowledge there can be no language and consequently no language-based communication. It follows that what is at issue is not whether knowledge is necessary, but what we mean by knowledge and what role different types of knowledge play in language use and in learning processes. It should be added that, in keeping with the general consensus of linguistics over the past few decades, language in general and grammar in particular will be seen, on the one hand, as a cognitive phenomenon – that is to say, our concern will be with questions of how grammar is stored in the human brain, processed and utilised – and on the other, as a social phenomenon – grammar is part of a more general linguistic code, the aim of which is to communicate messages between human beings who form part of speech communities. The knowledge which we are concerned with is that of grammar rules, though the word "rule" must be interpreted as it is seen by linguists and means generalisations about regularities that underlie the

1 Taken from Fenner, A.B. and Newby, D. (eds.) (2006) *Coherence of principles, cohesion of competences: Exploring theories and designing materials for teacher education.* Graz/Strasbourg:European Centre for Modern Languages/Council of Europe Press

grammatical system and which steer language use. That is to say, rules represent an abstract cognitive construction and should not be regarded as a set of prescriptive statements, which is how some pedagogical grammarians and teachers tend to see them. In discussing the teaching and learning of grammar I shall consider four knowledge-related aspects:

1. categories of grammatical knowledge, that is how does the human brain categorise grammar?
2. the storage of grammatical knowledge in the brain;
3. how can we optimise the efficiency of learning processes in order to aid the acquisition of knowledge?
4. what might be the quality and outcome of the acquired knowledge? How will it serve learners and will it meet their communicative needs?

The first two of these questions fall primarily within the discipline of linguistics, though they are of great relevance for language learning; whereas (3) and (4) are largely the concern of methodologists, though in devising pedagogy they must draw on theories deriving from both linguistics and cognitive psychology. In focusing on knowledge we are entering complex, and indeed controversial, linguistic and pedagogical territory. As we shall see, it will throw up a plethora of theoretical issues and accompanying terminological distinctions, which are often confusing. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss each one in great detail; however, it is hoped that the brief snapshot that will be given will cast some light on theoretical issues which underlie different approaches to the teaching and learning of grammar, and indeed other aspects of language too. I shall then consider these issues with regard to three general approaches to grammar: traditional grammar teaching, communicative grammar and cognitive grammar.

Categories of grammatical knowledge

A fundamental issue which needs to be addressed when taking a generally cognitive view of grammar is: what is the nature of the grammatical categories stored in the mind? This in turn leads to the question: what actually is grammar? To pose this question might seem to lead us into very deep and theoretical linguistic waters, far away from decisions that have to be made in the classroom. Yet it is a question which needs to be addressed in teacher education since how we view the phenomenon of grammar will impact directly on important aspects of grammar teaching such as objective setting, rule formation and methodology.

In recent years linguists have debated the question of whether language represents a special module within the mind, as claimed by Chomsky and the generative school, which will entail that language is analysed largely in isolation from other aspects of human cognition and in its own specifically linguistic terms, or whether language should be seen as one type of a more general human intelligence which works along similar lines and in tandem with how information of all types is perceived and processed, the position taken by cognitive linguists. Lee (2001: 1) describes the difference as follows:

> The main feature that distinguishes Cognitive Linguistics from generative grammar has to do with the place of meaning in the theory. In the generative model the structure of linguistic expressions is deemed to be determined by a formal rule system that is largely independent of meaning. By contrast cognitivists argue that linguistic structure is a direct reflexion of cognition in the sense that a particular linguistic expression is associated with a particular way of conceptualising a given situation.

One of the outcomes of this simple but actually far-reaching dichotomy can be observed in the mainly structural view of language, which is reflected in a Chomskyan syntactic view of grammar and based on the concept of universal grammar, and a semantically oriented grammatical description, such as that proposed by Langacker (1987), which is based on general categories of human thought. The former is likely to take as its main unit of analysis the sentence and will investigate how syntactic structures are generated. The latter will take as its starting point general notional categories – such as time or space – and will investigate how human beings channel their perceptions of the world into language categories and map them onto meaningful utterances.
As far as language learning and teaching is concerned, studies of second language acquisition seem largely to operate in a structural framework. This can be seen by frequent references in research studies to grammar in terms of "form-focused" instruction (see, for example, Spada, 1997), morpheme acquisition, etc. Amongst pedagogical grammarians, while lip service may occasionally be paid to a semantic view of grammar, for

example in Leech and Svartvik's *A communicative grammar of English*, the organisation of which is based on general semantic categories, it is difficult to perceive much coherent grammatical theory behind pedagogical grammars and methodologists' statements about grammar instruction.

