SEEKING CONSENSUS: GENERATIVE LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

With the emphasis on meaning and interaction inherent to functional and cognitive approaches to linguistics, the application of these theoretical frameworks to language pedagogy can be seen in the general acceptance of communicative approaches to language teaching today. This paper asks whether generative linguistics is also relevant for language teaching practitioners. The Chomskyan revolution in the early years of generativism led to a general acceptance that learner language develops in stages, and adheres to a degree of systematicity. Beyond these broad generalisations, however, it may not always be apparent how specific research in generative second language acquisition is of relevance to the language classroom. Yet arguably, several decades of research now leave us at a point where there is a degree of consensus such that useful applications from generative linguistics can be articulated. Moreover, this branch of linguistics can be seen as coming closer to more cognitive understandings of language and language development through recent work that draws on developments in psycholinguistics. The Modular On-line Growth and Use of Language (MOGUL), proposed by Sharwood Smith and Truscott, maintains a generative view of language while accommodating broader notions of language development in order to provide an accessible framework of language relevant to adult second language teaching. This paper explores this framework, attempting throughout to make explicit the implications for teaching that arise from theoretical research in generative linguistics and second language acquisition.

1.0 Introduction

Initial work in generative linguistics inspired hope that significant gain could be made in language classrooms for more effective non-native language learning. Krashen's seminal work has had a lasting effect on the profession of language teaching. Yet, at the same time, disillusionment quickly arose, perhaps because the Chomskyan 'revolution' did not, in fact, see a concomitant revolution in language classrooms. The following illustrates existing disaffection for second language acquisition (SLA) research in language teaching.

> The point I wish to make is not that great strides have not been made in SLA but that, not surprisingly, given the relative infancy of the field, there are still few certainties. It might be felt, therefore, that "apply with caution"—or not at all—should still be the order of the day. (Ellis 1997: 70)

In this paper, I argue that linguistics and second language acquisition can contribute to language pedagogy. In particular, this paper is concerned with the Chomskyan generative branch of theoretical linguistics and the extent to which it has been and can be carried over to the language classroom.

I use the label, generative linguistics, broadly to include linguists working in the current Chomskyan framework as well as any of the many frameworks derived from the line of thinking that has emerged from MIT over the last fifty years. Within this branch of linguistics I include the specialised field of generative SLA. While there are many researchers who would classify themselves as SLA specialists, there is a group of SLA researchers who explicitly align themselves with Chomskyan linguistics. The nature of their

work often results in findings that are highly specific and which aim to validate particular theoretical models of language acquisition. While these may have value for theory-internal reasons, the broader application to language classrooms can often be overlooked or left unsaid. This is not a criticism of SLA researchers as their aims are valid and necessary. Yet, as long as there is no explicit articulation of how theory and research findings can aid in classroom teaching, there will be a gap between SLA research and language teaching. This divide can also be seen as a product of the historical context of developments in the field of linguistics. Thus I begin by briefly situating the current divide in context, before exploring the relevance of generative SLA research to the language classroom.

2.0 Context

Generative linguistics grew out of a structuralist tradition in which language was seen as a system of regular patterns with internal and universal consistency. The methodology was to collect large samples of language data, which could then be reduced to morphemes and phonemes in order to uncover patterns and regularities within a language and across languages. The assumption underlying the search for language patterns was that universals are properties of language. The radical shift by Chomsky was to instead view language universals as a property of humans. The Universal Grammar (UG) proposal, therefore, called for a change in methodology as linguists moved from gathering language data in far-flung places to armchair introspection of their own grammatical systems (Jordan 2004).

One aspect of continuity from the structuralist tradition has been the reliance by generative linguistics on a reductionist, or positivist, approach to research. This is considered problematic from the point of view of the post-structuralist thought that has developed in the social sciences (Derrida 1976), and within education (Vygotsksy 1962; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Bruner 1986), all of which are dismissive of an approach to language that looks for absolutes through applying a traditional scientific method. This divergence in paradigm can be seen as one reason for disaffection with a generative approach. The generative attempt to divide language into universal principles and language specific parameters[1] (Chomsky 1981) stood in stark contrast with cognitive psychologists who were developing more relativist notions of prototypes and fuzzy categories (Rosch 1973). If a clear set of principles and parameters had emerged from this line of inquiry, the generative programme may have received stronger validity; but it is generally accepted that languages cannot be characterised by simple sets of binary parameters (See Newmeyer 2004) for an in-depth criticism of this line of inquiry.). Undeterred, the now current Minimalist programme (Chomsky 1995) has retained the notion of parameters, but redefined the domain of Universal Grammar to the more core aspects of syntax and phonology, leaving much of language (and language variation) to be explained by the properties of lexical items themselves.[2] As such, the practice of reducing language to discrete components (e.g. syntax, the lexicon, etc.) remains at the core of the generative programme. This is a hurdle to cross for anyone rejecting the notion of absolutes and universals.

