

Preface

The present English grammar book is intended for the students majoring in the English language in the universities and institutes of higher learning across the country. The book consists of twenty-four lessons which cover a broad range of topics on English language grammar, each topic being followed by an adequate number of relevant language exercises. The topics included in the book are varied, catering for the linguistic and communicative needs of the typical English student who is doing the B.A. degree in English language. To provide for the contents of the present book, several sources (given in the references) on English grammar have been consulted and the insight and experience gained by the author during his long years of English language teaching has been worked into the selection and gradation of teaching units and lessons in the book.

The author is aware of the problems of writing textbooks to be used in the formal settings of language instruction and is fully cognizant of the heavy responsibility of acting up to the expectations of national educational policy makers, English language teachers, and student learners. Very briefly, we may say that the problem with designing structural syllabus concerns the decision of determining the learnability i.e. the ease and difficulty of learning tasks. On the other hand, to base a grammar textbook on the maxims of communicative syllabus is no less problematic than to construct teaching materials in alignment with the principles of structural syllabus mainly because it is very difficult, if not impossible, to figure out the future communicative settings in which the student learner will function. It is reasonable, therefore, to argue that any English major, regardless of the target speech community, needs to have a basic knowledge of English grammar in order to draw on it while interacting either orally or through written mode with native and/or non-native speakers. With this in mind, the present author set to reviewing some of well-known English grammar books with the

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intention of selecting the topics included.

From what we said in the preceding passage it is understandable the present book is essentially eclectic of its nature in the sense that both the topics and the ways of treatment of the topics in various English grammar books have helped the author to sift through different grammatical descriptions emanating from different linguistic theories and decide on the order of grammar teaching materials in this book. However, in our eclectic approach to preparing the book, we were wary not to follow in the footsteps of the grammarians in their descriptions of the grammatical features involved. Rather, in many cases, we have seen it proper to, relying on our language teaching experience, reshape the descriptions in the sources consulted in order to render the task of reading and understanding the discussions easy. Perhaps we are justified in our claim that the present English grammar book acts as a filter between formal grammars and the classroom of English as a foreign language.

It goes without saying that for communicative competence to develop there is need for basic grammar knowledge. Teaching activities of various kinds are needed in order for grammar competence to convert into communicative competence. Because of the vast number of variables in every foreign language classroom we cannot lay out in detail for the presumptive teacher how to act out his role in order to help the student learner attain his communicative objectives. Despite a multitude of views on successful foreign language teaching, we may say much is left to the ingenuity of the teacher as to how the grammar knowledge gained through the book can best be put to communicative purposes in class.

It is worth noting the following main features of the book:

1. The space allocated for each topic in the book reflects to some extent the significance of the issue involved.

2. Of primal importance are the discussions on: a) English tenses (three lessons), b) sentence construction based on using coordinating, correlative, and transitional conjunctions (three lessons), and c) sentence construction based on using adverb, adjective, and noun clauses (three lessons).

3. Lessons 10-24 each are devoted to the discussion of selected topics which provide for a solid basis of the English grammar knowledge needed for successful performance in written and oral English.

4. Each lesson is followed by several language exercises on the teaching

point involved.

5. To conform the contents of the book to the present time allotment in the English programme of undergraduate students, several topics such as part of speech (i.e. verbs, nouns, adverbs, adjectives), ambiguity in English sentence structures, distinguishing between similar structures, auxiliary verbs, verbals (infinitives and gerunds) have been eliminated from the original list and are incorporated in the second volume to be published later in the near future. The mentioned book having been penned by the present author, now carries the title **English language Grammar: Lexical-Functional approach** (2004), and is available at the bookshop, Islamic Azad University-Tabriz Branch. Further, the present author has written a third book on English language grammar, entitled **A Model-based Approach to English Language Grammar**, which is in print (Rahnama Press), and will be accessible in fall, 2011.

6. Answers to the exercises in the present book (first volume) have been given in a separate booklet in a bid to help the teacher to save up the class time and to help the student to speed up the learning process.

7. Six appendices concerning: a) nationality words, b) prepositions, c) English verb forms, d) English similes, e) English collocative expressions, and f) English irregular verbs are given at the end of the book.

We would like to end this preface with a recommendation to all English language instructors to observe to the best they can, namely, speak English as a means of teaching grammar. This will require the students to focus on meaning (a trend which is common in natural verbal interaction) while getting your students to attend to the formal properties of the particular grammatical point being discussed. In a teaching situation as such the student will stand by the maxim of 'skill-getting' and 'skill-using' when performing learning tasks in the English grammar class.

Concerning the use of this book in class, we may say, by way of suggestion, that the teacher would be well advised to explain the major relevant grammatical points in each lesson at the beginning of each session, then do, through the collaboration of students, the first few sentences in each exercise, and finally require the class to study the whole lesson and finish doing the remaining sentences in each of the exercises on the lesson as part of their homework assignments.

This book is intended for an English grammar course of six credits, to

be covered within two semesters. We may also add that the book can be used as a 'self-taught' grammar book outside the formal classroom settings and that the various types of exercises on sentence structures included therein are believed to be of great help to the candidates who intend to sit for the university entrance competitions held across the country as well as international English language proficiency testing and evaluation.

It is also a truism that the present book cannot be perfect nor can it satisfy the tastes of the people concerned. We, therefore, appreciate the reader's critical comments whatsoever; it will help us to improve what we have accomplished so far and enact the appropriate suggestions given by the readership in the forthcoming editions.

I am grateful to many people who helped me accomplish the arduous task of preparing the present book.

First and foremost, my thanks are due to Dr. A.A. Rezaee, who inspired me with the resolution to bring the seed of this book to fruition. I am also grateful to my many undergraduate and graduate students who convinced me of the need for such a textbook. I do also appreciate the opportunity and support which the officials in the SAMT (The Center for Studying and Compiling University Books in Humanities) offered me along the way. Finally, I owe M. Javan a special thank for his meticulous reading the first draft of the text and seeing to its being carefully typed—the present copy which you have in your hands.

I would like to end off this preface by saying that I have no claim whatsoever for what I have achieved; rather, the recognition should go to many scholars in the field who have provided me with valuable sources on English language grammar.

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