

# How Deep Is My Grammar

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## Introduction

The field of second language acquisition has been of virtually no use to practising teachers since its inception. Yet we continue to sniff around it as dogs do with pavement dung. Presumably because there is no other inspiration on the block. Pure linguistics, though more attractive than the applied variety, has been of even less practical value — were it truly a hard science it would by now be in receivership. A ‘LAD,’ in my part of the world, is someone who has a fondness for skylarking and deception. Someone to enjoy but not take seriously. This lack of relevance in no way reflects on those involved in the above field. Neither second language acquisitionists nor deep grammarians have ever made many claims concerning the applicability of their speculations. It is the language teachers who have rushed out to the desert to sit at the feet of the masters. It is something which makes good psychological sense, language teachers being, after all, in the position in which all teachers find themselves in that they need to have faith and must utter a short silent prayer before every foray into the classroom. This short paper will argue that such faith is a distraction from the job in hand, that the desert of our dreams is among deserts not untypical. It is deserted.

## Second Language Acquisition Theory

Rod Ellis in his comprehensive 1994 survey of what was at the time roughly thirty five years of second language acquisition research (SLA) is modest in his claims both as to theoretical progress and as to implementable value. Concerning the former this comment is offered: ‘As in other social sciences, there is no agreement about what constitutes the ‘right stuff’ in SLA research.’<sup>1)</sup> This would seem to mean that there is still no consensus on what kind of collectable data have sufficient validity and reliability to form

the basis of an establishable hypothesis for the overall process of language learning, an interpretation with which Ellis would appear to agree, since he goes on to say that: 'Most theories of L2 acquisition are neither comprehensive nor truly modular . . .' There is 'a multiplicity of theories.'<sup>2)</sup> The reason for this, to quote directly once again, is that: 'Learners vary in the way they use their linguistic knowledge in accordance with a variety of linguistic, situational, and psycholinguistic factors. It is to be expected, therefore, that data collected from one source will not completely match those collected from another.'<sup>3)</sup> This is a state of affairs that even some of the researchers concerned have accepted as inevitable, arguing that SLA is an art rather than a science and that 'in art perspectives are neither right nor wrong; they are simply more appealing to various audiences.'<sup>4)</sup> Such a way of looking at things, especially if we substitute the word 'fashion' for 'art' correlates remarkably well with what happens in the real world when the applied value of new hypotheses is championed.

When it comes to implementability, Ellis is frank but is himself mildly optimistic. He mentions the seven reasons given by Tarone, Swain, and Fathman in a 1976 TESOL Quarterly paper for SLA research failing to 'provide the teacher with satisfactory guidelines.' It is worth reproducing these reasons. SLA was said to be 'restricted in scope, it had only just begun to investigate the cognitive processes and learning strategies involved in L2 acquisition, the contribution of individual variables such as personality and motivation had not been evaluated, the methodology for both the collection and analysis of data was still uncertain and few studies had been replicated.'<sup>5)</sup> Writing almost twenty years later Ellis claims that much progress has been made but that these comments can by no means be dismissed and quotes a noted SLA researcher's severe remark that 'second-language research does not tell teachers *what* to teach, and what it says about *how* to teach they have already figured out.'<sup>6)</sup> Following this, H. Widdowson is quoted as saying that 'application cannot simply model itself on the procedures of empirical research,' which leads Ellis to remark that: 'One conclusion from this line of argument might be that theory and research are of no use to the teacher.'<sup>7)</sup> He draws back from such a potentially self-destructive position, however, and himself concludes that 'one way of making practical use of SLA research is by developing activities to raise teachers' awareness about the relationship between the questions they ask and L2 learning. The research, then, provides teachers with ideas at different levels, which they can then test out in their own classrooms.'<sup>8)</sup> Ellis ends his remarks on implementability — some four pages long in a work of nearly seven hundred — with upbeat references to

the value of 'action research, where teachers become researchers by identifying research questions important to them and seeking answers in their own classrooms.'<sup>9)</sup>

This would seem to be an admission that 'professional researchers,' like professional astronomers (astrologers?), are never going to be of much use to practising teachers, who might as well put their Sears catalogue telescopes out in the garden, look at the stars and have their awareness raised.