Generative SLA researchers can also be charged with reductionism. Throughout the development of the field, as generative linguists proposed new, and very specific linguistic principles, acquisitionists have sought to find evidence of such principles among language learners. The UG/no UG literature is characterised by studies looking for evidence of very specific aspects of language as a way of showing that non-native language development is or

[1] Examples of proposed parameters include the Null Subject Parameter (Rizzi 1982), the Verb Movement Parameter (Emonds 1978), and the Compounding Parameter (Snyder 2001), among others.

[2] See Baker (2001) for a clearly written, updated attempt to account for language in terms of principles and parameters.

is not constrained by universal principles. For example, research by Kanno (1997, 1998) into the acquisition of the Overt Pronoun Constraint tested second language Japanese speakers to see if they knew that *dare,* 'who', can refer to a non-expressed embedded pronoun, but not an overtly expressed embedded pronoun[3]. This kind of exercise has spawned heated debate among acquisitionists as they have sought to impose syntactic analyses on samples of language produced – or sometimes evaluated – by learners. For acquisition research, this question is of vital importance as it distinguishes between theoretical models within the discipline. Knowledge of the Overt Pronoun Constraint, for example is considered evidence that second language development is constrained by Universal Grammar because such knowledge is not generally taught or even explicitly known by naïve Japanese speakers. For language teachers facing the every day pressures of classroom teaching, the usefulness of this line of research, may, understandably not be readily apparent.

It is unfortunate, however, if instead of recognising a divergence in agendas, language teachers decide that generative SLA research is not relevant to language teaching. While both sets of professionals are rightly concerned with the tasks defined by their respective fields, it is, arguably, the role of the applied linguist to make connections between the two ends of the spectrum. This paper is an attempt to articulate some of the connections between generative SLA and the language classroom. In the next section I explore some of the early work in generative SLA that enjoys lasting influence on language pedagogy.

3.0 Generative Linguistics, SLA and the Language Classroom

Central to the birth of generative linguistics was the study of native child language acquisition as a window into the biological process of language development. Early SLA researchers looked for parallels between child second language development and native first language development. An important example of this are the morpheme order studies by Dulay, Burt and colleagues (Dulay and Burt 1973; Dulay and Burt 1974; Dulay, Burt et al. 1982) looking for parallels between SLA and the findings of Brown showing a regular order in the acquisition of English inflectional morphemes by native-speaking children (Brown 1973). Additionally, as the concept of Universal Grammar gained acceptance, the question arose in SLA of the extent to which second language development is also 'natural', appealing to biological mechanisms. This question became framed as one of 'access to UG' in non-native language development.

While decades of acquisition research have not resolved the extent to which adult language development is constrained by UG, there are some areas which now find wide agreement within generative SLA research. There is general consensus that the learner's language is not randomly constructed, but instead embodies a degree of systematicity. One implication of this is that teachers may be able to identify non-targetlike rules within a learner's interlanguage, which may then be addressed explicitly. An error may be traced to some property of language, perhaps a property of the learner's native language. For example, a native speaker French may consistently place adverbs after the verb in English to say, for example, *I finished quickly my essay*, because this is a correct word order in French (and because, from a generative linguists' viewpoint, French, but not English instantiates a

[3] So, for example, according to Kanno (1998:1126), (ia) is a possible interpretation in Japanese while (ib) is not.

(i)	a.		Dare$_i$-ga	**Ø$_i$**	sore-o	katta	to	itta	no?
			who$_i$- NOM	**he$_i$**	that-ACC	bought	that	said	Q
			'Who said that (he) bought that?						
	b.	*	Dare$_i$ ga	**kare$_i$-ga**	sore-o	katta	to	itta	no?
			who$_i$ -NOM	**he$_i$**	that-ACC	bought	that	said	Q
			'Who said that he bought that?						

positive setting of the verb movement parameter)[4]. If a learner's underlying system includes a rule that is causing a particular error such as this, specific strategies may be developed to overcome the error. In this way, explicit awareness may help a non-native speaker to self-correct for more effective fluency.