The apparent lack of interest in grammatical theory is somewhat strange since this area has direct and immediate consequences for two important areas of grammar teaching: the setting of grammatical objectives and the specification of grammar rules, a task which many school curricula and textbooks and all pedagogical reference grammar books address. As far as objective setting is concerned, a generative, syntactic view of language is likely to lead to grammatical objectives being specified in terms of structures and morphological forms; a cognitive view is likely to lead to objectives being specified in terms of notions, functions and processes.

The nature of grammatical knowledge

The second knowledge-related question concerns the nature of the storage of grammatical knowledge. Two pairs of categories will be discussed here.

The first is linked to Chomsky's concept of "tacit" – that is, unconscious knowledge – which is how the grammatical knowledge of native speakers' first language is characterised. That is to say the knowledge of grammar rules, or grammatical competence, which steers performance is unconscious; the user has no direct access to this competence. This view of grammatical storage has had an indirect but nevertheless strong influence on discussions of grammatical rules and foreign language methodology and finds expression in the distinction between "implicit" and "explicit" knowledge. One line of argumentation put forward, in the form of a syllogism, by those applied linguists and methodologists who seek to stress the similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition, runs as follows: "natural" (namely, first language) use is steered by tacit or unconscious knowledge; L1 and L2 acquisition operate according to similar principles; therefore, conscious knowledge of rules and explicit teaching of grammar contradicts natural acquisition processes and are of little use. Such views have fanned the belief that overt grammar teaching is not beneficial and that a conscious and explicit, as opposed to implicit, knowledge of grammar should be avoided in pedagogy.

The second pair of terms, which has also had an influence on grammar teaching, is that of "declarative" and "procedural" knowledge. These are defined by Anderson (1990: 219) as follows:

> Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge about facts and things; procedural knowledge refers to knowledge about how to perform various cognitive activities.

The distinction is sometimes shortened to the formulation: "declarative knowledge is knowing that or what …"; "procedural knowledge is knowing how …".

The way in which I shall use the term "declarative" in this chapter needs a note of explanation. In keeping with a psychological view of language, declarative knowledge may be implicit or explicit. For example, if, in a controlled experiment, native speakers are asked to make a judgment of the acceptability of two utterances such as "I am used to getting up early" and "I am used to get up early", they will "know" that the former is acceptable and the latter not. However, the vast majority will not be able to explain that the "to" is a preposition not part of an infinitive, and that consequently it must be followed by a nominal phrase, which in this case is a gerund. Thus, native speakers possess implicit declarative knowledge. (The technical term "declarative" is unfortunate since it does not necessarily mean that it can be declared!) Explicit knowledge, on the other hand, refers to the ability to explain a generalisation using metalanguage, which is what grammar books, many teachers and some students might do.

The declarative – procedural knowledge distinction is important in language teaching since it provides a knowledge-based distinction between competence and performance and in turn supports a rationale of specifying the aims of learning grammar in terms of performance, rather than mere competence. This is an essential basis for both the skill-based approach of CLT and the "action-oriented" approach which can be found in the descriptors of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

The acquisition of grammatical knowledge

How language in general and grammar in particular are acquired clearly represents a vast theoretical area. For the purposes of the necessarily brief discussions of this chapter, I shall focus on one aspect of grammar acquisition: the question of how grammatical rules may be internalised. Three aspects of this knowledge-related question will be considered.

The first concerns the distinction made famous by Krashen (1981) between "acquisition" and "learning". The former corresponds to unconscious knowledge, reflecting the view of "tacit" knowledge referred to in a previous section, and the unconscious nature of much of first language acquisition; the latter is described by Krashen as a conscious, explicit process – for example, using explicit rules in teaching or learning grammar. For Krashen, it seems that "acquisition" is the natural, effortless goodie; learning the boring, pedagogical, unsuccessful baddie.