### **Linguistic Theory in General**

If SLA researchers somewhat resemble or would wish to resemble biochemists in search of better remedies, then theoretical linguists must be seen as akin to the ancient and profound masters of alchemy. Not for them a scratching at the surface in the hope of finding a way to raise fluency by 5.3 percent. Being, of course, philosophers, they want to know what is at the bottom of it all. Chomsky has denied that his work could ever have practical implications. And in this he is surely correct. An eminent sociologist has this to say about the whole enterprise: 'To show that a piece of music is a fugue tells us nothing about either the composer's motive in writing it or the antecedent cultural and social conditions without which it would never have been composed at all. The demonstration by Chomsky and his followers that there is a universal grammar innate to the human species which underlines all the particular grammars of the enormous number of different human languages still leaves it to be shown where and how language evolved in the first place, how linguistic competence relates to other mental abilities, and whether gestural rather than verbal communication may hold the key to the origin of language.'<sup>10)</sup> Ian Robinson, writing much earlier, makes the same point: '. . .the AD (Acquisition Device) could no more constitute an explanation of how 'La ci darem la Mano' is music. The question for music would still be 'How do these movements become music?' and it would have to be discussed as music is usually discussed, not in the ear-nose-and-throat department of a medical research institute.'<sup>11)</sup>

Yet and yet, such arguments notwithstanding, because of the very fact that alchemy holds such fascination, both SLA researchers and the teachers who trail in their wake — Japanese has the marvellous expression 'follow behind like the dung of a goldfish' — in effect deny the denial of the theorists and continue to seek the philosopher's stone. The highly interesting work of Manfred Pienemann is a case in point. Stated simply, Pienemann's view would seem to be that pre-pubertal acquisition of grammar follows a

natural pattern that is as intractably etched in as the grooves in an electronic microchip. There is no possibility of running before you can walk. Pienemann's aim is to make explicit the process of progression from one stage of grammar competence to the next. Already, however, some of his followers are turning out model syllabuses which teachers are encouraged to use in order to save them from the frustrations and time wasting of teaching concepts which stand no chance of being acquired owing to their being premature. The appeal of such an approach is strong, assuming that the philosopher's stone of an establishable progression of acquisition can ever be discovered. It ignores, however, the basic point that teaching is *not* about giving an extra shove to a cart that is already in motion but about short-circuiting the chip on the grounds that considerations of time do not allow for any other approach. Not only that, but most language learning, for several reasons, must take place after puberty, thus probably rendering Pienemann's approach irrelevant.

### **The Irrelevance of the Acquisition Device**

The case for the language acquisition device is founded on the idea that children do not live by input alone. Cognitive scientist Ray Jackendoff sums up the argument when he says that '...the learning of language isn't just a passive 'soaking up' of information coming from the environment. Rather language learners actively construct unconscious principles that permit them to make sense of the information coming from the environment. These make it possible not just to reproduce the input parrotlike, but to use language in novel ways. What is learned comes as much from the learner as from the environment.'<sup>12)</sup> Jackendoff goes on to express his support for the 'strong' hypothesis that the LAD is a function of a human being's genetic make-up. 'The fact that language learning is supported by a genetic component is what makes the task possible for every normal child, despite the complexity of the resulting knowledge.'<sup>13)</sup> The ability to manufacture, to create previously unheard expressions, and the ability to comprehend endless streams of new language can only, it is felt, be explained by positing the existence of a language specific inherited device. Nothing comes from nowhere. There must be a genetic helping device. The strong hypothesis is clear and in logic seemingly irrefutable. Our difficulty lies in discovering the data that the hypothesis should necessarily produce. Where is the endless creativity? Where are all the new combinations and expressions that the genetic device is supposed to help create? Certainly not in the

everyday speech of ordinary folk, who can for the most part scarcely be expected to string more than a few phrases together and for whom the term 'inarticulate' was invented. In Britain, the 'parroting of input,' to borrow Jackendoff's word, of the neologisms of the tabloid press is considered to be the height of creative expression. The speech of fluent, uneducated speakers is rarely other than a sequence of gobsmacked clichés, devastated routines and gutted collocations, many of them garbled. As Enderby the poet properly grumbled: 'You couldn't say what this man had just said. A liberty was diabolical; it was lies that were barefaced.'<sup>14)</sup>