Even if a rule can be identified, however, it is well known that no matter the amount of correction, some errors persist. Corder's distinction of an error as a systematic and consistent incorrect use of a point of language in contrast with a one-off mistake also has implications for the language teacher (Corder 1967). Mistakes, as a natural part of language production, may not be worth worrying about, especially if fluency is the aim. Errors, on the other hand, may be worth addressing. High rates of mistakes, however, may signal that the learning environment is causing undue stress to the learner such that they are not able to perform to their highest potential. If this is the case, it may signal a need to make changes to the classroom environment.

A second general finding that has come out of generative SLA is the characterisation of language development in stages. Thinking about stages of development can help a well-trained teacher to determine whether errors are better left unremarked, knowing that this language point is not likely to develop until a later stage in the learner's overall proficiency. Alternatively, it may be that the error persists even though the learner is certainly proficient enough to develop this aspect of language. This suggests the learner has fossilised where this particular aspect of language is concerned. Again, it may be useful to bring this to the learner's attention and to work together with the learner to develop strategies to compensate for this fossilisation.

The difference between (self-)correction and natural language development is at the heart of the generative tradition of SLA. This distinction reflects the view of dual representation of knowledge that was central to Krashen's acquisition-learning distinction (Krashen 1985). While this distinction may enjoy general acceptance even today, it, like the notion of systematicity and development in stages, is a very general notion dating back, now, at least a quarter of a century. I turn, therefore, to more recent work to find ways to apply generative linguistics to today's classroom. In the next section I present a recently proposed model for understanding language and language development known as the Modular On-line Growth and Use of Language (MOGUL) in order to discuss some of the more current research in SLA. In this framework Sharwood Smith and Truscott (Sharwood Smith 2004; Truscott and Sharwood Smith 2004) incorporate developments in psycholinguistics which explore how knowledge is constructed and at the same time maintain the notion of dual representation of knowledge (Schwartz 1993), which continues to guide the field of generative linguistics.

4.0 Modular On-line Growth and Use of Language (MOGUL)

The Modular On-line Growth and Use of Language (MOGUL) framework adheres to the claim of modularity of mind (Fodor 1983) which holds that there is a core of linguistic knowledge that is epistemologically distinct from other kinds of knowledge. MOGUL accepts Jackendoff's (1997, 2002) version of the mind in which there are linguistic sub-modules which process formal aspects of language, phonology and syntax. These formal linguistic properties occur without our explicit knowledge or control. The outputs of these sub-modules come together at interfaces, including an interface with real world knowledge – that is available to conscious processing. The net result is that language processing draws

[4] See Schwartz and Gubala-Ryzak (1992) and references within for a full discussion of adverb placement among French learners of English.

from both modular linguistic knowledge and non-modular linguistic knowledge. Additionally, there is, of course, non-modular, non-linguistic knowledge.

To illustrate these three categories of knowledge, consider what is required in order for a person to process a sentence like that in (1).

(1) He knows if you've been naughty or nice.

Making sense of this sentence requires that a speaker know principles of i) English syntax such as word order and subject-verb agreement, and ii) English phonology so that the sounds can be segmented into words[5]. For example, linguistic knowledge includes the knowledge that *naughty* and *nice* behave syntactically as predicate adjectives; this knowledge will lead every native English speaker to agree that the following sentences are ungrammatical – even if they are not be able to explain that they are ungrammatical because *naughty* and *nice* cannot be used as verbs or prepositions, respectively.

(2) a. *I will naughty/nice my niece on Christmas day.
b. *Put the gift naughty/nice the tree.

These examples illustrate the type of knowledge that is stored in the language module. Beyond this linguistic knowledge, however, is additional information that most speakers from an Anglo-Saxon background will derive because of cultural knowledge. The use of the phrase *naughty or nice*, combined with the idea of one's behaviour being known, will most likely conjure up some idea of Santa Claus and the delivery of gifts at Christmas. Yet there is nothing inherent to the individual words in the above sentence to give rise to this larger meaning. Instead, this meaning comes through experience; as such, it is stored in the non-modular component of the mind.

