FIVE USES FOR GRAMMAR IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING *

'Communicative' or 'functional' FL teaching grew out of the search of an alternative to the grammar-based approaches that were its antecedents and that promised only poor results if adhered to after the teaching of FLs was universalised with the end of selective schooling in Britain. While the demise of grammar was welcomed by many teachers, pupils, and publishers, the attempt to make grammar the scapegoat for failed FLT alienated a conservative lobby. Communicative FLT has now enjoyed a ten-year run and already there are signs of reappraisal. Widdowson (1983) wonders whether his 1978 book *Teaching Language as Communication* might have been better entitled *...FOR Communication.* The disquiet that has begun to show in 'official' circles in the world of TEFL (where the movement began) is also felt at grassroots level among many FL teachers in Britain who have been required to use the new Graded Objectives materials that represent communicativism here. These teachers are bewildered by the apparent absence of grammatical content in these materials and are beginning to ask: «Is grammar tabu?» This paper is an attempt to show that attempts to teach FLs without reference to grammar are both misinformed as to the true nature of communicativism as well as likely to be counterproductive.

When the question of grammar is squarely put to advocates of these communicative approaches to FLT, their answers fall into two categories. This may come as a surprise, but this parsimony of

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argument is in itself indicative of a certain insouciance over the issue. The two suggestions for grammar are as follows:

i) The grammar we should be concerned with is not the same grammar as figures in traditional and 'structural' teaching materials, but it must be that grammar which is *communicatively* relevant. At this point reference is usually made to the 'grammar of discourse', the grammar that we use when we have to negotiate meanings, respond to rhetorical design (as writers or readers), register coherence, or do any of that 'procedural work' that is involved in processing discourse. An example of this stance is Sexton & Williams, (1984: 108-115).

ii) We should be teaching *cognitive* grammar today. After all, the communicative approach was in large part born of the Chomskian rejection of Behaviourism and his championing of Cognitive accounts of language learning. Accordingly, learners should not be fed the convenience food of grammar rules: instead they should be led or left to discover the rules themselves. Here 'teaching' involves little more than setting some (preferably authentic) problem-solving tasks.

Both of these views on the place for grammar teaching are patently evasive. The key terms — 'grammar' and 'teach' are simply overlooked. By 'grammar' we surely mean the codified description(s) of a language, but the term seems to have taken on a different meaning in the views we cite. It is true that in everyday parlance the term 'grammar' is exploited through many metaphorical extensions: people talk about the 'grammar' of music, of flowers, of good cooking etc. But surely such metaphor is out of order in technical discussions between professional linguists and language teachers. I think that the main reason why we have failed to engage in serious discussion of the problem addressed in this paper is precisely this retreat to metaphor.

However, given the proposition that this 'discourse grammar' is indeed the natural object of FLT, we must now urgently enquire: Where *is* this discourse grammar? It must be immanent in successfully executed discourse, there is no denying that; but I know of nowhere and no form in which it is codified in any other than rudimentary fashion, for example Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Leech & Svartvik (1975). In neither place is the description sufficient to carry a FL teaching programme. In fact one of these authors goes so far as to

deny the separability of a special sort of grammar that might be called 'discourse grammar'; there is grammar — and there the matter ends. Halliday also traces the origins of this belief in the independence of a grammar of discourse. It all started in the 1960s with the strong conviction that meaning was the governing factor in matters of language: a conviction that came to be known as 'semantic primacy'. This was accompanied by a neglect and ultimate rejection of grammar and an enthusiasm for discourse. Nowadays, observes Halliday, «...it is sometimes assumed that this can be carried on without grammar — or even that it is somehow an alternative to grammar. But this is an illusion. A discourse analysis that is not based on grammar is not an analysis at all, but simply a running commentary on a text.» (Halliday, 1985: xvii).

So, by 'grammar' we do not mean the metaphor; nor do we mean the native speaker's linguistic intuitions. What we mean, as do most language teachers, are those sets of codified statements (descriptions and hopefully also explanations) about the language. Such statements are usually 'formal' in the sense of Walmsley (1984) in that they are couched in a linguistic metalanguage, and this metalanguage is a major cause for concern, for the simple reason that it often bars the pupil's and sometimes also the teacher's access to the grammar. In recent years we have witnessed two widely different approaches to solving this problem of inacessibility brought about by the impenetrability of metalanguage. 'Pedagogic grammar' (Rutherford, 1980) has been a somewhat ineffectual attempt to identify the principles upon which to write special grammars for FL learners. Such grammars are special insofar as they can surmount the metalinguistic problems of inaccessibility that learners meet when they try to use other sorts of grammars, be these 'linguistic', 'scientific' or 'descriptive' grammars.

