Teaching Grammar for Proficiency

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In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass,* Humpty Dumpty tells Alice that, "When *I* use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." In foreign-language pedagogy, one term that everyone uses is "grammar." Yet, as one reads the professional literature and attends workshops and conferences, it becomes clear that although the term "grammar" is frequently discussed or written about, the meanings that are ascribed to it vary widely.

There is as much definitional diversity in the area of what a grammar is as there is in what a grammar does. Some define "grammar" as only morphology and syntax, to the exclusion of other elements in a linguistic system. Under this definition, the English form "table" presumably would not come out of the "grammar" of English, although the form "tables" would. Others understand "grammar" more broadly, i.e., as any constraint on the co-occurrence or distribution of any kinds of linguistic forms. For these, the fact that native English words may begin with the sequence /strV-/ but not with /*srtV-/ is as much a grammatical observation as is the fact that definite articles and possessive adjectives are in complementary distribution (e.g., "the book" or "his book," but not "*the his book"). The "Standard Theory" tells us that a grammar characterizes

the intrinsic competence of an idealized speaker/hearer of a language, and accounts for conditions on wellformedness by providing an underlying structural description for the infinitely many sentences in that language. In such a system, morphology as such is not even one of the major components, being divided up between the lexicon and the syntax. On the other hand, semantics *is* one of the major components (Chomsky, 1). From a pedagogical point of view, Krashen sees "grammar" as synonymous with "conscious learning," which he has defined as "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them" (6, p. 10). Higgs has defined grammar as "a system for converting meaning into language" (2).

The preceding paragraph perhaps accounts for both the longevity and acrimony of the profession's debate over the role of "grammar" in foreign-language teaching. One need not look far in the professional literature or in foreign-language textbooks to find mutually exclusive positions staked out over this very issue. The purpose of this paper is to reconcile the dichotomy that many find between "teaching for communication" and "teaching grammar." I argue that such a dichotomy is much more imagined than real and is caused in large measure by concerned professionals *using the same words* in discussing their views and perspectives while implicitly *assigning them distinct meanings.* If this is indeed the case, it is no wonder that misunderstandings have arisen and endured over time.

The basic assumption of this paper is that all foreign-language teachers share the goal of helping students to become successful communicators in their

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target language. To further specify this goal, I will consider the nature of both communication and grammar, and will show that they are not separable concepts. In so doing, I will characterize a foreign language pedagogy that facilitates the simultaneous motivation for and development of both communicative success and linguistic precision.

Two noncontroversial facts motivate the perceived dichotomy between communicative success and linguistic precision. First, it is obvious that considerable communication can take place successfully at the lexical level, i.e., with little benefit of native-like phonology, morphology, or syntax. In response to the question, "What did you do last weekend?" a nonnative might respond, "I and friends go movie in downtown." If the question had been, "¿Qué hiciste el fin de semana pasado?", a nonnative might have responded, "Amigos y yo voy cine centro." Given the context of these hypothetical exchanges, a native user of either language would have little difficulty understanding the communicative intent of the nonnative, provided only that the native were committed to understanding it. In fact, ill-formed communicative tokens succeed *only* when listeners assume a communicative intent on the part of the nonnative and implicitly accept a disproportionate share of the communication burden. This observation perhaps accounts for the self reported "fluency" in a foreign language by many nonnatives who have dealt almost exclusively with vendors or other service-oriented persons. These nonnatives typically make only minimal communicative demands on the foreign language, and they make them on natives who have a strongly vested interest in understanding them.

Such foreign-language users are the students who answer, "The beach" when they are asked "What did you do last weekend?" They are developmentally analogous to child L1 acquirers who are at a holophrastic stage, in which the one-word utterance "Milk" might mean, "I want milk, I don't want milk, I just spilled my milk, Here comes the milkman, This is the place in the store where we usually buy milk," and so on, depending on the nonlinguistic context. What characterizes such utterances is that they are "situation bound," and that the listener must infer the intended message from that situation. So—given a context and a lexical blurt, considerable, albeit skeletal, comunication is indeed possible, and is arguably much better than nothing.

