

“I think you have to have theory. You have to be operating within some kind of theoretical framework to ask any meaningful questions about language. Languages make sense, but only in terms of theories...We learn to ask questions about individual languages on the basis of a theoretical framework, the two go side by side. The language is always influencing what the theory is going to say because they confront us with problems; that’s how the field works. You have a theory, here are the facts. As soon as you look at the next language, you see something that is either going to force you to change the theory or, if you work hard enough, you’ll see that not only does it turn out not to be an exception or something like that, but it actually proves the theory. They work together like that.”

Ken Hale (1934-2001)