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The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course

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The Grammar Book: An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course (2nd edition)

Marianne Celce-Murcia and Diane Larsen-Freeman (1999)

Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle

Pp. viii + 853

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U.S. \$50.95; UK £33.95

The second edition of Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman's amazing tome, *The Grammar Book*, has been revised. The subject matter is expanded, the prose is tighter, the examples are fresh, and the new organization makes it an even more valuable teacher's resource.

The subtitle for *The Grammar Book* is "An ESL/EFL Teacher's Course." It was originally developed to address the points that we all must be able to teach effectively. The examples, explanations, and exercises are designed to help teachers overcome the negative associations which grammar has for so many, so that "some actual teachers say, 'as we do, that learning grammar is fun!'" (p. 10). The fun comes from the book's approach to grammar; this is not a simplistic text giving clever one-liners and maxims to use in class. Instead, it provides teachers to teach students how to "use the structures of English accurately, meaningfully,

Consistent with the first edition, the 1999 edition is well organized, with careful examples, a refreshing discussion of different scholars' theories on how and why English operates the contextualize the grammar points, to show how grammar operates on the sentential and communication interface" (p. 4). Each grammar point is addressed in terms of presentation which Larsen-Freeman uses in her *Grammar Dimensions* series (also from Heinich) and each grammar point assists the teacher in understanding the explanations and in preparing

Although not originally intended as a reference, the second edition of *The Grammar Book* the authors found out that many teachers were using their text as a reference grammar (p. 4) and the indices help make this book a valuable tool for teachers in the field as well as students and the indices help make this book useful for independent study. The appendix gives suggestions and the indices include a listing of the numerous scholars referred to in the text, the languages and examples, as well as the words, phrases, and topics dealt with in explanations. This second edition has more information and more careful ordering of that information.

New chapters expand the coverage and allow for the better organization. The new chapters on terminology used in discussing grammar, defining terms like "adverb," "aspect," and "register" follow the subsequent discussion. Having a separate chapter explaining the differences in register, for example, means that less time needs to be spent on that basic information when the author discusses my own lack of metalinguistic knowledge when starting an M.A. ESL/EFL program, this is

Several of the 1983 edition's chapters were expanded for 1999. A stronger emphasis on the tense and aspect system led to the new chapter 9, "The Tense-Aspect-Modality System in Discourse," and to a good treatment of the tense and aspect system. What had been a single chapter on the tense and aspect system has become two chapters, one on tense and one on aspect. As the authors say, "certain tenses, aspect, and modality combinations tend to occur together" (p. 161). This separation allows the authors to treat their subjects with greater focus, and has led to a new chapter on tense and aspect; for example, all simple aspects are now dealt with together.

Throughout the new edition, the treatment of different subjects has been reexamined and reorganized. The treatment of infinitives, gerunds, and participles has been reorganized to allow for the expanded chapter on the tense and aspect system. The treatment of possessive forms has also been renovated, appearing as the enlarged chapter 16, "Restructuring Rules." The structure rules have gone through extensive revision to allow for a smoother introduction to the structure rules. Now, the first ten rules on sentences, adverbials, and noun phrases are introduced in the next chapter.

This is an immense book. There are thirty-six chapters, one less than in the 1983 edition, but the same amount of information is covered. The chapters are:

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1. Introduction
2. Grammatical Metalanguage
3. The Lexicon
4. The Copula and Subject-Verb Agreement
5. Introduction to Phrase Structure
6. More Phrase Structure Rules
7. The Tense and Aspect System
8. Modal Auxiliaries and Related Phrasal Forms
9. The Tense-Aspect-Modality System in Discourse
10. Negation
11. Yes/No Questions
12. Imperatives
13. WH-Questions
14. Other Structures That Look Like Questions
15. Articles
16. Reference and Possession
17. Partitives, Collectives, and Quantifiers
18. The Passive Voice
19. Sentences with Indirect Objects
20. Adjectives
21. Prepositions
22. Phrasal Verbs
23. Nonreferential *It* and *There* as Subjects
24. Coordinating Conjunction
25. Adverbials
26. Logical Connectors
27. Conditional Sentences
28. Introduction to Relative Clauses
29. More on Relative Clauses
30. Focus and Emphasis
31. Complementation
32. Other Aspects of Complementation and Embedded Clauses
33. Reported Speech and Writing
34. Degree-Comparatives and Equatives
35. Degree-Complements and Superlatives
36. Conclusion

The Grammar Book is an impressive achievement: it combines an excellent treatment of the subject with a wealth of suggestions, and in the process it leads aspiring teachers into the intellectual challenge of

ESL/EFL instructors. If we cannot figure out the rules of English, how can we hope to effect explicitly, in understanding and mastery? The second edition builds on the strengths of the scholarly frameworks, and teaching suggestions that have made this a must-have text. The expanded coverage in the second edition makes it easy to give up my trusty old white “Gra

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