The second noncontroversial fact is the converse of the first: while naked lexis can indeed serve some communicative function, just as clearly, there is also considerable communication that *cannot* successfully

take place uniquely at the lexical level, i.e., with little benefit of native-like phonology, morphology, or syntax. No plausible amount of lexis will likely communicate with success the difference between, "If you and she are friends you can share a room," versus "If you and she were friends you could share a room;" or, "If he was there I didn't see him," versus "If he had been there I would have seen him." In order to process these sentences successfully, one must indeed command the requisite vocabulary, but when we understand the *communicative* differences between these pairs, we use a great deal more than our lexicon.

What we see from these two noncontroversial facts is that while both vocabulary and "grammar," as commonly understood, are necessary for successful communication, neither alone is sufficient.

Thus, neither saying a great many things inaccurately nor saying very few things accurately is a reasonable instructional *outcome* for a foreign language program, although both may be necessary and even desirable at certain interim developmental stages. From the former perspective, Krashen and Terrell claim that "...beginning students can simply string the appropriate lexical items together in some 'logical' order..." in order to communicate (7, p. 71). Ignoring for the moment the source of "appropriate" versus "inappropriate" lexical items, the obvious problem with this position is that what is "logical" in one system, presumably the student's L1 grammar, is not necessarily logical in some other system. If one chose to say in Spanish, "The teacher wants us to speak Spanish," nothing would be more "logical" than to say, *El profesor nos quiere hablar español.*" But such a "logical" stringing together not only fails to communicate the intended message, it communicates an entirely different one, i.e., that "The profesor wants to speak Spanish to us." Elsewhere, I have argued against such a lexicalist focus (4). In fact, the most fatal "mistakes" are usually quite "well formed structurally" but communicate a message very different from the one intended. In short, if stringing together of lexical items were an acceptable strategy for communicative success in a foreign language, we could just issue students an extensive bilingual word list and ask them to come back for an achievement test when they had memorized it.

We must also recognize that the apparent alternative would be equally counterproductive; that is, a pedagogy that would virtually ignore vocabulary in favor of absolute linguistic accuracy from the outset of instruction, irrespective of communicative need or desire. Such a pedagogy might well accept a perspective such as the following: "If you are a typical stu-

dent…you probably tend to worry a great deal about vocabulary. Please don't, because it is really the least important aspect of your study of Spanish….You should be able to concentrate on the grammatical structures involved and not have to worry about finding the right words to use in the answer.[1] If this were an acceptable strategy, we could issue students a target-language "grammar book" and ask them to come back to take a test when they had mastered it. Clearly, neither of these strategies is acceptable.

These exclusionary perspectives on foreign-language teaching that pit one element in a global communicative system against the others fail to exploit the fundamentally integrative nature of grammar. One of the implications of defining grammar as a system for converting meaning into language is that *any* aspect of the target language that aids in the transmission and/or reception of meaning counts as "grammar." The following analogy might be helpful:

If we visualize a language as a large building of considerable complexity, we can conceptualize the grammar of that language as the blueprints for the discreet structural elements of the building. We might see the vocabulary as bricks, perhaps. The morphology could be the mortar that holds the bricks in place, and the syntax the internal steel framework. The phonology might be the intercom system wired throughout the structure, and the discourse features the windows that allow us to see in and out. Bricks without mortar do not make a strong and secure structure, any more than does mortar without bricks.

In this sense, building communicative competence into our foreign-language students (a goal embraced by virtually everyone in our profession) shares some characteristics with constructing a building. Many things need to happen, and they need to complement each other. Much must occur simultaneously, just as much must await the completion of earlier stages of construction. A pedagogy that floods the students only with vocabulary will fail to produce successful communicators just as surely as will one that relentlessly presents in series "the major grammatical structures of language X," and which values "linguistic correctness" at the expense of any other communicative function. The former pedagogy will most likely produce "blurt and pray" speakers, who, given a context and a message, will produce vocabulary and look for signs from the listener that a more or less acceptable approximation of the intended message has been received. The latter pedagogy will more likely produce "nonspeakers" of the target language, whose only linguisitic ability lies in composing well formed trivia that are as ruthlessly correct as they are uninteresting.

When we combine the above observations, we approach a plausible characterization of a successful foreign language user: *one who possesses and combines all of the communicative elements of a linguistic system, i.e., a "grammar," in ways that are at least analagous to the ways that native speakers possess and combine them*. We also end up with a plausible goal for a program of foreign language instruction: to provide our students with these communicative elements, or with a developmentally defensible subset of them, in an environment that encourages their natural, productive use. The challenge to instructors and materials developers alike is not so much the cataloguing of the communicative elements themselves as it is the provision of the environment that encourages their natural, productive use.

