

BOOK REVIEW

Perspectives on Pedagogical Grammar.

Terence Odlin (Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

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Reviewed by Winifred Crombie, University of Waikato Language Institute

The editor, Terence Odlin, indicates in his preface that this book is intended to do some serious consciousness raising about issues in the area of grammar and grammar teaching and to act as a platform for discussion of a more theoretical nature. In both of these aims, the book succeeds. Even so, pedagogical grammar remains the "slippery concept" that David Little labels it in the initial sentence of "Words and their properties: Arguments for a lexical approach to pedagogical grammar" (p. 99 ff.). The wide-ranging geographical location of the contributors provides a good background for what turns out to be an underlying international review of the status of grammar and grammar teaching throughout the world. This adds enormously to the interest value of the book.

The book is divided into three main sections: What Sort of Grammar?; Grammar, Lexicon and Discourse; and Putting Grammar to Work. Each of the sections contains three or four articles written by respected and talented academics and each is worthy of review in its own right. It is apparent from consideration of the articles overall that there is a growing sense worldwide of the importance of giving serious attention to the relevance of grammatical understanding to language teaching and learning. The issue, of course, is how this grammatical understanding should be expressed and communicated. The question is no longer *whether* this needs to be done but *how* it is to be done in the modern language teaching and learning environment. Approaches are now being driven by serious intercourse between theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics, second language teaching practice and learner need. The term "pedagogical grammar" is not now being applied to any single product, but to a collaborative process or approach in which theory is applied, tested and reviewed in terms of its pedagogic relevance. This process enhances both theory and practice.

The articles in this book provide examples of many dimensions of this new approach -- from the syntax-centred to the lexically driven. As its title suggests, the work is wide-ranging and eclectic. It is not, however, a work which will provide an introduction suitable for the beginner. In order to appreciate fully the articles included in this work, readers should have some background knowledge in linguistic theory and of current trends in second language teaching. Teachers of courses where this book is to be used would be well advised to guide students through the texts, beginning with those which are less theoretically demanding. Students would need to do some preliminary reading before approaching this work. This book, like others in the Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series, makes a valuable contribution to the area.

