Editorial

The last issue of Volume 17 brings together articles on language teaching and language use in a range of different settings and contexts. In the first article, Shem Macdonald investigates the reasons why some teachers are reluctant to tackle pronunciation. On the basis of in-depth interviews conducted with eight teachers around Australia, he suggests that one important reason why teachers tend not to seek out professional development opportunities in pronunciation is because it is often not formally included in the curriculum. The paucity of readily accessible materials to assist with both the teaching and evaluation of pronunciation contributes to teachers’ reluctance to tackle issues of pronunciation.

In the second article, Gary Barkhuizen introduces an approach to critical reading and writing called the QUEST analysis, which provides leading questions to guide learners who have difficulty adopting an appropriate authority and style in their written responses to articles. Although Barkhuizen reports on how this approach can be used with a particular kind of student – postgraduates studying at university – he concludes that this kind of scaffolding may be of considerable interest to teachers and learners in a wide variety of contexts. Still with a focus on the classroom, albeit in a very different setting, Akira Tajino reports on a relationship which can be both extremely valuable and problematic in the classroom, that between the classroom teacher and native-speaking teaching partners. Using a systematic approach to action research developed primarily in business contexts, Tajino investigates the specific relationship between Japanese teachers of English and native English-speaking teaching assistants in Japan. The study offers some useful insights into both the pedagogical and social aspects of this particular team-teaching situation, and how such relationships can be investigated in any context.

The final two articles in this issue turn from a focus on teachers and teaching to a focus on language use. Alageswary Muniandy draws on samples of emails and chat site exchanges to argue that e-discourse constitutes a new discourse hybrid which has some of the features of spoken and written language, but also entirely new features of its own. Since it therefore differs considerably from either written or spoken forms, Muniandy urges teachers not to get left behind, but to embrace this new discourse to motivate students. The final paper by Hazel Davidson is a response to a paper which appeared in last year’s special issue of Prospect, in which Nation and Deweerdt (2001) argued the importance of using simplified texts or graded readers in language learning programs. Davidson examines the vocabulary
in the Australian series, *The Great South Land*, and argues that even simplified texts of the type advocated by Nation and Deweerdt can be too complex for low level learners in the Australian Migrant English Program.

In the first review included in this issue, Eva Bernat reviews a very recent Oxford publication by McKay, *Teaching English as an international language*, on the implications for pedagogy of the internationalisation of English. She argues that this book is very timely since English as an international language is becoming an increasingly important issue in the world today. In the final review Helen Basturkman evaluates the new Cambridge publication, *Grammar for English language teachers*. She provides a summary of each section of the book, pointing out its strengths and limitations, and arguing that this book will be a useful resource book for many language teaching professionals.

**REFERENCE**


**GILLIAN WIGGLESWORTH**

**LYNDA YATES**
Teaching English as an international language
Reviewed by Eva Bernat

With increasing globalisation in commerce, science and technology, and increased movement of capital, labor, and tourism, English has become the vehicle for international communication. Now, as the *lingua franca*, it has become public property, and has taken on new characteristics. Hence, English as an international language (EIL) has emerged as one of the major developments in applied linguistics and language-teaching studies.

As non-native speakers of the tongue are outnumbering native speakers, the polemic of EIL has received widespread attention. Central to McKay’s book is the assumption that today English is an international language, and that this phenomenon has important implications for English language teaching pedagogy. The author argues that a language cannot be linked to any one country or culture; rather, it must belong to those who use it. Therefore, the typical relationship that exists between culture and language needs to be re-examined in three areas: i) the teaching of discourse competence; ii) the use of cultural materials in the classroom; and iii) the cultural assumptions that inform teaching methodology. McKay advocates that there is a current need for EIL teaching methods and materials to be designed to meet the needs of EIL learners.

In the first chapter, ‘English as an international language’, the author defines the characteristics of international language, and explores why English has developed as an international language, what factors might impede its continual spread, and what dangers are involved in the development of an international language. A table of demographic details of English users from across the globe is included for our reference.

In Chapter 2, ‘Bilingual users of English’, the writer explores the pedagogical and research implications of the growing number of bilingual users of English. McKay argues that, given the difficulty of defining the term ‘native speaker’, native-speaker competence should not be used as a standard in language learning and pedagogy. The chapter outlines further research that is needed in this area, and ends by discussing the importance of bilingual teachers in EIL teaching.

Chapter 3, ‘Standards for English as an international language’, addresses the current debates over standards of EIL and the complex issue of what standards (or whose standards) should be promoted in the teaching of
EIL. Issues include lexical variation, grammatical variation, phonological variation, and pragmatic and rhetorical standards. McKay admits that attitudes toward different varieties of spoken English exist, and that today Standard English is both promoted and opposed.

Chapter 4, ‘Culture in teaching English as an international language’, questions the cultural assumptions underlying much English teaching, arguing that classroom aims and methodology should be based on the requirements of an international language. McKay sees it ‘extremely important to recognise the diversity that exists within any culture’ (p 100) and examines the question of which culture to include in EIL materials. The author suggests that materials be used to reflect on students’ own culture in relation to others, that cultural content be critically examined for its assumptions in the texts, and that the diversity that exists within all cultures be emphasised.

Finally, Chapter 5 deals with ‘Teaching methods and English as an international language’, and begins with a discussion of the concept of culture of learning. It challenges some of the generalisations made regarding so-called eastern and western cultures of learning, and assesses the appropriateness of communicative language teaching (CLT) method for the teaching of EIL. Importantly, McKay emphasises the need to implement methods that are consistent with the local culture of learning.