The second aspect relates to the route by which knowledge may be acquired. Here we are looking at the terms "deductive" and "inductive". If a deductive route is taken, a rule is first given by teacher or textbook and on the basis of this explicit knowledge the learner is given controlled practice to consolidate the rule and aid internalisation. An inductive route, on the other hand, will take as its starting point examples of language, often accompanied by a task which requires learners to interact with language and which has the aim of helping learners to form generalisations about the functioning of a grammatical item. The deductive route is at the core of much of traditional grammar teaching, whereas an inductive route, in which learners become aware of rules through their interaction with language, is often favoured in more recent approaches.

Finally, I shall consider four general types of activity which learners may engage in and which serve as a means to facilitate the process of internalising grammatical rules. I shall identify four activity types, which are listed below:

1. explication (by teacher, grammar book, etc.) – using metalanguage, for example, making statements about grammar and using terminology and labels; also using charts and diagrams, etc.;
2. exemplification – giving selected texts (sentences, dialogues, etc.) which serve to provide a focus on typical, and possibly prototypical, examples of the use of a grammatical item or items;
3. exploration – giving students tasks and awareness-raising activities, for example to discover a grammar rule;
4. utilisation – a "learning-by-doing" form of elucidation; students are given activities, grammar games, etc. which require them to use a particular item or items of grammar while performing a more general communicative task.

It should be stressed that these activity types are not mutually exclusive. All types may be found in one and the same classroom and they may be seen in some cases as complementing each other.

The outcome of grammatical knowledge

A final distinction that needs to be discussed is linked to one made initially by Chomsky: that of competence and performance. Competence can be defined as the underlying knowledge of concepts and rules that are stored in the minds of speakers. Performance will be defined as the process of utilising language knowledge in an actual context in order to encode a meaningful message. As far as grammar is concerned, the category of performance will enable us to see grammar as a (knowledge-based) skill. It follows from this that the aims of teaching grammar need to be defined both in terms of knowledge acquisition and in terms of skill development. The aim of learning grammar is not to be able to transform one sentence into another nor to fill in the gaps in a sentence – what I term "cul-de-sac" methodology – but to attain a level of competence which enables speakers to process contexts and to encode messages in ways that are meaningful, appropriate and accurate. Teaching methodology must be geared to facilitating this aim.

There is, however, another aspect to the question of outcome. In the section on "categories of grammatical knowledge" I referred to the generativist versus the cognitivist view of language and said that a cognitivist view sees language in terms of one kind of information processing and not as a separate module. It follows from this

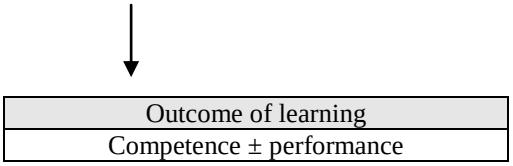
that any theory of language use and acquisition, including grammar, must also take into account other types of thought processes which are not normally associated with language. In a previous chapter, reference has been made to constructivist theories: the view that language users and language learners construct meanings and interpretations of events based partly on personal schemata, perceptions and experience. If we take a general constructivist view of human cognition, this will require us to incorporate any view we may have of language within a constructivist framework. At first sight, this might seem to confront us with a dilemma. After all, the very notion of grammar rules entails recognising the existence of linguistic generalisations shared by all members of a speech community; on the other hand, a constructivist view stresses the individuality of perceptions and knowledge structures. I shall return to this question in later discussions of cognitive approaches.

Summary

In this section I have opened up the debate on different approaches to grammar teaching and learning by stating knowledge-related categories upon which, in my view, most of the controversies concerning grammar teaching hinge and by referring to some of the pedagogical means which facilitate knowledge acquisition. The relationship between the various categories are summarised in the figure below. The purpose in compiling such a table is to show that different methodological techniques (means of knowledge acquisition) will result in different types of knowledge. I am not suggesting that any technique is superior *per se*; however, by analysing systematically the relationship between methodology and knowledge acquisition in tandem with learning style preferences, teachers might get a clearer picture both of learning processes and of how the aims of teaching grammar might be achieved.