The second response to this problem of inaccessibility has at least the virtue of directness, which contrasts with the evasiveness of the 'pedagogic grammar' approach: this is the *language awareness* approach (Hawkins, 1984). There is no reason why children who learn to use the jargon of microcomputers with impressive ease should not also learn to talk about language. The relevant motto here perhaps is 'As ye sow so shall ye reap', interpreted to mean that children are unable to talk about language because they have not been shown how. This raises the question of teacher competence of course, since the vast majority of teachers have themselves little

idea of metalanguage and the analytical techniques involved in describing language. One can only hope that such bodies as *CLIE* (The Committee for Linguistics in Education) will make such necessary training available to all teachers.

There is one further weakness in the 'communicative grammar' movement, namely the assumption that grammar *is* irrelevant in language teaching because it is not essential for communication. Read literally, this is an absurd claim of course: if by 'grammar' we mean adherence to word order and using plural endings, then grammar certainly is essential for getting our meanings across. But we are not meant to take it so literally; the suggestion is that we can still get messages over even without meticulous formal accuracy, by employing all kinds of strategy and compensatory device like mime, caique and circumlocution. This is perfectly true, provided the ideas we are out to communicate are crude and mainly concrete. But this is to miss the point that the dominant function of grammar is social rather than cognitive or communicative. Standard grammars socialise people into political entities. This confusion between the communicative and social functions of grammar (and its teaching) was the basis of the so-called Honey debate that raged briefly in Britain just over a year ago. Honey (1983) reprimanded linguists for promoting the belief that all languages or dialects are 'equal'.

The point is that they may very well be equally complex, equally viable carriers of cerebration and equal in other ways: but *socially,* like Orwell's pigs, some are more equal than others. We judge people by their adherence to linguistic norms when they speak our language, and we expect to be judged in turn by those whose language we are learning on the same criteria. The teacher who conveys to the FL learner that it matters little *how* he gets his usually banal messages across is really inviting the learner to transmit a very powerful social message that he doesn't care about playing the game by the rule book.

This brings us back to that second school of thought, those who would opt for *cognitive* grammar. Their ideal is a replication on the part of the FL learner of those processes used to acquire the grammar of one's first language. The learner should calculate the grammar of the FL on the basis of noting constant and recurrent relationships between forms and meanings. In this process the principle of 'semantic primacy' (Macnamara, 1973) is to be observed, which means that the learner should use meaning as a clue to form (grammar) rather than the other way round, which was the way that structural FL

teaching had viewed the priority. The main obstacle to implementing this idea is that FL learners are not first-language learners: they already have established complex sets of form-meaning associations from which they sometimes cannot extricate themselves. As a result, there is LI interference. It would indeed be ideal if in FL learners the language system and the cogitive system could develop in tandem. To some extent this will still be possible with young learners, but in the case of the adult, who is already in possession of a fully-develo-ped cognitive system, the second (linguistic) system has to develop in isolation rather than in tandem with cognition. All this raises serious doubts about the prospects of cognitive grammar contributing much to FL learning.

Having hitherto struck a somewhat negative tone in challenging the value of proposals for grammar teaching to be communicative, discoursal or cognitive, I shall now suggest the roles that could, should (and in some cases really are) played by grammar in FL teaching.

1. Specification of the Instructional Objectives

Perhaps this proposal looks like a veiled call for a return to the Structural Syllabus; but that is not quite what is intended here. Syllabuses are designed for, and sometimes by, the materials writer and frequently neither teachers nor learners are party to the decisions that are made at this design stage. There needs to be some way in which teachers and learners are involved, not necessarily in decision-making but by way of being informed about what decisions have been made and why these. Some teaching materials are accompanied by a set of *Teacher's Notes* that perform this function. They constitute an essential link between the unseen coursebook writer and the teacher, a link that needs to be strengthened. The form in which teaching objectives are specified in the *Nates* must be grammatical, and the coursewriter ought to feel free to use the metalanguage we referred to earlier. Why not a functional specification? the reader might ask. Because there *is* no agreed metalanguage that is precise in the way that formal grammar (Walmsley, 1984) is, for talking about language functions. Even if there were, it would be insufficient, because GIVING ADVICE is open to many interpretations.