While this example illustrates the more straightforward differences between modular linguistic knowledge and other non-modular knowledge, it does not illustrate one crucial aspect of the MOGUL framework: the 'non-modular' component of the mind is also capable of storing *linguistic* knowledge. While linguistic knowledge such as syntactic category is modular knowledge, there is the possibility of an extra-modular store of knowledge that exists in parallel with the linguistic knowledge of the language module. This kind of knowledge is knowledge *about* language, or meta-knowledge. For instance, because I am a sophisticated user of English, I am consciously aware of the fact that *naughty* and *nice* can be labelled 'predicate adjectives'. Knowing this, I can create nonsense sentences like those in (2) to illustrate my point. Yet when I use the words *naughty* and *nice* in spontaneous speech, I cannot attend to the fact that these are predicate adjectives while trying to convey the idea that Santa Claus may not bring you presents this year.[6] This illustrates a second point: aside from where knowledge is stored, the way it is accessed is another difference between modular and non-modular knowledge.

Of most concern here, however, is how the distinction between linguistic v. extra-linguistic knowledge on the one hand, and linguistic v. metalinguistic knowledge on the other, are of use to language pedagogy. Arguably, this is where a reductionist approach is

[5] While there may be some limited aspects of semantics that comprise modular linguistic knowledge such as quantifier scope, the bulk of what we understand to be semantics implicates meaning which is essentially conceptual, and therefore assumed to involve non-modular knowledge.

[6] While one may be able to do so in a single instance, one cannot attend to the syntactic properties of all the language one produces, consistently and continuously while at the same time producing streams of meaningful spontaneous speech.

useful. Given the complexity of language, the practice of systematic categorisation remains useful for breaking language down into distinct, but related components in order to be better able to discuss, understand and teach/learn it. Teachers who are aware of the ways in which language can be carved up are in a much better position to teach those aspects of language that are most suitable for the particular students in their classroom than those who are picking and choosing language points at random. This is true not only of points of grammar, but of socio-cultural aspects of language as well. A good teacher of academic English, for example, will teach both the grammatical properties of modal verbs *and* the practices of academic discourse communities which dictate the circumstances when modal verbs are used. Whether s/he teaches these as discrete points in the lesson or more holistically as aspects of a single phenomenon does not negate the value of knowing that they are both distinct properties of modal verbs. This call for reductionism is not a call for the return to an old-fashioned synthetic syllabus, but instead a recognition that teaching professionals need a sophisticated level of knowledge of their subject matter – language – as well as the ability to present it in manageable chunks for the sake of effective teaching.

But, of course, a focus on teaching is unimportant if there is no correlate in learning. In addition to the epistemological question of what language is, therefore, we must also address the question of how language knowledge develops. MOGUL depends on what Truscott and Sharwood Smith (2004) call Acquisition by Processing Theory (APT), whereby language growth occurs through the on-line use of language. With APT, learning occurs through the reinforcement of input. When, for example, a new lexical item occurs in the input, it registers in the learner's mind. As that item receives reinforcement, it will have a higher resting activation level which in time may qualify it as a permanent part of the knowledge store (whether linguistic or non-linguistic). If, however, a particular point of input is never encountered again, it is not likely to achieve a high resting activation level and may never become a stable part of the accessible knowledge store. With APT, in other words, when trying to parse a linguistic string, the most closely associated options will be activated. A matching parse receives reinforcement within the domains of both grammar and cognition. For adult language acquisition, it is completely feasible for a item of language to be stored as knowledge in the non-linguistic mental component in addition to, *or* in place of any linguistic knowledge stored in the language module.

In sum, then, dual representation of knowledge means that language input can be stored as linguistic or extra-linguistic knowledge. Linguistic aspects of the lexical item are stored in the language module while metalinguistic features become part of the non-modular store. In the MOGUL/APT framework, in short, epistemological differences are traced to differences in representation, while development of knowledge is a single process. The crucial theoretical point is that MOGUL is a framework for Modular *and Non-Modular* Online Growth and Use of Language. The next section will explore this in the context of language teaching. I end this section by noting that while the dual representation of language continues a strongly held generative tenet, the notion within APT that knowledge construction is facilitated by association with existing knowledge can be seen as a step in the direction of cognitive linguistic circles. In other words, MOGUL exemplifies a degree of consensus with regard to language learning development which seems to be emerging within a branch of linguistics that has often been seen as incompatible with other linguistic approaches.