Part of the language acquisition device is said to be concerned with systemizing phonetics. The other and better known part is often called the Universal Grammar. Systems of generative and transformational grammar are attempts to get as close as possible to this Platonic idea through the taking of a scalpel to living languages and the separating out of the roots and branches of their nerve fibres. The aim of researchers in this field is to emulate mathematics and the theoretical sciences by positing a system which has been reduced to the minimum number of guiding principles. Such a system is considered to be 'elegant' and its rules are deemed 'powerful.'

Naturally enough much of the 'evidence' for a genetically driven, creative, elegant grammar derives from introspection and deduction. Yet the actual nature of spoken language, as is increasingly being revealed by corpora of tape-recorded interactions, points in no such direction. The language that universal grammarians have been dissecting is nothing other than the extraneously imposed, grammarian prescribed standard kind, the kind that is best represented in good prose. Recent scholars have started remarking on this fact and are drawing from it radical conclusions which may be relevant to the world of language teaching: '...we saw that a rule based approach to language facilitates the expression of new meanings and enables the generation of utterances which have never been produced before. What Bolinger (1975) questioned is whether this portrayal of language use is characteristic of what language users do most of the time. Bolinger proposed instead that much of language use is, in fact, repetitive, and not particularly creative. While not denying the potential for creativity and novelty, he suggested that most of the speech we produce is likely to have been produced before, probably by the speaker.'<sup>15)</sup> In other words, a generative device may well exist, but most of what we produce consists of memorised routines and automated responses. The notional/functional type approach to language teaching is a sophisticated recognition of this simple truth. Just to show that the above quoted Bolinger is not alone in this mode of thinking, here is

what another scholar has to say: 'Similarly, Sinclair (1999) argues that while grammar enables endless combinatorial possibilities, in practice most such possibilities are ignored, and particular combinations of lexical elements occur again and again.'<sup>16)</sup>

Is it possible to reconcile the two realities? On the one hand we have the irresistible force of the argument for the existence of some kind of special priming device that facilitates our acquisition of our native tongue. On the other hand we have the immovable object of language as she is spoke by the majority of her devotees. Perhaps we can derive some assistance from other areas of particularly human activity for which an acquisition device has been hypothesised.

While psychological special ability testing has long looked for innate aptitudes in such areas as clerical ability, mechanical ability, computer related ability, art ability, musical ability, creativity and of course language ability<sup>17)</sup> it is only in the areas of numeracy, language, and music that the idea of an acquisition device has been promoted. Jackendoff begins his exposition with the telling statement: 'Like language, music is a uniquely human activity,'<sup>18)</sup> and goes on develop, if briefly, an argument for a Universal Musical Grammar. A recent work on numeracy by Brian Butterworth contains a chapter entitled 'Born To Count' and bravely if a little nervously proclaims the imminent discovery of the mathematical gene: 'If there are genes that build the brain circuits for the Number Module, then we may be able to track them down over the next three or four years. If there are not . . .'<sup>19)</sup>

The hunt for acquisition devices would appear to be on, and no doubt this is a fine thing. An even finer thing is that a moment's reflection points to an apparent contradiction in the composition of the quarry of the hunt. It has been the argument of universal and generative grammarians that the ability of all normal children to master their native tongue in an enviably short time can only be achieved with extra-terrestrial help. At the same time it should be apparent that a great number of normal children do not, without training, become musical competent to any great degree. And it should be even more apparent that the same is true for any kind of mathematical skill that exceeds the level of simple arithmetic. Butterworth himself, while still insisting on the genetic key, provides an excellent — and old-fashioned — explanation for this difficulty: 'Most of us are born to count, but beyond that the only established limits to mathematical achievement are, in Galton's words, zeal and very laborious work.'<sup>20)</sup>