Just as the *Notes* take the teacher into the coursewriter's con-fidence, so the textbook should treat the pupil in similar vein. The

usual objection to this is the impenetrability of the 'jargon', but we have already seen that this is not insurmountable. More important than feasibility is the usefulness of informing the learner in this way. The learner who is conversant with grammatical categorisation is able to recognize and hold in focus the particular part(s) of the language he is engaged in learning at any one time. This emerged quite clearly from the Language Aptitude studies conducted in the sixties. Moreover, as studies of the 'good' FL learner have revealed (Naiman et al., 1978), an important attribute he has is his 'field-independece': this allows him to focus on the stimuli (i.e. forms) relevant to his immediate learning objectives and communicative needs and to disregard all others as (for the time being) irrelevant. This capacity is pertinent to the Monitoring (Krashen, 1981) function, in that one presumably makes use of the formal features of the FL in order to identify features to be monitored.

2. Objective Criteria for Learner Assessment

Desirable though it certainly is to have tests of FL communicative ability (Morrow, 1983), we do not yet have them. When we do, they will remain controversial as long as they rely on subjective judgements. Grammar is considerably more clear-cut and more amenable to decisions of right or wrong. Certainly even the edges of grammaticality are sometimes fuzzy; are the following possible for example?

Which film were you annoyed because you had missed?
Did he ought to do it?

But it is comparatively easier to determine how far a pupil has progressed in learning the *form* of the Present Perfect than it is to determine his familiarity with the *notion* of Current Relevance.

This is not to deny that assessment of the learner's functional-communicative competence is necessary at some stage. What I have doubts about is its feasibility-with objectivity-on a mass scale, i.e. in the State educational system. So elusive is such capacity of objective assessment that we shall in all probability even have to be content to rely on learner self-assessment. It appears that a useful lead in this direction has been taken by some *Graded Objectives* materials,

where regular opportunities are given to learners to assess themselves according to a functional criterion, i.e. whether they can *do* something with the FL such as ASK THE WAY TO X.

3. For Identification and Description of Native Language vs. Target Language Differences

In his Error Analysis of Portuguese students' written work Gomes da Torre (1985) revealed that 44 % of the errors could reasonably be diagnosed as having resulted from NL transfer. This is not the place to augment the extensive literature on Contrastive Analysis (James, 1980) nor to debate such niceties as whether NL interference or FL ignorance (Krashen, 1983). Suffice it to suggest here that it seems highly probable that some awareness on the part of learners of both the more salient and the more subtle NL:FL differences is likely to reduce the incidence of such errors. Teachers have been aware of this possibility for generations: telling learners to think of Possessives in French in terms of *The pen OF MY aunt* is a traditional remedy. What teachers have lacked is an ability to describe NL and TL in detail. They have lacked the linguistic training to pursue an objective that they instinctively endorse. Such a proposal for dealing with NL-based trouble spots has the added attraction of being complementary to Krashen's now well-publicised Monitor Model. He claims that conscious awareness of the FL rule is a useful way of cutting down on errors. It would seem eminently reasonable therefore to claim further that awareness not only of the FL rule but also of the relationship between that rule and the 'corresponding' NL rule is likely to reinforce the learner's monitoring power. Yet unfortunately, so committed is Krashen to 'natural acquisition' that he chooses to belittle the potential of this so-called *LI plus Monitor Mode* as a path to FL performance.

Not only will FL performance be improved through such bilingual analysis as a regular part of classwork, but there is an extra benefit: the ability to pursue such topics calls upon and heightens the child's language awareness. This is likely to be one of the lasting educational gains to the child of FL learning, and such education is going to be much needed in our multilingual and multicultural society. We are still much too ethnocentric in our educational treatment of language, as is evidenced in the recent HMI document *English*

from 5 to 16 (HMI, 1984), which makes no attempt to establish cross-connections between our national language and the host of older and newer ethnic minority languages spoken in Britain, or even between English and the FLs on the curriculum. It seems that even Widdowson (1983), who returns to the essential distinction between *education* and *training* insofar as it impinges on FL teaching, seems reluctant to see language awareness and the analytical ability that it rests upon as an *educational* objective.