The first step in reaching a goal of instruction is to recognize that the notion of "grammar" must be broadened, that grammar can no longer be understood as including just morphology and syntax. When we talk about "teaching grammar for proficiency," we mean grammar in this expanded sense. A pedagogy that values communicative ability as its ultimate goal cannot fixate on just pronunciation, or on vocabulary, morphology, syntax, conversational management, discourse constraints, or any other isolated *aspect* of the target language grammar. Such a pedagogy must recognize that there can be no significant successful communication without the "grammar" *in toto* to hold it in place.

Since in one form or another bilingual word lists and formal grammatical explanations together constitute the majority of the content in foreign-language textbooks, do we conclude that such materials are unnecessary or even counterproductive? Might we not as well conclude that some textbook yet to be written might be so perfectly balanced between vocabulary and formal grammar (not in our sense as defined above), that it would guarantee true communicative competence on the part of our students? No, for in any successful foreign language *program* there are crucial differences between any set of foreign language *materials* and foreign language *classes*. If we explicitly recognize some of these differences, we can begin to characterize not only a promising foreign language *program,* but successful materials and successful classes as well.

The fundamental difference between materials and classes is that no matter how well conceived the materials are, *they cannot interact with their clients.* They cannot know who has a sweetheart, who owns an automobile, who dresses outrageously, whose parents are living, deceased or divorced, who is an on-

ly child, who majors in what, who is interested in sports or who considers sports to be the opiate of the masses. Materials cannot tell a student that he has just done an exercise well, badly, or indifferently. Materials cannot clarify their explanations nor can they give additional examples of the information they present. They are necessarily static, dead, and immutable. They are written in the hope that they will be sufficient, when by definition they cannot be. The best materials are only those that most overtly suggest the communicative opportunities that their contents imply, but they cannot realize those opportunities. This situation cannot reasonably be remedied; a set of materials that only presented communicative opportunities would be even more useless than a set that only presented vocabulary and structure.

Classes, on the other hand, should be the antithesis of materials. Where the latter are static and immutable, the former must be dynamic and flexible. Obviously this does not mean that we should abandon textbooks, tapes, exercise manuals, computer software, etc. in our programs. For although live, direct instruction might arguably be sufficient for adult L2 acquisition to take place given limitless time for instruction (thus mimicking the natural L1 acquisition process), in high school or college programs we do not have limitless time for instruction.

Realistically, both materials and classes are necessary parts of a foreign language program, although neither is sufficient. What is most important is the dynamic mix between the content of the materials and the activities undertaken by the students and instructors. Materials can indeed provide certain crucial information about the target language in a form that our students can readily use. Materials are excellent sources for nonproblematic, essentially mechanical information such as some of the vocabulary and verb forms — linguistic elements that require nothing beyond their "presentation" in order to be comprehensible (2). Good materials can also advance both reading and listening skills. But live interaction alone can provide not only necessary feedback, but also amplification, exemplification and personalization of the communicative functions as manifested by the target language.

This recognition of the unavoidably static character of materials and the ideally dynamic character of the classroom provides an exciting challenge to foreign language instructors. If students are to gain maximum benefit from a foreign-language program, they need both of its necessary halves: the materials and the classes. This not only suggests that materials and classes *must not* be redundant, it also provides a prin-

ciple for making language classes less textbook dependent: if as instructors we understand our role as that of providing just those elements necessary to successful communication which textbooks either do not or cannot provide, then each distinct textbook merely entails a distinct set of appropriate class activities and instructor behaviors, each set motivated by this one principle. In short, the class, that is, the instructor working in harmony with the students, must provide what the materials, for whatever reason, fail to provide.

For example, no textbook or other set of materials can tell students how well they pronounce the target language, nor whether a given attempt at communication has minor flaws but is successful. Even materials with answers in the back cannot provide for answers that are entirely acceptable alternatives to those given. None can determine how successfully the beginner can control a conversation, e.g., by asking other speakers to speak more slowly or to repeat something, or by inquiring about a particular constituent that was either not heard or was not understood (*Who* did it? *When* did you say it happened? etc.). No set of materials can invite a given student to share with his or her classmates feelings about a particular content area known to be of special personal interest. Such activities are the instructor's responsibility.

