

Knowing About Language: What, Why and How?

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Some preliminaries

If we use words incorrectly we are going to think incorrectly and therefore we are going to make the decisions on which our thinking is based incorrectly and that's either going to be a nuisance or it's going to wreck our lives. Our happiness depends on grammar.

Neville Gwynne, Interview on *Radio 5 Live*

Properly spoken and written language is the lifeline which any conscientious schooling system can offer to every child, from whatever background. It is the only possible path to real social equality. . . . To teach people how to speak and write their language properly and well is to give them a ticket to freedom. Being 'tolerant' of their 'differences' is another way of writing them off.

(Daley, 1991)

in Sealey (1994)

Some preliminaries

The emphasis is on SpaG in KS2. Mr Gove wanted it that way. No creativity. No interest for the reader. Just using the subjunctive and propositional clauses (sic)

Posted on Twitter, May 2017

Finite and non-finite verbs [...] blow my mind. Could anyone explain finite and non-finite verbs to me and why they might be of interest to my language students? And participles, participles scare me'

Anonymous post to *The English Language List*, October 2013

A02

- As was the case last year, a significant number relied heavily upon looking at structural features of poems and produced extensive analysis of these features. Much of this was very assertive and candidates should guard against making lengthy claims about what the number of lines in a stanza, or the line length, might signify.
- Similarly, many assertive claims were made about the impact of enjambement.
- Centres should encourage candidates to limit their use of terms taken from English Language study, as these often distract from literary analysis.

- **Reactionaries:** prescriptive view of language, language as rules, need for stabilization/resistance to change
- **Romantics:** issues about 'knowledge' in English, personal/individual, anti-formalization (grammar), centrality of literature in the curriculum

Standards/prescription/fetishization of
metalanguage/dubious practices

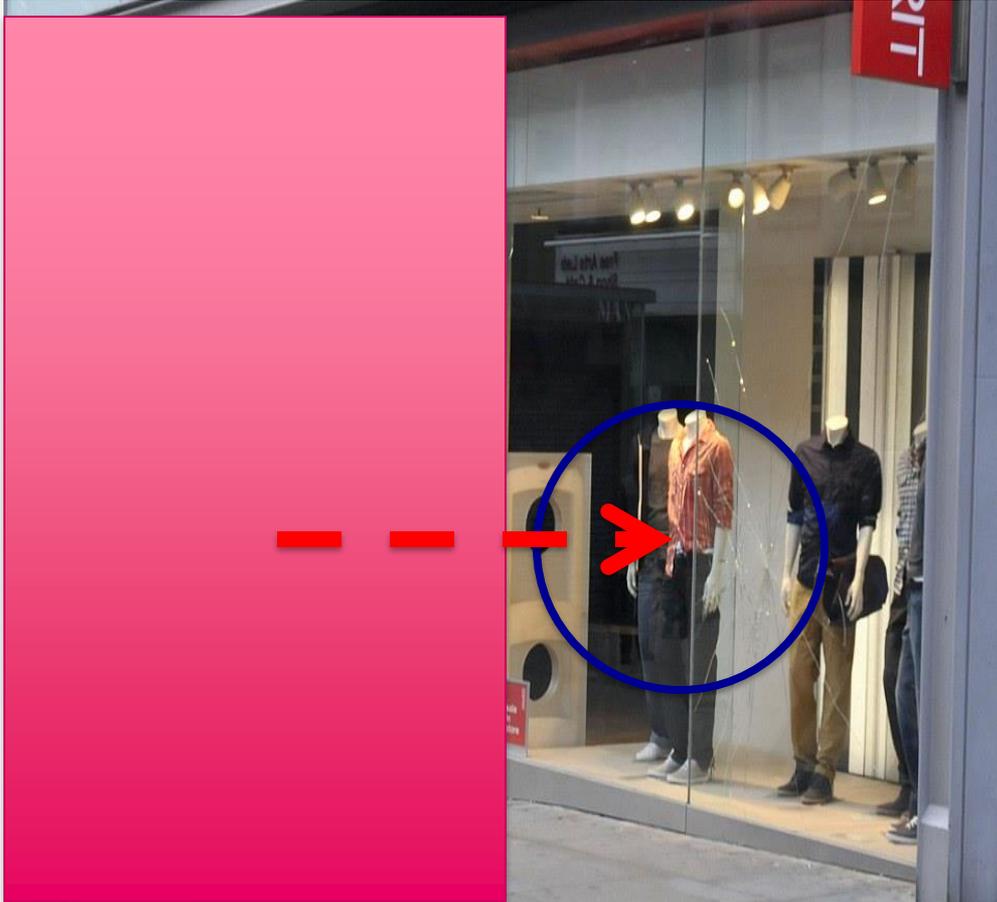
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The myth of creativity/resistance to
metalanguage

