

TEACHING GRAMMAR IS A WASTE OF TIME

Miguel Nenevé

The objective of this short article is to present some considerations relating to the teaching of grammar in second/foreign language classroom. In recent years there has been much discussion of this. For some theorists, grammar still has a role to play in the language classroom; for others, teaching grammar is just a waste of time.

It seems to be true that the total rejection of grammar in the classroom is based on oposition to the structural view of language which equated language teaching with grammar teaching. By eliminating grammar, according to some scholars, the teacher would teach what students need to communicate in the target language.

The assumption that grammar should be set, however, may perhaps lead language teaching into an uncomfortable situation. It is still not possible to claim that the complete abandonment of grammar teaching results in better language acquisition.

Most teachers would agree that there are circumstances in the classroom in which the students may need grammar in order to solve some problems in the use of language. Teachers, for instance, may be asked to explain some points which students think will help them to communicate more accuratly. In this case, the denial of teaching grammar by the teacher could be said to go against the "communicative view".

Thus, if it is true that in language teaching, teachers should not lose sight of the learner's goal, one may assume that there are instances, such as the example referred to in the previous paragraph when the teaching of grammar may be required. The conclusion that one can draw, therefore, is that it is not safe to say that teaching grammar

is a waste of time. The question seems rather to be, then, how to teach grammar, or how to treat grammar. I believe that it is necessary to discuss how to do this, because so me ways of teaching grammar may be a waste of time.