From a different perspective, if the materials are long on explanations but short on examples, only the instructor can exemplify, amplify, clarify or otherwise re-present the linguistic data. If the materials provide copious examples of the target language, the instructor should be ready to make explicit some of the explanations that will allow the student to first bind and subsequently access the linguistic reality that underlies the examples. To summarize, textbooks and other materials almost always do *some things* very well, but in so doing, they leave other things undone. Those "other things" become the responsibility of the instructor.

The generalization for foreign language instructors that emerges from this discussion is this: *Do in the classroom only what cannot be done profitably anywhere else or in any other way.* "Anywhere else" might mean in the language lab, during office hours or study halls, before class, after class, and so on. Rickerson has suggested that "the most valuable asset in the instructional process [is] the instructor" (8). He argues that instructors are not well utilized as models for mimicry ("listen and repeat") nor as explainers of structure, but as stimulators of communicative exchanges and monitors of student outputs. The former functions can be met by other means, and the instruc-

tors should provide what only live human beings can provide. If as foreign-language instructors our classroom activities consist largely of going over the exercises and other content already found in the textbook, then we stand fairly accused of not doing our job.

What, then, is our job? I will conclude that ultimately our job is to teach grammar. But to be able to say that, I must discuss "grammar" at greater length.

As noted above, Krashen has said that grammar is "a synonym for conscious learning...." (6, p. 89). Elsewhere in the same work, he has said that conscious learning refers to "conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them" (6, p. 10). So if we are teaching grammar by this definition, we are helping our students learn how to say, e.g., "In German, adjectives agree with the nouns they modify for gender, number, and case." Or, "In Italian, adjectival clauses having negative or indefinite antecedents require that the subordinated verb be in the subjunctive mood." Defining "grammar" for our students in terms of paradigms, declensions and the like, or presenting it through formalized statements of morphological and syntactic wellformedness is inappropriate and counterproductive. At the very least, it assumes implicitly that arcane metalanguage forms part of the shared informational base between instructor and student that makes meaningful communication possible.

I believe that a consistent pedagogical perspective is easiest to maintain when we define "grammar" as a system for converting meaning into language. Under this definition, the term "grammar" covers the entire linguistic system of expression. Hence messages are successfully transmitted and received in any communicative modality uniquely through the mediation of the grammar of the language. Viewed in this perspective, if, for example, I speak English to monolingual speakers of Greek, they fail to understand my message only because I have not sampled *their* grammar. I have not used *their* system for converting meaning into language, and the desired conversion in fact has not taken place. If I were to use *some* Greek words, *some* conversion would take place and hence *some* communication would be possible. If I were able to sample appropriately from the entire grammar of Greek, then everything I chose to communicate presumably would be successfully received. The more nearly isomorphic my grammar is to the grammar of my listener, the more successfully I communicate the desired meaning. This is as true within languages, i.e., across idiolects and dialects, as it is across languages.

In a communicative, proficiency oriented foreign language course, then, the fundamental mission of the instructor must be to teach grammar, in the sense just characterized. The aim of language use is not simply to be understood, but to make it impossible to be misunderstood. The only way for beginning adult foreign language students to realize this aim is gradually to conform as well as they can to the requirements of the target language grammar. Such foreign language students bring to their task a preexisting set of communicative constructs, i.e., "meanings" that they can already express. Their initial task consists of mapping these constructs onto a new and necessarily more limiting set of target language structures. Their ability to express themselves in the target language is at first effectively controlled and circumscribed by the target language grammar, including by definition its vocabulary, that they have learned or acquired. As these students progress, the set of available target language structures and the set of their own communicative constructs become increasingly isomorphic, until at the end of the process, advanced nonnative users control the target grammar, and make *it* conform to their communicative demands, just as the natives do. Language instructors are expected to facilitate this process by "teaching" the target language. But what are we to teach, and how are we to teach it?

We can imagine a "hierarchy of instructional tactics" which derives from a strategy based on these observations:

1. The overriding desire of beginning foreign language students is to speak and understand the target language. "Correctness" is not an explicit student goal. "Communication" is. But communication without correctness is necessarily flawed. We cannot exploit our students' desire to "get it right" as easily as we can motivate them to "make it clear;" to "get it across." The end product, however, will be the same.

2. Meaning is most economically and clearly communicated when the grammar (in our sense) is native-like. The more nonnative utterances deviate from the native norm, the less certainty we have of successful communication, and the more likely *mis*communication becomes.