- The Newbolt Report (1921)
- English for the English (1922)
- The Newsom Report (1963)
- Secondary Schools Examination Council Report (1964)
- Schools Council Programme in Linguistics and English Teaching (1964-71)
- The Bullock Report (1975)
- First A-level English Language paper (1981: 41 candidates)
- The Kingman Report (1988)
- The Cox Report (1989)
- Language in the National Curriculum – LINC (1989-92)
- English component of National Curriculum (1990)
- National Strategies (1997-2011)
- The Bew Review (2012)
- New KS3-4 National Curriculum (2013-14)
- A-level Reform (2012-15 English Language has 35000 candidates)

WHAT

- **CONNECTING GRAMMATICAL FORMS AND CHOICES WITH MEANING**
- **GRAMMAR IS MEANING**



The rioter smashed the window

The window was smashed by the rioter

The window was smashed

The smashed window



British actress and sex scandal that's toppled Harry Potter film mogul

SEE PAGE FIVE

Fury as grandstanding Speaker ambushes PM with bombshell ruling on her deal

Now Britain must beg EU to delay leaving - and faces up to 20 MONTHS in limbo

SMIRK THAT SAYS: BREXIT BE DAMNED

Sabotage: John Bercow yesterday

JOHN Bercow was accused of trying to sabotage Brexit last night after he blocked another vote on Theresa May's deal.

In a dramatic intervention, the

By **Jason Groves** Political Editor

Commons Speaker ruled that the EU withdrawal agreement could not be put to a vote again without substantial changes.

He gave Downing Street no notice of his announcement, which came just

24 hours before the Prime Minister was expected to ask the Commons to decide on the issue for a third time following two crushing defeats.

As well as sparking a constitutional crisis, Mr Bercow's move all but killed any prospect of a vote before Mrs May heads to an EU summit on Thursday. It also means she may have to ask

Brussels for a delay of up to 20 months. A senior Government source said the Speaker, who is an outspoken critic of Brexit, wanted to wreck Mrs May's plan of limiting the delay to three months.

It seems clear that the Speaker's motive here is to rule out a meaningful

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Aims of language teaching

- Productive (skills): increasing competence in speaking and writing
- Descriptive (content/analytical): understanding of the properties of language and how it works
- Prescriptive ('linguistic table manners'): geared towards the socially acceptable/control rather than any increase in skill or analysis

(Halliday 1967: 83)

WHY

- **DEVELOPING LINGUISTIC (SELF)AWARENESS**
 - **EMPOWERING**



Harris Academy
Upper Norwood

Maths and Enterprise

Banned Words:

COZ AINT

LIKE BARE

EXTRA INNIT

YOU WOZ and WE WOZ

Beginning sentences with **BASICALLY**

Ending sentences with **YEAH**

‘Basically, Shakespeare’s history plays trace England’s movement from a decentralised, feudal monarchy to a more centralised, modern monarchy’

Paul A. Cantor (Clifton Waller Barrett Professor of English Literature at the University of Virginia/PhD from Harvard)

‘She loves you yeah, yeah, yeah’

John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Discourses (Gee 2015)

- Belief systems>>Use
- **theories** about what ‘counts as a “normal” person and the “right” ways to think, feel and behave’ (2015: 4)
- **overt** or **tacit** (2015:13)
- **Primary** or **non-primary** (2015: 17)

[...] how we speak is an integral part of our individual, cultural and social identities. A challenge for the teaching of grammar then is how to do so in ways that do not denigrate and deny students' sociocultural and linguistic origins. **One way of doing so is to view grammar through the lens of 'register' rather than 'error'**