Figure 2: Aspects of knowledge acquisition

Activity types: means of knowledge acquisition	**Nature of knowledge**		
	Storage		**Route**
Explication – learning by understanding	Declarative	Explicit	Deductive
Exemplification – learning by observing	Declarative	Implicit	Inductive
Exploration – learning by reflecting	Declarative	Explicit	Inductive
Utilisation – learning by using	Procedural	Implicit	Inductive



In the next section, I shall analyse some of the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches on the basis of these knowledge-linked categories and shall also incorporate the *savoir* concepts referred to earlier.

Approaches to grammar learning and teaching

The three general ways of approaching grammar – traditional grammar teaching, CLT and a cognitive approach to be discussed – are all based on the belief that language pedagogy has the potential to influence the acquisition of grammar in a positive way. My analysis will follow the four parameters referred to in the above discussion: categories of grammatical knowledge; the nature of grammatical knowledge; the acquisition of grammatical knowledge; and the outcome of grammatical knowledge.

My reasons for focusing on these three approaches is that they seem to me to represent those most commonly applied in the teaching and learning of grammar across Europe. It should be added that it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive analysis of each. Rather, certain salient features of their rationale and methodology, mainly with regard to the aspect of grammatical concept formation, will be discussed.

Traditional grammar – *Savoir*

The term "traditional grammar" reflects sets of practices with which many teachers will be familiar from their own learning and which, at the time of writing, continue to play a dominant role in many classrooms throughout the world. Some accounts refer to these practices as "grammar-translation" but it would be more accurate to characterise them as "grammar-vocabulary" since translation is just one exercise type, which may or may not be used.

At the centre of a typical lesson will be a single and specific grammatical objective, usually defined as a form (present progressive, passive, etc.) in accordance with a structural view of language. The methodology follows what methodologists call a "PPP" progression: presentation-practice-production. The teacher will "present" the new form together with one or more of its meanings or uses and this will be followed by a rule or explanation of the form and or meaning. Then come exercises designed to provide controlled practice (drills, fill in the gap, transformation of sentences, etc.), first to consolidate the rule that has been given and then to test the learner's grasp of what has just been presented. Intensive practice should eventually lead to production of correct language.

It would seem to me that, whilst having served generations of language learners, including, no doubt, readers of this chapter, traditional grammar is rather limited as providing a means of support both in terms of knowledge acquisition and of skill development. Indeed, many of its "practice" exercises seem to test grammar rather than to teach it or to support learning. Its chosen means to support concept formation is largely explication and it relies heavily on explicit declarative knowledge. I would argue that whilst this may lead to a certain grammatical competence, it does not do much to facilitate performance. Moreover, its strongly teacher-centred orientation and lack of interaction between learners do little to pave the way to the independent encoding of ideas and exchange of language, which are essential to grammatical performance. Whilst learners acquire a body of information about grammar or *savoir*, this is not "quality knowledge" in the sense that it remains at a declarative level and does not pave the way to performance. Whilst this level may have certain uses, it needs to be supplemented by other types of approach.

Communicative grammar – *Savoir-faire*

As stated in my earlier chapter on CLT, in post-communicative discussion of CLT it is sometimes forgotten that the initial impetus for this approach came from linguists who took a broadly functional, rather than structural, view of language. The notional-functional axis, which was essential to this form of language description and to the setting of objectives, is today rarely invoked. Whilst speech functions continue to play an important role in CLT, the notional tag seems largely to have been confined to the garbage can (see Newby, 2000a, 2000b). This is a pity, since a notional approach to language categorisation is essential in defining grammatical objectives from a speaker-based, semantic perspective, which is, in turn, a prerequisite for embedding grammar in a communicative methodological framework. Whilst there is some evidence from textbooks that grammar is sporadically described in terms of meaning, rather than form, a common scenario, which CLT has unwittingly spawned, is for textbook writers and teachers to take a structural-functional approach to grammar. In other words, much of grammar continues to be taught in a traditional way, whilst certain elements are treated more "communicatively" when packaged as language functions – for example, certain modal verbs in requests and offers.

It terms of language storage, a functional view of grammar does, of course, feed into procedural knowledge, since communicative methodology in general is performance oriented. Moreover, proponents of CLT usually advocate an inductive approach to the acquisition of grammar, which is in tune with the certain learner-centred principles at the core of CLT. At first sight, a functionally-based, performance-oriented, *savoir-faire* view of grammar seems to meet the general goals of the communicative classroom – to be able to communicate authentically in actual contexts. But let us throw a little spanner in the *savoir-faire* works.