Here is the hint and the way out of our dilemma. Surely it is true, and obviously so, that a large number of people do not in fact master their native tongue, even if advanced

though surely intimately related skills such as reading and writing are not included under the definition of everyday language. In the area of grammar, for which an acquisition device is posited, an accumulation of embeddings and strings of subordinate clauses very soon leaves both speakers and listeners in a state of confusion. Sir Isaiah Berlin in his table talk and lectures drew applause from his listeners for his ability to tie up all the ends of breathtakingly lengthy expositions. He was also known as a man of exceptional overall intelligence.

And in the area of vocabulary, for which no-one has ever suggested the existence of a specialised acquisition device, paucity of resources and confusion of near homonyms are widespread. Grammar by itself, it should be remembered, will get you nowhere. A skeleton needs skin and blood, however well-articulated its bones. Leaving the question of vocabulary aside, it may even be true that grammar itself, as it manifests its ideal self in the world of shadows, may be unstable and renewable just as is the calcium of the skeletal frame.

### **How Deep Is My Grammar?**

It should be clear that grammar, as it exists in the real world, which is the form that is of interest to language teachers, is subject to change and to idiolectal variation. Generative grammarians have tried to ignore this reality and to establish a standard for what truly offends the 'grammaticality' of a language at this moment in time and often enough in their own minds. Yet the English language, perhaps more than many in recent times, has shown enormous changes over the past thousand years. Certainly verbs have remained verbs, nouns nouns and prepositions prepositions. On the other hand new tenses have developed, showing a different attitude to time — surely more fundamental than grammar — and the subjunctive has almost dropped out of use, indicating a different, perhaps less subtle perception of quiddity, with hopes and fears and desires no longer felt to dwell in some perhaps demon controlled alternative reality. Auxiliaries of number and person, notably 'was' and 'were' have reversed themselves, strong verbs have weakened, and plurals have more or less regularised themselves around allophones of 's', a usage alien to the English language's Germanic roots. Prepositions, though continuing to maintain their function, are showing increasingly flexibility in their collocations, particularly when it comes to phrasal verbs; one man's 'in' is another man's 'on,' while the requirements of standard British and American English are sometimes differ-

ent viz. 'protest against,' and 'meet with.' Finally, word order itself, one of the great establishers of language family, has changed since Anglo-Saxon times. In writing at any rate the object of a sentence is only likely to appear in first position in old-style declamatory poetry.

What is odd is that, although language historians have been able roughly to date the onset of changes and to describe the speed with which they came to be accepted, they have not been able to find what one feels are satisfactory explanations for them. Like Topsy in the children's tale, they 'just grew.' To be sure there are explanations based on the physiological side of phonetics and on regularisations of rhythm and intonation, but there is for example no pleasing elucidation of how such a widely prevalent usage as the 'do' interrogative, one which language teachers could well do without, came into being in the teeth of what we are told should be a process akin to simplification. This failure suggests that grammar is not by any means as deep-rooted as some might wish to think.

The changes of the past are now, obviously, gone. It is a hard and, perhaps impossible task to fathom how people once felt about their means of expression, though we do know from Caxton's famous 'eyren' and 'egges' story<sup>21)</sup> that there have always been conservatives and progressives. Luckily, for the purposes of the present argument, we are in our own time witnessing a change in one of our most central grammatical intuitions. I refer to the conscious and politically motivated substitution of the plural personal pronoun forms for the singular, for example the exchanging of 'their' for the singular 'his,' and to the apparently unavoidable corollary to that substitution, the driving toward extinction of the poor little 'its.'