3. If we want to teach someone something new, we should find something known and familiar as our starting point. For most of our students, formal/traditional grammar fails this principle. Few of our students will be able to attach any meaning to a textbook section entitled "Reciprocal Actions with Reflexive Pronouns," for example.

4. The best available entry we have into our students' minds is the *meanings that they already know how to express in their native language.* Our message to them must be, "If you choose to express this meaning, you can do it using these forms."

The hierarchy of instructional tactics mentioned above attempts to motivate instructor behaviors as a function of the relative transparency or opacity of the relationships that can be found to exist in the target language between the meanings being expressed and the forms that express them. An analagous hierarchy can be derived for the extent of treatment needed in textbooks and ancillaries. The more opaque the relationship is between form and meaning in the target language, the more formative must be the instructor's intervention. At the top of the hierarchy, for example, that is, when a meaning is already known to a student and the target language expresses that meaning transparently, the most appropriate instructor behavior is simply "presentation." The relationship between the meaning "butterfly" and the German word "der Schmetterling" is transparent in this sense, and nothing more than a communicative context or a visual is needed. In a textbook, the classic vocabulary list is sufficient.

The next level, "delimitation," mostly entails clarifying the meanings of homophonous native language forms so that students feel comfortable about subdividing "the same" native language word into different target language words. At this stage, the instructor (or the textbook) delimits the scope of a native language word such as "stock," saying "Not *stock* as in 'cattle,' but *stock* as in 'chicken soup,' 'gene pools,' 'merchandise,' 'investment opportunities,' 'shotguns,' " or whatever.

It is also necessary at times to show students where comparable meanings are transmitted by different linguistic means in the foreign language. In English, for example, contrastive stress [a meaning students intuitively understand and want naturally to express] can be applied to virtually any sentence constituent in order to emphasize it. What one essentially cannot do in English is tamper with word or constituent order. In other languages, however, contrastive stress may be signaled by a change in word or constituent order. In Spanish, *Juan me lo dijo* and *Me lo dijo Juan* are interestingly different sentences. Similarly, since Spanish verb forms normally specify their subject morphologically, the contextually redundant use of a subject pronoun places primary semantic focus on the subject. Hence *Hablo español* (I speak Spanish) is different from *Yo hablo español* (I speak Spanish).

This should tell us something about how one might more productively present matters of constituent order, verb forms, and subject pronouns in Spanish classes.

Students' communicative needs are not well served by telling them that "word order in Spanish is very flexible," or that "subject pronouns are optional." Virtually any variation in order changes the interpretation of a sentence, and the inclusion or omission of a subject pronoun materially changes its communicative impact. Thus, in Spanish, subject pronouns are obligatorily present when their presence is required by the meaning to be conveyed, and obligatorily omitted under precisely the same condition.

When we tell our students that "it's correct either way," we perpetuate the false notion that "correct" equals "grammatically well formed." This is the notion that accounts for the typical textbook exercise consisting of any number of sentences that "illustrate the grammatical point" under consideration, without any attempt at suggesting its communicative value. This is the notion that makes it possible to find in textbooks entire drills of the type that ask, "Who went to the laboratory last week?" and invite students to respond serially, "Julio went to the laboratory last week; I went to the laboratory last week; You went to the laboratory last week..." and so on ad nauseum, without the least concession to the ultimate goal of communicative appropriateness.[2]

In the same vein, how many foreign-language textbooks actually tell the students the difference in *meaning* between using a direct object pronoun and fully specifying the direct object, i.e., that the former marks information "shared" by participants in a discourse, while the latter introduces "new" information? Do the grammar books ever say that when the pronoun is *not* used for shared information the speaker/writer seems to be metaphorically pounding the table? We are more likely to find a brief section that says, "The following are the forms of the Direct Object Pronouns in language X," followed by an exercise of ten completely unrelated sentences in which students are invited to replace each direct object phrase with a direct object pronoun. Do we as instructors truly believe that our students cannot in context recognize "shared" versus "new" information? Can we really wonder at why our students when they speak or write never *do* what they *know*? Our students as well as our textbook writers need to realize that a major criterion of successful communication is not mere grammatical wellformedness but contextual appropriateness. Textbooks can facilitate this realiza-

tion, but the classroom is the place to make it real.

