

---

## New Publications ... Nuwe Publikasies

---

### Reviews

#### Marianne Celce-Murcia and Sharon Hilles

*Techniques and resources in teaching grammar.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988. (Paperback 189 pp.)

“Of the many issues surrounding the teaching of grammar, perhaps the most controversial is whether to teach it at all” (p.1). In providing the background to the consideration of this issue, the writers note that there are no studies that provide evidence of the need for overt grammar instruction. However, certain studies suggest that “the prognosis (for the achievement of high level proficiency) in the long run is better for those with overt formal instruction than for those with none”. Comprehensible input, rated so highly in the communicative approach to language teaching, is in itself considered insufficient to attain mastery of a second language. A strong case for not abandoning grammar teaching is the acknowledgement that different people respond to different learning styles, e.g. analytical (as opposed to holistic) learners would require grammar input in order to form and test hypotheses and to extract rules from examples (p.5). Furthermore, student needs constantly change in the course of the language learning process.

This book addresses the major issue of how to integrate grammatical principles into a communicative framework. As traditional methods of teaching grammar clearly need to be improved, the authors propose a matching of structure, language factors (social, semantic, and discourse), technique and resources as a basis for the presentation of effective language lessons.

Chapter two, entitled “Getting ready to teach grammar”, distinguishes between prescriptive and descriptive grammars. The focus is on choosing and sequencing material for a grammar lesson. This chapter describes one such lesson in detail, incorporating four phases: presentation, focused practice, communicative practice, and feedback and correction.

The second section of this book (there are four in all) focuses on techniques of grammar teaching, such as listening and responding, telling stories, and drama and roleplay. Listening and responding are well suited to the presentation and focused practice of grammatical structures with a semantic challenge, and help the L2 learner match meaning and form in context. A wide variety of simple and complex listening exercises is suggested.

Story-telling provides a realistic and enjoyable context for presenting grammatical points, while roleplay facilitates a match between structure and social functions, and can also be used for focused grammar practice. The many activities described in this section provide meaningful contexts for integrating writing, reading, pronunciation, listening, and grammar.

The section on resources comprises three chapters filled with practical ideas. Pictures are suggested as a resource for teaching of grammar that require a structure-meaning match. Realia are recommended for the same purpose, as well as for stimulating the communicative

use of language forms. Used in conjunction with story-telling and roleplay, realia contextualise a grammar lesson and facilitate memory and learning. Also discussed and demonstrated is the use of graphics (charts, tables, schedules) as a means of focusing the communicative practice of grammatical structures.

The final section of the book deals with the integration of techniques and resources, and covers the use of songs, verse, games, problem-solving and text-based activities. This combination of technique and resource is particularly useful for matching structure and discourse in context, and can be used in all phases of a grammar lesson. Mini-grammar lessons are also suggested for remedial purposes.

This book presents a convincing argument for the study of grammar to help L2 learners perceive the relationship between grammatical structures on the one hand, and discourse pragmatics, semantics, and the social function of language on the other. Having provided a clear rationale for their approach, the authors proceed to demonstrate useful techniques for making grammar accessible to the student, using easily obtainable resources. Most chapters are filled with usable exercises and activities (e.g. cloze tests) for teaching specific aspects of grammar such as tenses, wh-questions, relative clauses, and logical connectors.

This book makes for stimulating reading. It is clearly and logically sub-divided, very readable and always relevant. It is essential in this time of communicative language teaching that we do not lose our perspective of the role that grammar plays in language learning. This publication will help to re-focus attention on important issues, and, at the same time, be of great practical value to the L2 teacher.

## **Susan Sheerin**

*Self-Access*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989 (Paperback 200 pp.)

This is the latest in Oxford's "Resource Books for Teachers" series, edited by Alan Maley. Susan Sheerin, an experienced EFL teacher, is the Director of Studies at the Bell School in Cambridge.

Today it is widely accepted that all learners differ with regard to learning style, personality, motivation and specific needs. The movement towards learner-centred curricula stems from a disillusionment with 'lockstep' teaching, and from the development of a communicative language teaching philosophy. An urgent need now exists to develop effective mechanisms for enabling students to learn independently of teachers. One such mechanism is the self-access study centre where students can learn in their own preferred way and at their own pace. This book aims to help EFL and ESL teachers set up and manage such self-access study facilities, thereby allowing students to choose their own material and also correct and assess their own performance. This is not a move towards making teachers redundant, as self-access learning should be integrated with and complementary to classroom learning.

It was Strevens who wrote: "It takes better teachers to focus on the learner" - implying that the organization of a learner-centred approach is likely to be most strenuous and challenging. This book is a very practical aid to meeting that challenge.

It contains five chapters. The first offers practical advice on how to set up self-access