Let me make it clear that I am not contemplating trying to turn pupils into linguistic theorists. They should be given the means to talk about instances of language in use, i.e. about *texts.* They are not expected lo learn to talk about ways of talking about these texts: are to develop a metalanguage, but not a metametalanguage. A familiar example of what I have in mind is the *educationally-based* exercise of translation. The main and strongest objection to translation as done in traditional language teaching was that it was done 'blind', that is, without any conscious awareness of the processes involved. So the product of this operation was nothing more than a rather bad translation: language awareness does not come from doing translation, nor does increase in knowledge of the FL. Unconscious and intuitive translation is predicated upon a prior command of the two languages involved i.e. upon the translator being bilingual[1]. People do not become bilingual or learn a FL simply as a by-product of trying to display existent translation skill. If we wish to view translation as a *means* to school-based FL learning we must treat it as an exercise to develop sensitivity to interlingual correspondences (or their absence). This sensitivity will have to be, in the case of learners of a FL, nurtured through consciousness.

The role to be played by consciousness in FL learning has been been under discussion of late, both in terms of 'raising to consciousness' (Sharwood-Smith, 1981) and in terms of the dichotomy drawm between unconscious *acquisition* and conscious *learning* (Krashen, 1981). Similarly Widdowson (1978a) takes consciousness as the criterion for his own very similar distinction between *reference* and *expression* rules as used in FL performance. But there has been very little talk of the value of making learners conscious of the NL:FL

[1] The inverse assumption however is not true: people who are bilingual are not *ipso facto* proficient translators. On the contrary, some bilinguals are unable to translate with ease.

contrasts in the way I am proposing. Certainly not in FL teaching circles anyway: but there has, interestingly enough, been some such talk in second *dialect* teaching circles. As long ago as 1969 Feigenbaum suggested this as a strategy for leading disadvantaged American Blacks towards 'dialect expansion'. More recently, Richmond (1982) advocates this approach with immigrant children in Britain. I know of no controlled evaluations of the approach, but its recurrent advocacy does suggest it has some efficacy and some face-validity. I am proposing its extension to FL classrooms in schools aware of 'language awareness'. A prerequisite for such work is grammar: give 'em the tools and they'll do the job!

4. For the Identification and Description of Differences between Learner and Target Versions

Here again we are involved in what is essentially language comparison. And grammar figures again as the criterion as well as the tool for making such comparisons. It is a medium for expressing the difference or distance between what the learner can and cannot yet do linguistically. This distance is *error.*

Error Analysis (Norrish, 1983) has now been declared unfashionable on the grounds that it is an unnecessary self-limitation to study only the *deviant* parts of learners' performance. Consequently Error Analysis has been replaced by Interlanguage Study and/or by Performance Analysis, both of which study right as well as wrong. At least this is true of Applied Lingustics. In the more practice-orientated Instructional Science the study of error has only recently gained in momentum. There, such writers as Lewis (1981) and Pickthorne (1983) have revived an earlier psychological notion of *Error Factor* and see this as a missing link between their cognitive science and classroom practice. They also reveal to what an alarming degree teachers are ignorant both of the sources of learners' errors and also of possible courses of remedial action open to them. The learner they see as the victim of 'confusion', which is reminiscent of H. E. Palmer's 'bewilderment' among FL learners. Of particular interest however is Palmer's suggested cure; he advocated the exploitation of the learner's 'studial capacities', going on to state quite categorically: «The student must be specifically shown in what respects his speech differs from that used by natives» (Palmer, 1921: 19).

This will have to start with teacher training of course, since teachers by and large are unable in any precise and rigorous way to pinpoint where learners go wrong. As Lewis *(op. cit.)* so tersley puts this point: «There is both ignorance about error and error about error.»