The change is all the more dramatic in that it is perceived as one of the most fundamental of modern times: 'The changes brought about in the pronoun system in response to feminist activism are actually remarkable considering that there have been virtually no major changes in the English pronouns since the Middle English period.'<sup>22)</sup> As we shall see from the examples I shall present, the change involves two alterations of perception. One is the matter of number in that 'their,' 'they,' and 'them' replace 'his,' 'he,' and 'him,' while the second is the confusion of anaphoric continuation that follows from the first.

Let us look at some examples culled from the media over the past few years. Examples range from the conversational and casual to cases where the media source prides itself on the quality of its prose and there are even examples from the normally pedantic world of English teaching, which should show the extent to which the changes

have been accepted and absorbed. For reference: the Daily Mirror is a British tabloid; the Guardian Weekly, also British, favours a formal style as does Private Eye magazine when it's being serious; Kansai Time Out is a multi-nationality produced semi-professional magazine that tends toward a conversational style

Example 1 : 'But, thanks to Sorted, Railtrack *has* seen the error of *their* ways.'

(*Daily Mirror* 17/6/97).

Example 2: 'For the first time ever, the University of Michigan *has* released three official Final Test past papers for *their* ECPE.'

(*Oxford University Press pamphlet* June 1997).

Example 3: 'Georgia Power pretty much *gets their* way at the Georgia Commission.'

(*The Guardian Weekly*: 8/10/95).

Example 4: 'The Institute of Engineers *has* accused water bosses of ignoring *their* members' advice.'

(*Private Eye*: 6/10/95).

Example 5: '...the US public *is* unhappy with *their* politics and their politicians.'

(*The Guardian Weekly*: 8/10/95).

Example 6: 'NHK *was* starting up *their* satellite transmission.'

(*Kansai Time Out* Nov.: 1995).

Example 7: 'The English Department of Aoyama Gakuin University *is* seeking part-time teachers for conversation and writing at *their* Atsugi campus.'

(*The Language Teacher*: January, 2000).

Example 8: 'Last year the orchestra made *its* first foreign tour to the US and *are* now looking forward to a foreign tour . . .'

(*Kansai Time Out*: Nov. 95).

Example 9: 'At *their* annual conference in Belfast the British Medical Association rewrote *its* 30 year old rule on organ donation.'

(*The Guardian Weekly*: 1999).

Example 10: 'Your party *has* said *they* want to take a very radical look . . .'

(*John Major in the Guardian Weekly*: 5/11/95).

All of the above fall into much the same category and can be seen as having developed out of the concept of notional concord, where a collective noun is allowed, in British English at least, to be treated as a plural expression.<sup>23)</sup> Under this usage, however, the accompanying pronoun also should follow the notion of plurality. In examples 1 to 5, however, which are definitely British, this is not the case. 'Their' has been substitut-

ed for 'its,' leading in example 4 to an initial confusion about whom the 'their' refers to, 'water bosses' being the most proximate plural noun. Example 5, taken by itself, is completely ambiguous under this new grammatical approach. Example 8 is an interesting instance of uncertain usage and looks more like a casual speech pattern than a written one. Example 9 is perhaps best seen as a manifestation of wishy-washy liberalism. Example 10 shows how established the combination has become in speech.

Example 11: '. . .the student *learns* very quickly that *they* are better off blending in.'

(*The Language Teacher*: Nov. 95).

Example 12: 'If a *child* applies to your school who *looks* as if *they* won't reach the required standard, then do everything you can to stop *them* from joining.'

(*Private Eye* April 99).

Example 13: 'The important thing to realize . . . is that each child *invents* this system for *themselves*.'

(Brian Butterworth: *The Mathematical Brain* 1999).

Example 14: 'Every animal has their rightful owner.'

(*Script of Robert Altman's film 'Short Cuts'*).

Example 15: '*One person* didn't know the name of the word processing software *they* were using.'

(*Kansai Time Out*: Feb. 96).

