**Choosing Grammar Elements for the SLE Classroom**

Ellis (1985) points out that there are reasons for teaching explicit grammar for its own sake:

* emphasising relative difficulty or usefulness
* emphasising ‘markedness’ (how common a structure is)
* remedial work (detailed examination and correction of individual fossilisation)

However, there are two sets of problems related to structural syllabi:

Problems with immediate mastery (learning discrete points one after another)

* what is the natural order of acquisition? There is very little research on this
* how do you take individual learner differences into account?
* how do you assess these differences?
* how do you organise grammar content for a group of learners?
* how do you account for program or logistical differences?

Problems with gradual mastery (focus on comprehension/ spiralling)

* the spiral approach is hit and miss
* the above problems still exist

Ellis (1993) argues that grammar is useful when combined with a functional or task-based curriculum. Stand alone grammar syllabi are not sufficient.

These problems can also be overcome by remembering Pienemann’s (1985) distinction between *input for production* and *input for comprehension* and her recommendations to:

* not demand production that is impossible at a given stage
* not introduce deviant forms immediately
* not worry about the fact that general input can contain structures not intended for production

Ellis, R. (1985) *Understanding second language acquisition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1993). The structural syllabus and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly 27*, 1, 91-113.

Pienemann, M. (1985). Learnability and syllabus construction. In Hylstenstam, K. and Pienemann, M. (Eds.), Modeling and assessing second language acquisition (pp.23-75). Clevedon, Multilingual Matters.