

Christison, M., Christian, D., Duff, P. A., & Spada, N. (Eds.). (2015). *Teaching and learning English grammar: Research findings future directions* (xiv + 236 pp.). New York, NY: Routledge.

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As an English teacher and a doctoral student of teaching English as a second language (TESL), I am interested in teaching and researching grammar. One of my concerns over the past years has been how grammar can fit into communicative language teaching. This motivated me to read a new edited book by Christison, Christian, Duff, and Spada, entitled *Teaching and Learning English Grammar: Research Findings and Future Directions*. It is the second volume in the *Global Research on Teaching and Learning English Series* published by Routledge. The book has 12 chapters including three overviews and nine research studies, spread over four sections.

Section 1 includes only one chapter, authored by Celce-Murcia. In this chapter, she presents a historical overview of different conceptualizations of second language grammar teaching from ancient times up to the present. For the most part, she discusses communicative approaches to teaching grammar and how they can be incorporated into curricula. She closes the chapter by advocating a discourse-based approach to teaching grammar—one that encourages attention to form when the primary focus is on meaning.

Section 2 is composed of four research reports, focused on the cognitive and socio-affective aspects of form-focused instruction (FFI). In Chapter 2, Valeo reports on a study comparing the impact of form-focused and meaning-focused instruction in a content-based context with respect to the present conditional. In Chapter 3, Hondo addresses the issue of timing by comparing the effect of pre- and post-task FFI on the comprehension of the epistemic use of the modal *must*. In Chapter 4, Tomita reports on a case study of a Japanese learner of English. The focus of the study was on the relationship between requiring the learner to focus on form and her willingness to communicate. In the final chapter of this section, Park teases apart the effect of pretask instruction and pretask planning time on the frequency of lexical and morphosyntactic language-related episodes during task performance.

Section 3, which comprises one overview and two research reports, highlights the contribution of corpus analysis to the understanding of the association between lexis and grammar. In Chapter 6, McCarthy points out the benefits of a corpus-based approach to designing a grammar syllabus for advanced courses—namely, systematic rather than intuitive selection of target structures, provision of authentic and frequent lexical contexts in which grammatical structures occur, and development of a discourse-based syllabus. In the next chapter, Liu and Jiang explore teachers' and learners' attitudes towards a corpus-based lexicogrammatical approach by qualitatively and quantitatively analyzing data from different sources. In Chapter 8, Folse demonstrates how teachers can find the lexical items that frequently occur with a grammatical structure by searching two corpora to discover verbs frequently occurring with present progressive and regular past tense.

The concluding section, with two overviews and two research reports, revolves around different conceptualizations of FFI and attitudes toward them. In Chapter 9, Duff, Ferreira, and Zappa-Hollman discuss the plausibility of a discourse-based approach to teaching grammar in English for Academic Purposes courses. In the next chapter, Burns and Borg look into the professional belief system of teachers of English to adult speakers of other

languages. They set out to reveal the teachers' beliefs about grammar teaching, their conceptualizations of form-meaning integration, and the impact of theory on their views of integration. In Chapter 11, Spada and Lima report on two experiments. In one of the experiments, they used a self-report questionnaire to compare teachers' and learners' preference for integrated or isolated FFI in an English-as-a-second-language context in contrast to an English-as-a-foreign-language context. In the other experiment, they examined teachers' and learners' attitudes toward integrated and isolated FFI after having experienced each approach. The last chapter in this section features an overview of the theoretical foundations of implicit and explicit FFI and the range of methodological options identified with them. Discussing the advantages and disadvantages of implicit and explicit instruction, Ellis concludes that both should be incorporated in second language teaching courses.

The central view of this volume is that grammar teaching should occur in a meaningful context where the primary focus is on the communication of meaning rather than on language as an object of study. The overview papers and research reports point out the need for and the advantages of dealing with grammar in such a context. This book serves as a rich source of information for teachers, researchers, and material writers interested in situating grammar in real-world language use. It could also be used as a textbook for grammar courses in TESL and applied linguistics programs.

Given the fact that some teachers rely more on their experience rather than theory and research in teaching grammar (Burns & Borg, this volume), this book is a move toward narrowing the gap between research and practice by providing teachers with research-based guidelines for bringing form and meaning into interaction without sacrificing either. The empirical studies were carried out in different contexts, including Canada. The volume provides researchers with ideas for further enquiry into current grammar teaching issues, such as the timing of FFI, affective aspects of FFI, and corpus-based FFI. Last but not least, the book, notably Section 3, provides material writers with insights into the association between vocabulary and grammar and presents suggestions for how to find the lexical items that frequently occur with grammar features.

### References

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