(Clark 2018: 39, added emphasis)

HOW

- **INTEGRATING ENGLISH**
- **MAKING HIGH QUALITY PRE-SERVICE AND IN-SERVICE LANGUAGE EDUCATION/PEDAGOGY AVAILABLE TO TEACHERS**

- Issues with the compartmentalisation of the subject at all levels
- Undergraduate programmes in English can often have little language work
- Teachers on ITE courses are largely from English literature backgrounds
- A sense that language work is not really ‘English’ compared to literature teaching
- The changing landscape of ITE
- Strong misconceptions about grammatical knowledge in PGCE students and experienced teachers

GRAMMAR IS A VIRUS

- ‘Grammar is like a virus that has spread from KS2 to KS3 and 4’
- It’s infected English. It’s like the subject is diseased with grammar all of a sudden’
- ‘It’s painful. English teaching needs curing of grammar’

ANTI-CREATIVITY

- ‘Have had to re-write all my schemes of work [...] reduces time frame for study of other important aspects of English like writing’
- ‘We do more grammar than ever before at KS3 because of what’s happened to KS2 and KS4. It takes up time that could be done doing more valuable things like fostering a love of reading’

(Cushing 2018)

Becoming an English language teacher

Teacher A: 'I taught child language acquisition for the fourth time and this time I knew exactly what I was doing. I knew exactly what they wanted me to say, I knew what they were asking. I felt really comfortable with it and I thought this is so unlike what I expected English to be'

Teacher B: 'I think that it has given me an awareness of another side of English that I had never come across before'

Teacher C: 'We had one lesson, I can't remember- it must have been last year with the Year 9 class as well, and we had one lesson where we- you've probably heard this before. Where we got a load of receipts and we picked them apart and we talked about the language on the receipts, and then they wrote a story inspired by the receipt. That just came from something that I'd done in A-level that I thought, 'Actually that would work really well with year nine'

(Giovanelli 2015)

What is needed?

- Re-frame the discourse of grammar (and language work generally)
- Choose models of language that are functional in orientation to underpin pedagogy
- Make descriptive language work a key focus: draw on young people's own language as a valuable source of study
- Aim for more integrated models of 'English' in schools and in higher education with language study at the heart of the discipline

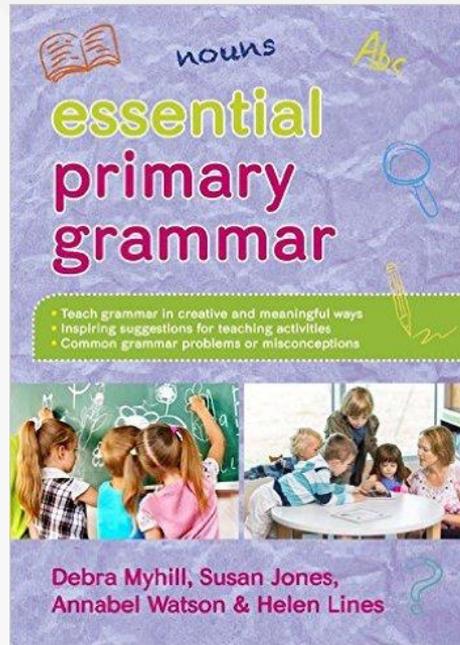
englicious Resources Glossary User login

English Language Resources for Schools

Englicious is an entirely free online library of original English language teaching resources!

[VIEW RESOURCES](#)

UCL



nouns Abc

essential primary grammar

- Teach grammar in creative and meaningful ways
- Inspiring suggestions for teaching activities
- Common grammar problems or misconceptions