4.1 MOGUL: A Framework for Pedagogic Decision-making

The value of the MOGUL framework for questions of language teaching and learning is that it provides a principled basis from which decisions about pedagogy can be made.

Perhaps most encouraging for pedagogy is the idea of metafluency, whereby non-modular linguistic knowledge can become highly developed. Though this knowledge may be non-modular, there is no reason within MOGUL why it cannot become 'automated' much like other non-modular knowledge does. It is well attested that other types of complex knowledge such as how to drive a car or how to play Paganini on the violin – knowledge which cannot possibly be modular – can, nevertheless, become automatic such that the process involved is not consciously thought about while the action is being performed. In other words, just as other very complicated cognitive abilities can be become automated, language production based on non-linguistic knowledge can also reach an automated level of functioning, or metafluency.

In fact, there is no reason why a very committed language learner shouldn't be able to appear like a native speaker in their production and comprehension. This way of understanding language acquisition goes a long way to explain those instances of so-called exceptional language learners, adults who are claimed to have acquired a native-like competency in their second language (See, e.g., Obler 1989; Bley-Vroman, Felix et al. 1988; Bongaerts 1997). The claim is not that they have native-like competence, nor that they necessarily have a linguist's understanding of language rules. Instead, it is more likely that they have, as individuals, developed their own set of language rules and strategies that work well enough to appear native-like in their use of the language.

This framework is also useful because it presents an articulated understanding of what language is in such a way that aspects of language that are modular can be singled out from aspects that are not. This, in turn, allows for deliberate pedagogical decisions with regard to the type of input to be exploited in the language classroom. With MOGUL, we can maintain the idea that authentic input leads to modular language acquisition, so that, much like the well-known Natural Approach (Krashen and Terrell 1983), we have reason to supply learners with ample amounts of naturalistic input. Complementing the Natural Approach, however, is the possibility of consciously developing language knowledge. So, for example, learners should be explicitly taught rules of language from structural formal rules of grammar to conventional, culturally-based rules of language use. While in time, aspects of modular linguistic knowledge may develop, the real world demands of learners means that learners need to develop metalinguistic knowledge that can compensate for any deficiency in modular knowledge.

One finding that is emerging from generative SLA is that there is a degree of modular development that seems to be possible for adult second language learners. Within the core properties of syntax and phonology, there are aspects of linguistic knowledge that even a sophisticated native speaker is generally unaware. These so-called poverty of the stimulus phenomena form the basis of the generative argument for modular linguistic knowledge as native children are argued to develop grammar that 'goes beyond' the input they receive. Research in second language acquisition also provides evidence for development of modular language knowledge by (adult) second language learners that goes beyond the input. Examples of poverty of the stimulus studies include Kanno 1997; Kanno 1998; Dekydspotter, Sprouse et al. 1997; Dekydspotter, Sprouse et al. 1998; Dekydtspotter, Sprouse et al. 1999; Dekydtspotter 2001; and Marsden 2005. Thus the widely accepted intuition that natural input is beneficial finds empirical support.

Note that in MOGUL, non-modular and extra-linguistic aspects need to be taught/learned in native and non-native contexts. All learners, in other words, must learn to associate words with meaning, or to use conventional politeness forms appropriately. The articulated approach of MOGUL means there will be different expectations for different aspects of language development. Since the process of acquisition is the same for all learners,

in principle, *all* learners should be able to develop modular knowledge – and evidence shows that to some extent L2 learners are. But, of course, there is a fundamental difference between child native language development and adult second language development (Bley-Vroman 1990).

According to MOGUL the non-linguistic store can develop in such a way that allows it to mimic the linguistic store of knowledge. In this way, the work of language teaching receives healthy endorsement. The limitations on explicit teaching/learning is thus limited only by the extent to which a teacher is able to explicitly convey the properties of linguistic knowledge. One logical conclusion is that even the most abstract research in formal theoretical linguistics is of potential relevance to the language classroom – but it is up to applied linguists to translate linguistic principles into manageable patterns and rules that teachers can make sense of and, in turn, present to their students. For instance, now that the Overt Pronoun Constraint has been identified for so-called pro-drop languages like Japanese and Spanish which allow unexpressed subject pronouns, teacher training courses should include this as a property of language that can be taught and learned.

