

Assessing Grammar

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Abstrak

Research and theory related to the teaching and learning of grammar have made significant advances over the years. In applied linguistics, our understanding of language has been vastly broadened with the work of corpus-based and communication-based approaches to language study, and this research has made pathways into recent pedagogical grammars. Also, our conceptualization of language proficiency has shifted from an emphasis on linguistic form to one on communicative language ability and communicative language use, which has, in turn, led to a deemphasis on grammatical accuracy and a greater concern for communicative effectiveness. In language teaching, we moved from a predominant focus on structures and metalinguistic terminology to an emphasis on comprehensible input, interaction and no explicit grammar instruction. From there, we adopted a more balanced approach to language instruction, where meaning and communication are still emphasized, but where

form and meaning-focused instruction have a clear role. Current research in grammar instruction involves investigations into the effect of teaching grammar explicitly or implicitly, reactively or proactively, and integrated in the curriculum at one point in time or sequentially (Doughty, 2002). Findings from SLA have also shown that the processing constraints underlying certain development a orders (e.g., negation) cannot be overtravened (Doughty, 2002) and that the optimal conditions for processing meaning, function and form in language learning are still to be discovered. All these developments have implications for how grammatical ability needs to be