Examples 11 to 14 are just a small fraction of the hundreds to be observed every day in the printed press, radio and television, and in everyday speech. They represent the culmination both of feminist dissatisfaction with continual references to 'man' and 'he,' when referring the human race, and, of course, to the more prosaic matter of the lack in English of a sexually neutral third person possessive pronoun. As is well known, this has for a long time led to awkwardness with possessive pronouns attached to words like 'everyone,' 'someone.' And even 'one.'

A conscious effort has been made to meet the above mentioned twin difficulties through a blanket imposition of the 'they' family when referring to the third person, be it plural or singular. This movement has met with great success, to the extent that the former solutions to these problems such as rephrasing or the use of the 'it' family have been largely abandoned. Example 11 could be very simply rewritten in the plural to avoid problems of concord. Examples 12 and 13 could employ 'it' and 'itself' — attitudes to children would seem to have some influence here, though Germans seem to have no objection to desexing their offspring. Example 14 demonstrates an unwillingness to use

'its' when there can surely be no objection to it. Example 15 is a good instance, however, of the corner one may be driven into. Since, literally, only one person is involved, a rewriting is impossible. 'Its,' though closer grammatically than 'their,' has been rejected. What is odd is that 'his' and 'her' have been rejected also, although the content of the sentence leads one to believe that its writer was aware of who the person was. This point leads us smoothly into the next set of examples, in which we can see that to the point of absurdity an effort has been made to repress any information about the gender of the person referred to.

Example 16: 'The only *person* present is the partner and *they* ring the bell.'

(*BBC Radio 4 August 97: doctor speaking about a pregnant patient*).

Example 17: 'You kicked your victim in the testicles and went on to break *their* nose.'

(*Letter to the Guardian Weekly December 1998 quoting a magistrate's reproofing of a prisoner in the dock*).

Example 18: 'We have got strong cases to show the Church knew a particular priest was a serious problem and did not do anything to stop *them*.'

(*Guardian Weekly: 14/3/1999*).

Example 19: '...the applicant *does* not have to tell us *they are* pregnant.'

(*Guardian Weekly: December 1998*).

Example 20: 'Canadian *businessmen* are able to deal with the office in *his or her* language of choice.'

(*Kansai Time Out: September 99*).

In Example 16 the partner and presumed impregnator of the patient is given the benefit of the doubt and loses his masculinity. Example 17 assumes a betesticled person of uncertain gender, while Example 18 similarly entertains the possibility that the Roman Catholic Church has introduced hotly disputed progressive reforms into its structure. Example 19 is equally progressive with its support for the cause of the male womb. Example 20 is a splendid instance of a writer trying to be both grammatically and politically correct and in consequence getting tied in knots.

My remaining examples show how the invasion of the 'they' family is pushing out usages traditionally considered correct.

Example 21: 'We are sending out new letters and those who received the original *correspondence* should ignore *them*.'

(*Daily Mirror: 17/6/97 – spokesman's words quoted*).

Example 22: 'One in five colleges *is* tapping into the British obsession with shopping by

trading *their* wares in high streets.’

(*Times Educational Supplement*: 5/1/96).

Example 23: ‘As the four women were driven away . . . *each* of them carried with *them* their own indictment, *their* own version of events.’

(*source not recorded*).

Example 24: ‘The United States *has* decided to withdraw *our* aid to Cambodia.’

(White House Press Secretary on CNN: 11/7/99).

Example 25: ‘It was Harry’s staunch belief that *one* should surround *themselves* with good people, and he did just that.’

(Kansai Time Out: September 1995).

Example 26: ‘. . . anyone else who *like* to think that *they* are different.’

(*The Economist*: 16/4/98).

Example 27: ‘So squeamish are we that only recently *have* Andrex taken the revolutionary decision to depict a toilet in *its* commercials.’

(*Guardian Weekly*: 31/8/97).

Example 28: ‘. . . and Apple *itself have* not helped us . . .’

(*Letter in computer magazine Macworld*: July 98).