In sum, the linguistic/metalinguistic distinction between types of knowledge suggests there is value in trying to characterise the language into neat sets of forms with clear and simple rules in order to develop students' metalinguistic knowledge, while at the same time supplying learners with ample amounts of rich authentic input for the development of linguistic knowledge.

5.0 Consensus from Second Language Acquisition

SLA research findings suggest that different aspects of language develop differently in adult language development. There is a set of studies that shows a divergence among advanced learners of English between knowledge of syntax and the ability to correctly produce associated morphology (Lardiere 1998, 2000; White 2003). Both the Chinese speaker of English and the Turkish speaker of English in these well known case studies are shown to have fully acquired the syntactic properties associated with inflection in English such that they are native-like with regard to obligatory subjects and correct case on pronouns; yet at the same time they are inconsistent in their suppliance of inflectional morphology such as 3rd person verbal agreement. This dissociation can be understood as an instance in which core syntactic properties have been acquired via the language module while the morphological elements have not, resulting in less consistent production.

Whether this morphosyntactic dissociation is a problem of mapping between knowledge and production, as argued by Lardiere and White, or whether, as argued by Hawkins and Chan (1997), it is a representation problem in which the full properties of the morphemes themselves have not be fully acquired is an open question of interest for reasons of theory.[7] For the language teacher, this research suggests that it is worthwhile to present and practice morphological paradigms explicitly while leaving syntax-related aspects of language, such as obligatory subjects and correct pronoun forms, to develop implicitly as modular linguistic knowledge through exposure to ample examples in the target language.

Another are of growing consensus within generative SLA is the premise of the Full Transfer/Full Access (FT/FA) model of Schwartz and Sprouse (1996) whereby the beginning point for second language acquisition is the grammar of the existing native language and L2

[7] MOGUL supports a mapping problem view. As these morphemes are surely frequent in the input, the advanced learners should have had ample time for activation levels to lead to robust representations. Thus, whether stored as modular knowledge or as metalinguistic knowledge, the fact that very advanced speakers do not consistently supply these morphemes suggests some kind of interface problem causing a breakdown in production.

development is constrained by Universal Grammar. One common confusion regarding FT/FA is the assumption that because development is UG-constrained, complete native-like acquisition should eventually occur. Yet even in their early descriptions of the model, Schwartz and Sprouse point out that there are areas of second language acquisition that are not expected to undergo UG-constrained development. One such instance is when there is insufficient data in the input to cause the deletion of a point of existing (native language-based) grammar. In other words, the inability to develop a native-like second language can be partly attributed to the problem of unlearning properties of the existing first language. The implication for classroom teachers is a need to understand properties of the first language as compared to the second language. Unlike Contrastive Analysis, however, the claim is not that there will be ease or difficulty in learning where there are L1/L2 matches and mismatches, respectively. Instead, particular aspects of language that present a need for particular unlearning should be explicitly addressed. The tendency for even advanced French speakers of English to have persistent difficulty with verb-adverb order, mentioned above, is an example of this.

6.0 SLA and English Language Teaching (ELT)

In all generative frameworks, language is a mental process in which the brain functions by responding to external stimuli. One literal implication of this would be for teachers to view their role as needing to stimulate the brains sitting in their classrooms through plenty of examples, and the repetition of examples, to allow mental structures to develop. While this may sound like old-fashioned behaviourism, it is perhaps not surprising that there would be some merit in an approach that was considered mainstream for so many years. Similarly, accepting that knowledge (including language) is linked by association, it only makes sense that new language is presented by making explicit links to previous or existing knowledge. This also tells us that active learning does not always have to involve language production on the part of the learner – comprehension is also a critical part of language development. Yet reception is clearly not enough. Learners must also be able to use language, and do so according to the norms set out by the language culture. In other words, it is important to also focus on the extent to which language is connected to social context as the language we use changes depending on where and with whom we use it.

This paper has attempted to promote a generative view of language. Yet, arguably, MOGUL is a generative framework that has the bridge-building potential to incorporate aspects of other views of language as well. In particular, it naturally incorporates the extent to which language can be seen as functional, as a tool for conveying meaning, and not just grammatical rules. It is has become uncontroversial in most language teaching circles that language input should be presented in context so that learning is meaningful. The generative view of language presented here does not contradict this educational premise; instead, MOGUL allows for and relies on a inclusion of both formal and socio-cultural aspects of language. The aspects of language that are labelled as functional would be included in the non-modular metalinguistic and non-linguistic store of knowledge.