There is, I believe, a fairly simple reason why so few FL teachers feel confident about analysing their pupils' errors. It is an operation that requires considerable analytic-linguistic expertise, which most teachers still lack. Consider phonetic transcription as a preliminary step in the description of learners' errors: while it is not too difficult to learn to use the recurrent requisite set of phonetic symbols to transcribe *standard* accents — RP, Hochdeutsch, Parisian French — learners unfortunately just do not speak these standard varieties. To transcribe a learner's foreign-accented speech is very difficult indeed, even more difficult than to transcribe the most common regional native accents. Interlanguage phonology is possibly even more quixotic than Child Language phonology is. Nemser's study of the English of Hungarians bears vivid testimony to the kinds of intractable problems that arise, for «A considerable number of the productive and imitative responses were phone blends or sequences often not identifiable with phoneme categories in either Hungarian or English: [s0], [td], [fs], [t0], [ts], [st].» (Nemser, 1971: 94).

What is true of learners' phonology is even more true of learners' grammar. This explains why there have been so few true descriptions of areas of Interlanguage grammar. Indeed most recent work in Interlanguage grammar owes its apparent sucess to a strategem that allows the analyst to avoid the work of actually describing the forms that occur in learner language and how they are distributed there. Instead he resorts to a sort of tallying operation: 'description' consists in stating when certain pre-identified features of the TL have been exhibited by the learner with a certain criterial frequency of occurrence-usually 90 %. This was the approach of Brown's NL acquisition studies (Brown, 1973), adopted for FL acquisition research in the USA. *The Bilingual Syntax Measure* (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982: Ch. 8) is the source of the most cited data on FL acquisition and it relies heavily on the description-avoiding quantificational method better suited to opinion polls than to language research.

The whole point of describing the learner's version of the FL (his Interlanguage) is to identify discrepancies between learner's and

native's codes. This is itself the first step towards narrowing that gap: we have come to the issue of remedial work.

5. Grammar as a Tool for Remedial Work

There has been an unfortunate tendency among FL teaching methodologists to interpret the 'remedial' in remedial teaching or remedial work too literally. Consequently such teaching has traditionally been seen as post-initial failure-based reteaching of elements of the FL that were inadequately assimilated the first time round. This is how Wilkins (1976:75) defines it:

«A remedial course is different in that learning of the language has taken place previously, but the resulting competence is inadequate as a consequence either of forgetting or of unsatisfactory teaching and learning.»

When this happens, the role of remedial work is that of «teaching out» these inadequacies (Lott, 1983).

This is a negative and rather defeatist conception of remedial work: a set of strategies to be resorted to when — as it inevitably does — it becomes apparent that the initial teaching and learning have failed. There are two more positive ways to interpret the term. The first comes as a salutory by-product of discussions sparked off by the Monitor Model (Krashen, 1981). Monitoring is there defined as paying vigilant attention to the well-formedness of one's FL utterances before, during or after their execution. In a sense this welcome redefinition of 'remedial' in terms of editing has been with us for a long time, albeit in a different guise. One behaviourist interpretation of the role of the NL in FL learning was that the law of least effort disposes learners to use NL transfer as the dominant FL production and learning strategy. The role of teaching then was the avoidance of errors emanating from mistransfer or negative transfer: a view obviously having much in common with the in-process remediation (editing) we have been discussing. While it would be unwise to base a whole theory of FL teaching and learning on this postulate, it would be equally rash to reject it as being part of the process.

The second nondefeatist but realist interpretation of 'remedial' is outlined in James (1983: 116), where the idea is floated that a learner will best benefit from having his Interlanguage 'naturalised' — a term normally used in the context of nationality and citizenship formalities. To gain naturalisation the aspirant must prove nondeviance and nonperversion, solvency, command of the national language, and willingness to integrate. Note that he does not have to show ability to communicate so much as willingness to conform. This is why the metaphor is so apt. We observe the conventions of grammar for *social* reasons rather than instrumental ones. Perhaps 90 % of FL learners in schools have no social motivation for learning the FL: only instrumental ones. For this great majority it will suffice to learn to operate a greatly reduced version of the FL relying mainly on lexical chaining, some simple paraphrase strategies, but little grammar. The other 10 %—call them an elite if you like — will be the future teachers, diplomats and translators: for this group attention to grammar is inevitable, because their professional commitments call for what is tantamount to linguistic naturalisation. A major practical problem is to identify the naturalisation group early and so avert the problem of their errors having become so deeply ingrained as to be ineradicable. A vivid account of errors that have become fossilised on a wide scale in the English of Portuguese university students — the majority of whom were aspiring teachers of English! — is found in Gomes da Torre (1985).