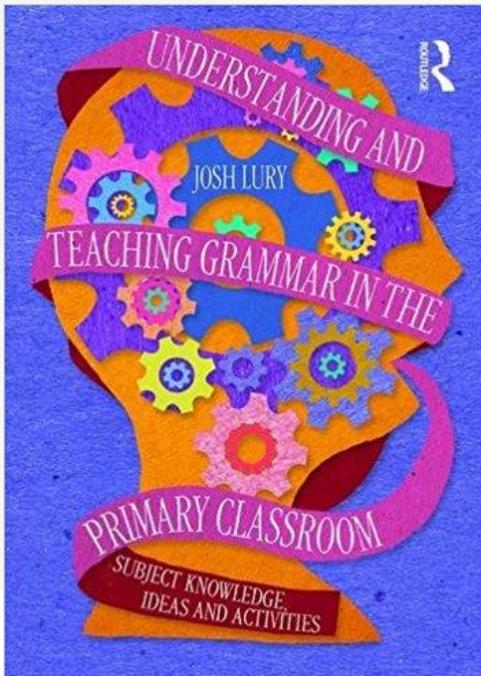
Debra Myhill, Susan Jones, Annabel Watson & Helen Lines

OXFORD TEACHING GUIDES

HOW TO Teach Grammar

**BAS AARTS
IAN CUSHING
RICHARD HUDSON**

OXFORD



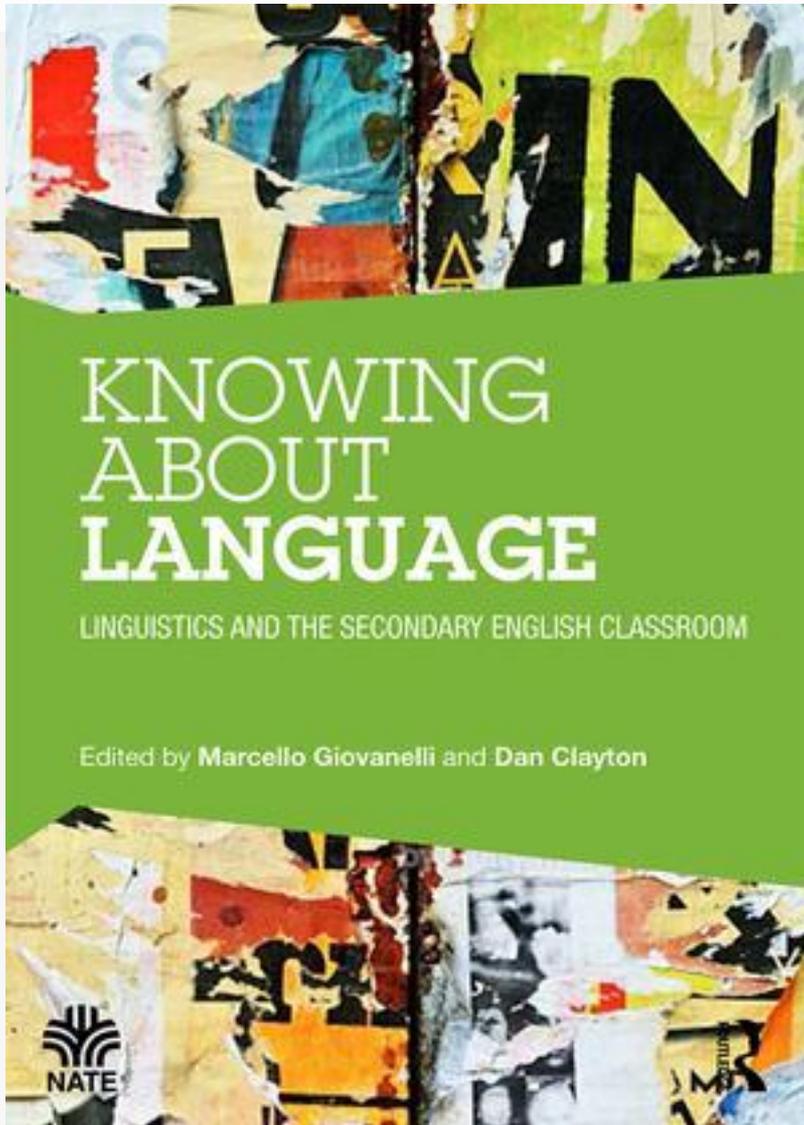
UNDERSTANDING AND TEACHING GRAMMAR IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

JOSH LURY

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE, IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES



EMC
English & Media Centre



Seventeen chapters
written by academics,
researchers and teachers
working at the interface of
linguistics and education

Foreword by Professor
Ronald Carter

[...] it is there behind the lines, underlying our classroom practices, and our ideas about children, and about learning and reality.

(Halliday 1982: 15)

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