Example 29: ‘Just to *cherry-pick* one or two of the sexy recommendations like nicotine replacement therapy or fluoridation of the drinking water won’t achieve much on *their* own . . .’

(*Guardian Weekly*: December 98).

Example 21 with its mistaken preference for ‘them’ over ‘it’ has, if traditionally interpreted, produced a nonsense. People are being advised to ignore the new letters which are in fact presumably corrections of the mistaken originals. Example 22 carefully opts for a singular verb after ‘one in five,’ although a plural verb is considered acceptable, but then succumbs to ‘they’ family pressure. Example 23 determinedly resists using ‘her.’ Example 24 is an instance of the anaphoric eccentricity that besets American and, increasingly, British commercial and public organisations. ‘Its’ is presumably perceived as cold and uncaring. Example 25 has a remarkable avoidance of ‘himself,’ remarkable because it chooses to avoid the gender neutral Britishism ‘oneself.’ Example 26 seems to be a case of the ‘that’ clause pushing its plural form back onto the preceding ‘who’ clause, creating an inconsistency. This could be just a misprint but in the normally typographically perfect ‘Economist’ this seems unlikely. Examples 27 and 28 show the confusion into which things are apt to fall as the ‘it’ family awkwardly try to fight back

somewhere in the writer's consciousness. Example 29 exhibits, of course, a failure of concentration. The subject 'to cherry-pick' is too far away from the related phrase 'on its own,' allowing the 'they' family a lazily taken goal.

What do the above 29 examples tell us? They tell us that, building on the lack of a suitable gender neutral third person pronoun in the English, it has been possible to take an everyday rough and ready answer to the problem — the 'Does every have *their* book?' answer — and extend it into a successful system that violates the fundamental rule of number concord. If such a rule can be trodden on and in a very short space of time, then it must be the case that grammar exists only as sets of routine phrases and sentences, or that it is within reach of the conscious mind even for those who learned it before puberty.

## Conclusion

This essay has argued that, however addictive they may be, both applied linguistics and theoretical linguistics are of little more than prestige use to the language teacher, applied linguistics by its own admission, and theoretical linguistics in its Chomskyan form at any rate by its unwillingness to take into consideration the limitations and vulnerability of grammar as it exists in the real world. A number of contemporary examples of that vulnerability have been given.

## Notes

- 1) Ellis, R., *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*, Oxford, 1994, p.670.
- 2) *Ibid.*, p.681.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p.675.
- 4) *Ibid.*, p.681.
- 5) *Ibid.*, p.687.
- 6) *Ibid.*, p.687.
- 7) *Ibid.*, p.688.
- 8) *Ibid.*, p.688.
- 9) *Ibid.*, p.689.
- 10) Runciman, W.G., *The Social Animal*, HarperCollins, 1998, p.53.
- 11) Robinson, Ian, *The New Grammarians' Funeral*, Cambridge, 1975, p.71.
- 12) Jackendoff, Ray, *Patterns in the Mind*, BasicBooks, 1994, p.35.
- 13) *Ibid.*, p.35.
- 14) Burgess, Anthony, *Enderby Outside*, Penguin, 1971, p.9.

- 15) Skehan, Peter, *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning*, Oxford, 1998, p.31.
- 16) *Ibid.*, p.33.
- 17) Aiken, Lewis R., *Psychological Testing and Assessment*, Allyn and Bacon, 1976, Chapter 7.
- 18) Jackendoff, *op. cit.*, p.165.
- 19) Butterworth, Brian, *The Mathematical Brain*, MacMillan, 1999, p.161.
- 20) *Ibid.*, p.318.
- 21) Baugh, Albert C., Cable, Thomas, *A History of the English Language*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951, p.195.
- 22) Romaine, Suzanne ed., *Cambridge History of the English Language Vol. IV*, Cambridge, 1998, p.54.
- 23) Quirk Randolph, Greenbaum Sidney, Leech Geoffrey, Svartik Jan, *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, 1972, p.360.

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