In the area of cultural studies, much is made nowadays of the *savoir-faire* goal, the ability to behave appropriately in different cultural contexts. Particularly in domains such as languages for commercial or business purposes, emphasis is quite rightly placed upon learning how to behave in situations such as meeting business partners, taking part in negotiations, etc. Also, at a school level, it is of course important for students to know

how to conduct themselves appropriately when visiting or living in another country. However, many educators would not regard appropriate behaviour as the ultimate goal of teaching culture: a surface awareness of how to behave, they would argue, does not necessarily entail having a deeper understanding of the values held by other cultures nor does it require students to think about differences between their own and other cultures in a more profound way. Similarly, being able to use speech functions, in which grammar is embedded, does not mean that students internalise the type of knowledge which is required to encode their own thoughts into the target language. Grammar learning and teaching needs to operate at a deeper level if this competence is to be acquired.

Cognitive grammar – *Savoir-être*

Underlying much of second language research into language acquisition towards the end of the 20th century was the belief, or agenda, that second language acquisition processes resemble to a considerable degree those which operate in L1 acquisition. As stated above, this view underlies the popular, and perhaps popularist, theories of Krashen. In recent years, however, various applied linguists and methodologists have expressed reservations about the L1 ➞ L2 hypothesis. Some of the reasons stated are:

- for secondary-school age learners of a foreign language, for whom the critical period of language acquisition is over, language learning is qualitatively and quantitatively different from first language acquisition;
- unlike infants acquiring their first language, school learners can make an active contribution to their own learning since they have at their disposal a metacognitive awareness of learning processes and can adopt strategies to facilitate their own learning;
- a modular, nativist view of language and language acquisition fails to take into account the cognitive resources available to learners, which are active in both language use and language learning;
- language pedagogy can play an important role in facilitating school-based learning.

These premises underlie what might be called a cognitive view of language learning, although it should be stressed that there is no unified approach which campaigns under this banner, in contrast to the situation at the outset of CLT. Some influential applied linguists who have used the cognitive label in proposing learning models are O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Johnson (1996) and Skehan (1998). Some aspects of the relationship between cognition and 2nd language instruction can be found in Robinson (2001). An extensive account of my own "cognitive + communicative" model, on which the ideas in this section are based, can be found in Newby (2003).

Three general cognition-related aspects which cognitive approaches focus on are:

1. Learning processes – unconscious mental processes which the human brain employs in order to facilitate the learning of new information.
2. Learning styles – a learner's personal sensory and cognitive preferences for perceiving incoming stimuli and processing and organising information (see Riding and Rayner, 1998).
3. Learning strategies, which will be defined here – in order to distinguish them from (1) – as deliberate and conscious measures taken by learners to make their learning more efficient.

It is the first of these categories which will be the subject of this brief discussion.

The purpose in focusing on learning processes is that by identifying processes that are active in the human mind when human beings acquire new information, materials developers and teachers can use the resulting insights to support and activate appropriate processes when designing, selecting or using instructional tasks and activities. In order to analyse learning processes, cognitivists tend to turn their backs on theories of language acquisition supplied by linguists and to look instead to insights from cognitive psychology which relate to human learning in general, rather than to language in particular.

Whatever the theoretical starting point, models of learning, and indeed of pedagogy, often see learning processes in terms of a series of stages. In traditional grammar teaching, it is common to talk about "presentation-practice-production". Krashen's acquisition-oriented model identifies the stages of "input-intake-output". A cognitive model might identify stages such as the following:

- awareness – focusing of perceptions and releasing mental energy to process incoming information; this requires learners to register salient information and to recognise certain patterns or features;
- conceptualisation – restructuring existing knowledge, making hypotheses and generalisations about the items of language which are being given focus;
- proceduralisation – the process of transferring knowledge to long-term memory; the stage during which declarative knowledge becomes procedural knowledge;
- performance – the ability to utilise knowledge stored in the brain in authentic contexts.

It should be added that these stages are not separate, but to some extent overlapping. Moreover, they are to be seen as operating not in a linear, but a cyclical fashion. Nevertheless, it is useful to represent them initially as discrete stages in order to enable a systematic analysis of learning processes and corresponding pedagogical activities.