What then is to be the essence of this more broadly-defined 'remedial' teaching? First, its objective must be grammar; unlike Wilkins *(op. cit.)* I cannot envisage any kind of remedial teaching that is functional, not if by this Wilkins means 'getting the message across'. The main feature of such teaching is that it is *ostensive,* and we should resort to ostensive teaching when experience and expertise alert us to the fact that for some aspects of the FL mere repeated exposure does not guarantee that learning takes place. Let me briefly show some ways of utilising grammar in ostensive teaching:

i) *Grammar Prompt:* As is well known, the English *3rd. Singular S* inflection is 'late acquired' and overlooked at times even by those who have acquired it. One way I suggest for drawing the learner's attention to this inflection — as well as to similarly recal-

citrant forms — I call the 'Partner Pair' exercise. Sentences are constructed containing *two* instances of the *S,* here in coordinated finite verbs:

The little bird comeS and sit- on my window sill each day

In this way the learner gets alerted by the blank and simultaneously with his being alerted the *S* is exhibited: an association conducive to self-monitoring is formed and reinforced. The two 'Partners' can be progressively distanced from each other to make the task harder. The fact that the clue (S) precedes the cue (the gap) gives a quite literal value to the term *pre-edit* here.

ii) *Negative Instances: A* recently published reference grammar for learners of English as a FL (Swan, 1985) is not the first to contain examples of common pitfalls like:

NOT a glass Venetian ashtray
NOT She smiled at me friendly.
NOT the poors' problem
NOT after I will arrive

This is teaching by proscription, telling learners what NOT to say. It is by definition remedial, since knowing what not to say derives from what learners *have* said. Such citation of negative instances was rebarbative to Behaviourist methodologists, but today the Cognitivist image of the learner as a discriminating intelligence, as well as the widespread use of the asterisk to signal ungrammaticality by descriptive linguists have made negative instances acceptable. It is an educational practice that some have advocated:

'It is sometimes not only possible to rectify Error Factors so that associated confusion is also removed, but, in addition, *their presence in particular learning contexts can itself be usefully employed»* (Pickthorne, 1983: 305, my italics).

Their use in teaching FL vocabulary is seen as essential by one writer: «If negative examples are not provided and/or if they are not described as incorrect the learners will be delayed in their learning of the meaning of a word.» (Krakowian, 1983: 183).

iii) *Error Spotting:* This classroom or homework exercise involves learners in finding, describing and correcting ungrammatical forms of the FL, that is, negative instances or forms that would not be generated by a grammar of the FL but do get generated by the grammars that learners hypothesise. Sexton and Williams (1984: 116ff.) suggest it as a viable groupwork activity and further point out that the errors used can be NL-induced 'interference' errors, universal developmental errors, or of course a mixture. Various categories of error can be used — morphological, word order, lexical redundancy, faux amis or violated cooccurrence relationships — but the optimal groupings is a matter for research still. A reasonable objection to the error-spotting activity is that the learner is exposed *exclusively* to incorrect models (Nation, 1983: 167) and this could well result in their being reinforced for him. This weakness is not inherent in the negative instances of work previously proposed since there the learner is confronted with right as well as wrong, the former being preponderant.

iv) *Mnemotechnics for FL error avoidance:* Recent FL teaching theory has once again endorsed Harold Palmer's prodigious insights (Palmer, 1921: Chapter 16) about the need to memorise chunks of the FL. Thus Dulay, Burt and Krashen, (1982: Chapter 9) talk of routines and prefabricated patterns. And yet, still very little has been written about *how* learners might improve their memory-storage of a FL. Most work relates to the memorisation of FL vocabulary by use of the Keywords' technique (Atkinson, 1975; Pressley, Levin *et al.*\ 1980). It seems that it was in the traditional teaching of the Classical and Modem languages that the mnemotechnics of grammar learning were last taken seriously. Kennedy's Latin Primer (Kennedy, 1930) made extensive use of mnemonic rhymes like:

> Socer, gener, -fer and -ger Are not
> declined like magister. You'll be sent
> to Kingdom Come If you don't put
> socerum.

