

Hinkel, Eli and Sandra Fotos, eds. (2002) *New Perspectives on Grammar Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Betty's comments:

This is an excellent survey of grammar teaching in the contemporary classroom. As it says in its Preface:

The chapters in this collection present a variety of approaches to teaching grammar within different curricular and methodological frameworks. . . . [T]his volume emphasizes flexibility and adaptability in selection of an approach determined by the teaching situation, the type of learners, and their particular language requirements.

This anthology contains articles pertaining to Grammar-Based Teaching written by Rod Ellis, Jack Richards, Michael McCarthy and Ronald Carter, Martha Pennington, Diane Larsen-Freeman, Marianne Celce-Murcia, Sandra Fotos, Eli Hinkel, and Peter Master — a real parade of grammar stars! It's definitely a book worth having on your bookshelf.

In an introductory article to the anthology, "From Theory to Practice: A Teacher's View," Hinkel and Fotos survey

- traditional grammar instruction,
- structural grammar and the audio-lingual and direct approaches,
- functional approaches,
- universal grammar and the role of syntax,
- communicative language teaching and humanistic approaches,
- focus on form,
- noticing and consciousness raising,
- interaction for grammar learning,
- discourse-based approaches to grammar instruction, and
- the case for grammar teaching.

My yellow-highlighter highlighted almost every sentence in the article, so I can't present all the "notable quotes" I found. But I'd like to include this one:

Krashen's Monitor Model of the 1970s and 1980s had a great deal of influence on the rise of communicative pedagogy. His hypothesis of language acquisition pivoted on learner linguistic competence achieved by means of natural language acquisition in the process of real communication when

learners are exposed to many facets of language use, such as listening, speaking, and reading. . . . [T]he communicative method of L2 teaching does not feature explicit grammar teaching or correcting learner errors.

Although the communicative methods reflecting Krashen's model of L2 acquisition suggested that learners would arrive at intuitive "correctness" . . . and that explicit grammar instruction was not needed, L2 researchers, methodologists, and practitioners have commented that grammatical competence is essential for communication (Brown, 1994; Larsen-Freeman, 1991) but cannot be attained solely through exposure to meaningful input.

Another important limitation of a purely communicative approach is that certain types of language knowledge and skills are difficult to attain in the process of naturalistic learning, for example, academic and professional speaking and writing. It has been suggested that advanced proficiency and accuracy in spoken and written production are essential for effective functioning in academic, professional, and some vocational communications, so attaining high levels of language competence and performance may require instructed learning. (Ellis, 1996). (*Selection quoted from Hinkel & Fotos, pp. 4-5*)

I don't have time right now to comment on every article, but I will mention one other for now, one by Rod Ellis ("The Place of Grammar Instruction in the Second/Foreign Language Curriculum," in Hinkel & Fotos, eds., 2002). He writes:

If learners know about a grammatical feature, they are more likely to heed it when they come across it in the input and also to attend to how it differs from the current interlanguage rule that underlies their own performance in the L2. In other words, the goal of a grammar syllabus becomes not that of teaching learners to use grammar but of helping them to understand how grammar works. (*in Hinkel and Fotos, pp. 26-27*)

I would note that Grammar-Based Teaching can do both: teach learners to use structures to say what they mean and help them understand how grammar works. Limiting one's teaching goals to an understanding of grammar without regard to developing usage ability is almost a return to Grammar Translation, where the goal is teaching the rule, not how to use the rule in one's own production. In current Grammar-Based Teaching such as in the Azar series, the "rule" is just a starting place and not important in and of itself; it's just a little help along the way and can be set aside as a learner eases into comfortable usage ability.

What are your thoughts on grammar teaching? Share them on [Teacher Talk](#).