It will be seen that unlike the traditional PPP, which simply describes methodological stages, the above ACPP cognitive model takes a learning and learner orientation as its starting point and seeks to identify what might be termed "natural" learning processes. By natural, I do not mean naturalistic – that is, based on first language acquisition – but deriving from processes which underlie all types of human learning, whether they be incidental or intentional, occurring in non-pedagogical settings or school-based. When applying the model for the learning of a foreign language in school, teachers need to consider what tasks and activities can be used in class to provide optimum support to each cognitive stage.

A cognitive approach is not a method: it does not prescribe how to teach, but it does help teachers and learners to consider methodological options in a more systematic way. For example, I earlier mentioned certain "learning by …" options (see Figure 2). These are directly linked to the stage of conceptualisation since "learning by …" refers to how new items of grammar become internalised. This may occur through explication – the explanations of traditional grammar; through exemplification, whereby learners induce rules by observing how grammar is used; through exploration – that is, by means of discovery or awareness-raising activities; or by utilisation – for example, by playing certain grammar games which requires learners to use items of grammar to communicate meaning. For learning to take place, conceptualisation is an essential stage; however, how it is best achieved will depend on learning-style preferences of individual learners. Nevertheless, a cognitive view of learning is likely to give preference to exploration (awareness-raising) and utilisation (learning by doing) activities since the former aid the process of reflection, which is at the heart of cognition-linked methodology, and since the latter will help point learners in the direction of performance, which is the overall goal of learning grammar.

One advantage of identifying learning stages is that it enables teachers to take a much more systematic view of both learning and grammar methodology than is often the case. For example, it is easy nowadays to find a plethora of "communicative" grammar exercises and activities (for example, Ur, 1988; Rinvolucri 1984). What is not so easy, however, is to know how such activities contribute to learning processes. After all, there are many different types with different learning aims, which are usually not stated and often, in my experience, not analysed by teachers who use these activities in terms of the learning principles behind them and their efficiency with regard to learning. The stage model will help us to decide what exactly might be the learning aims of a particular activity: is it an activity which supports learning or does it simply test what the students are supposed to have learnt (an alarming number of grammar exercises seem to fall into the latter category)? Does the activity help concept formation? Is the aim to proceduralise what has already been more or less conceptualised by the learner? Do we provide activities which feed into performance and cross the bridge between competence and performance (in traditional grammar the link between practice and production often remains a pedagogical no-man's land)?

What is missing from the ACPP model is the category of "input", which is usually understood as the language provided to the learner by the teacher, textbook or other source. In traditional grammar teaching, based on a synthetic "item-by-item" syllabus, this may be a single grammar point (form, notion, pattern, etc.), embedded in a text. Krashen, who would no doubt reject a synthetic syllabus, nevertheless famously regards "comprehensible input +1" (from the teacher or text) as a prerequisite for the next stage of intake.

A cognitive view, however, would claim that both these orientations take far too narrow a view of input, since they limit it to what Chomsky termed "primary linguistic data"; that is to say, the language which learners hear or read. What needs to be included in any cognitive learning model is a more comprehensive and better defined understanding and specification of the input, not only of that provided by the teacher but also of the input which learners themselves bring into the learning process; in other words, knowledge structures which are well developed in school learners and which consist of both linguistic and general cognitive resources. Krashen's "input + 1" is essentially teacher-oriented in that it represents a static, and perhaps even structural, view of what the teacher believes the learners know. In contrast, a cognitive approach will see input as a dynamic and complex process, which may well include a learner's supposed existing grammatical knowledge but which will go well beyond this. Some important linguistic and cognitive resources are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Input

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Input from teacher/textbook, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Known language + new language + context = comprehensible input + 1</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Input from learners</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguistic resources</td><td>Cognitive resources</td></tr>
<tr><td>• General knowledge of language(s)
• Knowledge of L1
• Knowledge of L2</td><td>• Schematic constructs
• World knowledge
• Pedagogical knowledge</td></tr>
</table>

Linguistic resources

Since learners are already highly competent users of language, they have a "general feel" of how language in general works. Here I am not thinking necessarily in terms of language structure in the narrow sense, as advocated by proponents of "universal grammar", but in a wider sense. For example, learners know that language is used to communicate messages; that language is used to express the ideas, perspective and standpoint of the speaker; that language exchanges are assessed by speakers and listeners according to how and whether meaning has been communicated. It should be added that, on the one hand, this knowledge often lies latent within the minds of learners and, secondly, that many pedagogical grammar exercises tend to flout these general principles of language use by reducing grammar to a kind of "linguistic or pedagogical mathematics" which bears no relation to authentic use. As a result, it seems to me that learners often experience "alienation" when doing grammar activities. It is important that learners feel that they are doing "language-like" things with grammar and not engaging in tasks which contradict their natural feeling for how language in general works.