Putting the fields of SLA and ELT together, one might draw parallels between the development of this more inclusive and broader framework in generative SLA and the development of the so-called post-methods era. As pointed out by Richards and Rodgers (2001), most ELT practitioners agree that there is no one best method for language teaching. From the point of view of a generative applied linguist, this post-methods era could be seen as a product of the recognition of language as a complex and multifaceted entity. Different aspects of language, along with different learner needs, require a full range of teaching methods. Moreover, it seems that neither of the two main branches of linguistics: cognitive

and generative, as traditionally conceived, has been able to provide an acceptable framework to underpin any one effective method. Arguably, however, MOGUL allows a more middle of the road approach. There are, in fact, two prominent trends that are current in English language teaching which are worth highlighting in light of this discussion. The two trends are the so-called Focus on Form approach and the Genre Approach, which I will briefly discuss in the next section.

6.1 Two trends in ELT: Focus on Form and Genre Analysis

Long (1991) is credited with distinguishing Focus on Form in the classroom from the more traditional Focus on FormS approach. The former promotes the explicit teaching of grammatical forms only after attending to the meaning of the text in question. The latter refers to the more traditional teaching of grammatical forms as isolated rules and patterns divorced of any meaningful context. (See Doughty and Williams 1998.) Focus on Form draws on the idea of noticing (Schmidt 1990) which refers to the idea that learners need to attend to the input in order for learning to occur. While this idea has much intuitive appeal, Truscott (1998) has pointed out that this notion has little basis in psycholinguistic theory. Indeed, in Truscott's observation can be seen the seeds of the later development of MOGUL, as its aim is to provide a psycholinguistic understanding of language development. Within MOGUL, the effectiveness of Focus on Form depends on the extent to which it primes the learner. The learner constructs an understanding of a particular text, whether written or spoken by drawing from existing stores of knowledge. As part of this process of making sense of the language, relevant linguistic knowledge will also be activated. In this way, the learner is primed for explicit explanation about relevant points of language, whether it be a point of grammar or one of language use. This explicit awareness can be stored as meta-linguistic knowledge alongside any modular knowledge that might have also been implicitly been reinforced.

Focus on Form merges naturally with genre-based teaching in which language is presented as a product of particular discourse communities.[8] Genre analysis has been taken up by those engaged in English for specific purposes (ESP) especially in higher education. Swales' (1981, 1990) work on academic writing is foundational to this approach. The genre approach recognises regularities in content and form at the text level and is explicitly opposed to the teaching of decontextualised examples of language and language rules (Paltridge 2001: 4). The practice is to present learners with samples of text which exemplify particular genres. The texts are analysed in terms of their structures of discourse at the text level. In non-native language contexts, the analysis of text extends to sentence and word level instruction as particular phrases and terminology are taught as part of the rhetoric or accepted conventions for particular genres.

Focus on Form provides a natural complement to the genre approach. In addition to genre-specific text structures, conventions and terminology, more structural elements of syntax (and phonology, for spoken texts) can be highlighted and explicitly taught. This can provide a comprehensive approach to language teaching. The genre approach will guide the teacher to teach language through existing texts, whether written or spoken, that exemplify the use of language particular discourse communities. By using authentic texts, the learner is receiving natural input. The features of that text, in terms of register, specialised vocabulary, etc, can be explicitly highlighted. This ought to result in meaningful engagement with the text. Yet comprehensive learning is not complete if not for the additional attention to

[8] This approach originated in an Australian native language context as a way of teaching native language literacy in schools. For a very clear introduction, see Paltridge (2001).

grammatical form, i.e. Focus on Form. A language lesson based on these two approaches would ensure that all types of language related knowledge are being fostered.

7.0 Conclusion

This paper has presented a sweeping survey of some of the contributions that generative linguistics, and generative second language acquisition in particular, have made to the field of language pedagogy. It is my hope that the discussion of MOGUL has illustrated the extent to which at least some voices within generative linguistics seem to be moving towards other research paradigms that have often been seen as antithetical to the generative framework. While disagreement and debate is healthy for academic discipline progresses, it is also important to take stock along the way, to find areas of consensus – especially if there is any hope that practitioners will be able to take on board some of the more abstract findings of research as they emerge.

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