We have thus far considered only meanings that are already known to our students. These are, at bottom, the easy part of teaching. Of much more interest pedagogically are those meanings marked formally in the target language which are not clearly marked in the students' native language, and which therefore are not immediately available to their consciousness. In such cases, our first responsibility is to identify the meanings that the target language forms communicate. For example, when spoken in Spanish, the following English "BE-sentences" use different verbs: "Ron is ill-tempered" and "Ron is sick." There is no pedagogical alternative to pointing out that in Spanish the salient feature is whether the the predicate "classifies" its argument or whether it "reports an observation" of it (Higgs, 3). A similar case occurs in any language that systematically marks perfective versus imperfective aspect in one or more tenses, which English fails to do systematically. Input hypotheses notwithstanding, students cannot " 'go for the meaning' first, and as a result...acquire structure" (6, p. 21) if the meaning itself is not accessible. Meanings without structures to support their expression remain inchoate, while structures *qua* structures are practically meaningless. The theory I am proposing in this paper argues that only when students understand the meanings encoded by the target language forms are the forms themselves apprehensible.

The recent movement within the profession towards language proficiency assessment has engendered some confusion about the possible interaction of communication and linguistic accuracy. Literature associated with the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) or the ACTFL/ETS proficiency evaluation procedures notes that a proficiency rating is assigned by certified raters only after they explicitly evaluate the communicative functions attempted by the candidate, the content or context in which they have been attempted, and the linguistic accuracy with which they have been realized. The accuracy component in this "functional trisection," however, is not an invariant or absolute measure. It ranges from simple intelligibility at the lower levels all the way through virtually native-like control over the total expression system of the language being tested. None of the three components in the evaluation metric is prime, nor even *primus inter pares*. On the contrary, the rating scales explicitly recognize that only when all of the various factors involved in effective language use coalesce around a norm associated with natives' use of the language are the highest proficiency ratings attained. Such ratings derive from the recognition that

the highest levels of proficiency coincide with the most successful communication of the desired meanings (connotative as well as denotative). As I have argued above, the most successful communication coincides with the most accurate expression.

At the same time, both the ILR and ACTFL/ETS rating scales explicitly recognize that fairly discreet developmental stages are involved in moving up the scale. The Relative Contribution Hypothesis suggests that different linguistic skills are crucial at different developmental points (5). Thus, while different foreign-language programs may have different emphases at different developmental stages, condemning one side for apparently valuing only "blurt and pray" strategies is as unreasonable as condemning another for apparently valuing only paradigm recitation. I would hope that no program is guilty of espousing either extreme as a final goal of instruction. Yet, in any program at any arbitrarily selected point of examination, one or the other may appear to be ascendant.

In this context, it is important to reemphasize that "teaching grammar" and "teaching formal/traditional grammatical rules" are not at all the same. Teaching grammar without a formal metalanguage is not only possible but desirable. Once the implications of defining grammar as a system for converting meaning into language are assimilated and incorporated into a pedagogy, an instructor (or a textbook writer) is forever freed, for example, from teaching "the subjunctive in noun clauses after verbs of volition," since this is now covered in the unit on "ways to get other people to do what you want them to do." Students who crave arcane terminology can get it from textbooks' appendices or from their instructors outside of class. Meanwhile, those who are terrified of terminology are provided a much less threatening ingress into the communication system that the target language represents.

I have suggested that teaching *communication* and teaching *grammar* are inseparable aspects of teaching *language*. In closing, I will say amen to the notion that students must understand meanings before forms will have any interest or utility. Forms themselves have intrinsically neither vitality nor interest. What is of vital interest, however, is *how the forms work together to communciate meaning.*

Students undoubtedly do not have to "do it right" from the very start of their foreign language study in order to make progress or feel successful. But since they do have to do it right at the end, since *doing it right ensures optimum communication and thus best satisfies their own goals,* we only aid their progress by

showing them first *why* doing it right is necessary, then *how*. It is up to foreign- language instructors and materials developers to show their students that the target language is not an unordered set of well formed sentences, as many textbooks and other materials often seem to imply. Our job is to help our students realize that communication is not a sentence level function. We do this by recognizing the crucial differences between materials and classes, using the former not as a closet curriculum but as a point of departure, and above all by presenting the grammar of the target language as the ultimate means of successful communication.

NOTES

[1]From the "Introduction to the Student" of a Spanish text published in the 1970s.

[2]From a Spanish text published in the 1980s.

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