

Preface

Grammar for Teachers: A Guide to American English for Native and Non-Native Speakers is a result of my frustrations over many years of teaching graduate-level structure courses and not being able to find an appropriate grammar text for the pre- and in-service teachers enrolled in these classes. The students in these courses have represented a variety of teaching backgrounds: ESL and EFL teachers, native and non-native speakers of English, and mainstream content-area teachers with ESL students in their classes, to name a few. Some of these students have had a strong knowledge of English grammar, but often have difficulties in applying their knowledge to real-life discourse. Other students' exposure has been limited to lessons in "correctness," and are generally unaware of which language features are central to teaching ESL/EFL learners. Some students are resistant to taking this course, but are required to do so, whether to satisfy specific degree requirements, for state or professional certification, or for other reasons. A few students have had some linguistics, many not. The challenge has been finding a way to convey the essentials of American English grammar clearly, to engage students actively in their own learning and understanding of grammar as applicable to ESL/EFL learners, and to motivate them to undertake perceptive analyses of grammatical elements and structures, and of ESL/EFL learner needs and difficulties.

The overall aim of *Grammar for Teachers* is to make grammar accessible and comprehensible. The text assumes no prior knowledge and can be used with active and prospective teachers who have little or no background in grammar, linguistics, foreign languages, or other related fields. It is also intended for those users whose exposure to English grammar has been primarily limited to prescriptive rules of what speakers should say and write with little or no consideration of the concerns and problems ESL/EFL learners face in learning and using English. The text encourages users to develop a solid understanding of the use and function of the grammatical structures in American English so that they may better appreciate the language difficulties of ESL/EFL learners. The underlying premise is that teachers of ESL/EFL learners need to understand how English works from a practical, every day approach of "What does the learner need to know in order to produce X." When teachers understand the grammar of American English and the problems and needs of ESL/EFL learner, they are in a better position to teach and explain elements of grammar.

The text reviews essential grammar structures clearly and concisely, while avoiding jargon or technical terms. The text approaches grammar from a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach and focuses on the structures of grammar of greatest importance to ESL/EFL learners. *Grammar for Teachers* encourages users to tap into their own, generally subconscious, knowledge of the grammar of English and make it a conscious knowledge that they can apply to their own varied teaching settings. The text strives to make the study of grammar interesting and relevant by presenting grammar in context and by using authentic material from a variety of sources. Discussions of areas of potential difficulties for ESL/EFL learners are included throughout the text. *Grammar for Teachers* also explores differences in forms accepted in formal versus casual or informal writing and speaking based on the types of questions and concerns learners are likely to have.

In each chapter, users of the text work through numerous Discovery Activities that encourage them to explore for themselves different elements of grammar and to consider how these elements work together to form meaningful discourse. Additional Practical Activities at the end of each chapter provide more practice on structures presented in that chapter. Included in the Practice Activities are samples of relevant learner errors and error analysis exercises. These exercises expose users to authentic ESL/EFL learner discourse at different levels of proficiency and from many different native languages, and afford them opportunities to practice focusing on specific errors at any given moment.

Grammar for Teachers

A Guide to American English for Native and Non-Native
Speakers

DeCapua, A.

2008, XVIII, 444 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-0-387-76331-6