The 'footbal team' is a visual mnemonic used in French teaching to overcome the tricky problem of the relative ordering

of the personal pronouns. The forward positions come first, the goalmouth last:

ME				
TE	LE	LUI		
SE	LA		Y	EN
NOUS	LES	LEUR	Y	bN
VOUS				

Teachers, textbook writers, and, most interesting, even learners devise these mnemonics. One of my own students (Francisco Moreno, p. c.) often made the mistake of saying ^*fathers* for *parents,* since they both correspond to his NL Spanish *padres.* He overcame the problem on noting that English *PARents* has the same first three letters as Spanish *PAReja* meaning 'couple' — and parents are couples.

v) *Identifying bad learning strategies:* The research that went into the tests of Language Learning Aptitude in the sixties, and the work on the Good Language Learner (Naiman *et at.:* 1978) revealed that an ability and readiness to attend to the forms of the FL are attributes of the sucessful FL learner:

«...the good language learner is prepared to attend to form ...constantly looking for patterns in the language ...constantly analysing, categorising, synthesising...» (Rubin, 1975: 47).

If such behaviour leads to successful learning it is reasonable to assume that it should be nurtured in learners who are prone to less than successful learning i.e. in remedial work. A common source of FL error is overgeneralisation, whereby a deviant form is produced 'by analogy with' correct forms: *b)* on the basis of *a):*

a) He wants to go home
b) *He must to go home

To avoid this, the drilling approach seems not to work, because the learner wants insight (in the form of categorisation) rather than, or at least prior to, automatisation. He must see that there are two relevant classes of first verb (modals and nonmodals) and two classes of Infinitive (bare and 'to') and that the four cooccur in limited ways. Such an insight is part of the linguistic intuition of the proficient

native or nonnative knower of the language, and the goal of teaching and learning is to make another learner share the insight: the problem is, how to achieve this. Explanation — whether verbal, diagrammatic or in translation — is one way. Grammar is important for the simple reason that it is the medium for such explanation. Gaining this insight might also have a knock-on effect of preparing the learner to steer clear of a related pitfall. Imagine the German learner of English who, having composed the utterance part / *can...* now consults his bilingual dictionary to find the English for *krabbeln,* If the dictionary gives the to-infinitive *to clamber* the learner who has not learnt to discriminate between the two types of inifintive will fall straight into the trap.

Concluding Remarks

This issue of grammar is a bone of contention today. Probably the main reason why the issue has now come to a head is that the first products of what has been seen as a 'grammar-free' FL diet are now graduating, and, as the Portuguese study referred to confirms (Gomes da Torre, 1985), the results are not pleasing. A second reason is the general malaise that surrounds teachers, in Britain certainly and probably elsewhere too. As Mary Warnock said in her recent Dimbleby Lecture (Warnock, 1985), teachers are undergoing a traumatic crisis of confidence. They no longer know what they are supposed to be doing, and have fewer and fewer opportunities to do refresher courses as the purse strings are pulled. Taking from them the little grammar they know to replace it with amorphous new functionality has done nothing to restore their confidence.

Here I have tried to be as concrete and practical as possible and have placed my bets on the five main uses for grammar. I have defined grammar in the narrowest possible terms in an attempt to avoid obfuscation. Even so, it is significant that the search for rationales has led us repeatedly to the central components of Applied Linguistics on the one hand and FLT Methodology on the other: to Error Analysis, Contrastive Study, Monitor Theory as well as to Drills v. Ostensive Teaching, Correction, Translation and Homework — all familiar themes.

We conclude that there *are* uses for grammar that are best served by grammar. Even if communication is the utlimate goal of FL

learning, there seems little to be gained by conflating means with ends. Since we can communicate quite a lot without grammar anyway, there is little point in hoping that grammar will emerge as a by-product of communicating. Grammar is just as much the hallmark of conformity to convention as the servant of communication: it plays a social function.

We must at all costs avoid dichotomisation: it is ultimately foolish to present grammar OR functions, Acquisition OR Learning as mutually exclusive options. The swing of the pendulum has symbolised FLT for too long. Grammar has its uses and we should not expect to teach and learn FLs better by proscribing grammar. On the other hand we can never rely totally on grammar. On the other hand we can never rely totally on grammar as defined throughout this paper, for the very simple reason that there is much of any language that must be learned but as yet has not been described. When the grammars are written, we would be wise to consult them, pending which time there are people who are only too pleased to show us how to manage without grammar.

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