As far as the learner's first language is concerned, the universal grammar agenda held by some linguists has led certain theories of second language acquisition to play down the differences between L1 and L2 and consequently the influence of the latter over the former. Cognitive approaches, however, tend to recognise that in learning a foreign language – I use the term deliberately to contrast with second language – means acquiring a new conceptual system which differs in some ways from that of the first language. This will result in pedagogy in a stronger focus on language awareness exercises which help students to gain a greater understanding of both their first language and the foreign language and which may highlight both similarities and differences.

Cognitive resources

The importance of not only linguistic but also cognitive resources applies, on the one hand, to the use of language and, on the other, to the learning of language. As far as the former is concerned, one important difference between a cognitive approach and many purely language-based approaches to use is that the former recognises the importance of forms of cognitive organisation within the brain, on the basis of which perceptions of thoughts and events are conceptualised, categorised and structured and which help human beings to make sense of the world. Both thinking and using language are inextricably bound up with the process of conceptualising and categorising; being able to use a foreign language entails not just dealing with language at a sentence level but learning how to encode one's own experiences and perceptions of the world into that

language. It therefore follows that pedagogy needs to provide activities which support learners in the task of encoding their own experiences into language.

As far as learning is concerned, at the heart of a cognitive approach is the view that learning does not consist merely of an incremental increase of knowledge items, but requires learners to restructure existing knowledge on the basis of new experiences. This means that pedagogical activities should give learners the opportunity to reflect on and activate their own knowledge whenever new grammar is to be learnt and, if appropriate, to formulate grammar rules in their own terms. It is one of the aims of discovery and language-awareness activities to provide such opportunities to the learner.

The comments made concerning both linguistic and cognitive resources clearly tie in with a constructivist view of language learning referred to in other chapters of this publication. One consequence of taking this view of learning grammar is that learning a language entails learning how to represent situations through one's own eyes and that "I" should be in the centre of classroom activities. In many grammar exercises, however, it is almost as if the learner's own self is excluded from the process of language use. For example, students are given exercises to fill in or transform, in which the situation and vocabulary have already been decided upon by teacher or textbook author and all they are allowed to do is to add the missing grammar. Continually working with other people's ideas can have a negative effect on learning since it blocks the process of construction, which is an essential part of language use. Allowing learners to express their own ideas and feelings and make use of their own knowledge and experience in exercises, which is sometimes referred to as personalisation, is important if we are to see language in cognitive terms.

Two important pedagogical principles emerge from this. Firstly, the role of "existing knowledge" must provide a framework, and allow for templates, into which new knowledge can be embedded and interpreted. Secondly, students must be encouraged to carry out a process of "hypothesis-testing and revision" since this represents an important cognitive learning process, through which learners are able to reconstruct their knowledge of the foreign learning system they are acquiring.

How do the above ideas fit in with the concept of *savoir-être*? The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* translates *savoir-être* as "existential competence" but interestingly, neither culture nor language are referred to directly under this heading. *Savoir-être* is characterised as follows (Council of Europe, 2001: 105):

> Selfhood factors connected with their individual personalities, characterised by the attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, cognitive styles and personality types which contribute to their personal identity.

By adopting a cognitive view of grammar use and learning we are expanding the "selfhood" concept to include not only cognitive styles but also cognitive processes and constructions which learners will make use of in both learning and using grammar. The outcome of learning a new grammatical item will be not merely another box ticked off on the checklist in the syllabus but an increased ability to perform acts of communication, expressing thoughts that are generated by the learner in an extended range of contexts. How these somewhat abstract ideas can be put into practice is illustrated in the set of activities in Section B of this publication.

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