

## Doing English Grammar

Grammar is integral to teaching English as a second language, and yet there is often a disconnect between theory and practice. This book bridges that gap by introducing key theories of English grammar and showing how they can be applied in teaching. By drawing on an eclectic range of sources, and using a multidisciplinary approach, Berry links advances in our knowledge of grammar, from theoretical and descriptive viewpoints, with developments in pedagogical practices, to provide a comprehensive overview of the whole process of grammar. The second part of the book contains four case studies of key areas of English grammar in which the insights of the earlier chapters are applied, illustrating how grammar theory is used in practice. Offering new insights into the way English grammar works, this book is invaluable for all professionals who ‘do’ English grammar: teachers, grammarians, textbook writers and syllabus designers, testers and researchers.

Roger Berry has been involved in English Grammar as teacher, teacher-trainer, author, lecturer, examiner and researcher. He has published six books on the subject, the most recent being *English Grammar: A Resource Book for Students*, 2nd edition (2018).

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**Doing English Grammar**

Roger Berry

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## Theory, Description and Practice

*Roger Berry*



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## *Editors' Preface*

Grammar can be problematic for teachers of English. Academic publications on grammar sometimes confuse rather than enlighten teachers by presenting a variety of theoretical models, each with its own array of terminology. The advice given to teachers on the role of grammar in teaching can be inconsistent and often does not take into account research into teaching and learning grammar.

This book situates itself firmly on the side of the teacher to tackle the need for constructive dialogue between the theoretician and the practitioner. Roger Berry uses his extensive experience as a researcher and teacher educator as he demystifies terminology, explains concepts, engages with the research, and argues for the interconnectedness of theory and practice.

A number of themes run through this book. One is a challenge to teachers to consider critically statements about correctness in grammar, in the light of both old and new sources of evidence. Numerous examples are used to show that 'rules of thumb' can be useful sometimes, but misleading in other cases. Another theme is an invitation to applied linguists to regard books about grammar, and the people who write them, as valid objects of study. Chapter 5 reports research into the language of grammar books themselves; unusually, it does so in terms of the writing process and the complex decisions that writers about grammar are faced with. A third theme throughout the book is the need for teachers to consider the purpose and context of each pedagogical encounter when deciding what grammatical points to teach and how to teach them. The emphasis on flexibility and a response to individual situations is a key aspect of this book. Berry also notes the ongoing need for revisions to descriptions of grammar, either because the language changes or because the methods used to investigate it do.

The book is enhanced by a series of insightful case studies based on commonly taught areas of English grammar: the article system, comparative adjectives, the personal pronoun system, and reported speech. Each of these chapters contains new, often surprising, observations

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and demonstrates in practical terms how the arguments made throughout the book translate into how and when specific items are taught. Berry also deals comprehensively with the role of grammar in different aspects of the pedagogic process, including syllabus design, testing and assessment. Most of the chapters in the book are accompanied by activities that encourage thoughtful engagement with the chapter topics.

Teaching grammar can be difficult. This book demystifies the topic and demonstrates how interaction among theory, research and practice can benefit all three perspectives on grammar. It is a valuable addition to the series.