Given the magnitude of the topic, I think McKay deals with the discourse of EIL in an open and succinct manner. Those who are involved in curriculum design, who teach or will be teaching English in a growing global community, and among a variety of cultures, will find this book interesting, thought-provoking, and worth reading. A bonus is that each chapter includes a summary, and ends with a list of suggested reading that provides the reader with sources for additional information on specific topics. There is also a glossary at the end of the book, containing terms that are central to an understanding of English as an international language.
Grammar for English language teachers
Reviewed by Helen Basturkmen

Grammar for English language teachers is a book with a broad agenda. The Introduction informs us that the work has two aims: to be a grammar reference book teachers of English will use in planning lessons and assessing learners’ problems, and to help teachers of English (native and non-native speakers) develop their understanding and use of English grammar. The work targets teachers working on grammar through self-study, and teachers on certificate and diploma courses. This is quite an ambitious agenda and in this review I will discuss how the work sets about it, and its success in doing so.

The work is approximately 500 pages in length and is organised into eight parts. The first four parts provide the main content. Parts A and B provide descriptions of English at the level of the word (Part A deals with word parts such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, et cetera, and Part B deals with one of these parts in particular, verbs). Parts C and D provide descriptions of English grammar at the sentence level (C with sentence constituents and word order, D with complex sentences). Each part comprises a number of chapters which are organised in roughly the same format throughout.

Let me describe one chapter to illustrate the type of content the work presents, and how this content is organised. ‘Reported speech’ (Part B, Chapter 17) begins with a section entitled ‘Key considerations’ which is half a page in length. It defines reported and direct speech and outlines some considerations learners need to make with this aspect of grammar, such as choice of reporting verb and rules for constructing clauses after reporting verbs. Nine pages of language description dealing with various aspects of reported and direct speech follow. For example, we are told when reported and direct speech are used, and presented with lists of reporting verbs. The description includes visual matter such as charts, sample texts and a good deal of accompanying prose written in a no-nonsense, everyday style. To illustrate, page 219 tells us, ‘When we report what someone has said, we often make some kind of interpretation or judgement about this and we choose our reporting verbs accordingly.’ The text then presents a range of verbs (for example, ‘claim’, ‘complain’, ‘confirm’) that can be used to reveal attitudes. The language description is followed by a section entitled ‘Typical difficulties for learners’ listing seven common problems spots, what they are, and possible reasons for their occurrence. The chapter ends with the section ‘Consolidation exercises’. This includes authentic texts (one spoken and one written) with tasks to encourage the reader to notice how direct and reported speech are being used in them, and sample teaching material with
questions for the reader such as: ‘How useful do you think this material is?’ Possible answers to these exercises are provided at the back of the work.

The final three parts are much shorter in length. Part E, ‘Extension exercises’, (five pages in length) suggests a number of activities teachers can themselves use to explore aspects of English grammar. One suggestion, for example, is for the teacher to examine two different texts types to see the frequency of any aspect of English grammar they are particularly interested in. Part F describes pronunciation, punctuation and spelling in English, and Part G provides further description on two topics dealt with earlier in the work: discourse markers and subordinating conjunctions.

Grammar for English language teachers is particularly successful in its attempts to help teachers develop their understanding of English grammar and potential learner problems. Each chapter not only describes and explains aspects of English grammar, but also provides exercises to help teachers develop their skills of noticing grammatical forms and how grammar is used in written and spoken texts and presented in language teaching materials. Second, the work links descriptions of English grammar and learners’ needs. The teacher gets to see not only how this or that aspect of grammar works as a linguistic system, but also what kind of difficulties the learner may face in relation to this. Teachers can too easily question the relevance of much of the linguistic description in conventional grammar reference books. Here immediate ties are made to aspects of teaching and learning.

As a reference work, the book has mixed success. On the positive side, teachers will find the information provided in the work extremely accessible. The language description does not assume a high level of prior linguistic knowledge, nor does it involve large quantities of metalanguage. The descriptions of the language are written with clarity, and the prose is pitched at a linguistic level few would find problematic. Another positive aspect is that the work successfully combines descriptions of language as a system (rules and formulas) with description of language use. Numerous samples of written and spoken texts entitled ‘language in context’ are provided to illustrate language use in various genres, such as written reports, formal meetings, et cetera.

The work is less successful as a reference work in two respects. First, the work does not provide references to the literature, or a bibliography. One cannot help but wonder about the accuracy of the comments the writer makes, especially those concerning learners’ difficulties or the use of grammatical features. It is not clear whether the comments have a basis in research findings or simply reflect the experience of the writer. Second, by simplifying linguistic information and attempting to deal with a very wide range of grammatical features, a certain superficiality of treatment some-
times results. I will discuss this point in relation to one chapter – ‘Discourse markers’. At first, I was pleasantly surprised to see this topic included in the work as the topic has often been neglected in the past. Further reading revealed that the chapter attempts to cover a great deal of ground (time, conversational management, cause/result markers, positioning of markers in sentences and utterances, lists of forms and the range of functions they have, differences between use in written and spoken discourse, etc) in a few short pages. As a result, the actual language description is, in places, lightweight. A lot of rules of thumb are given and we are told that this or that discourse marker is often used or tends to be used either here or there. For example, part of page 304 deals with the discourse markers ‘alternatively’ and ‘instead’. It tells us, ‘We use “alternatively” or “instead” to mark that something is an alternative. We tend to place “instead” after the second of the two points, and often use it to reinforce the conjunction.’ It seems to me that very many teachers of English will already know and be able to describe English grammar at this level.

Returning to the strengths of this work, of which there are many, I would like to mention two in particular. One strength is the attractive presentation of the material. Although the work deals with a great deal of information, it makes good use of spacing, font variety and visuals to make the information visually attractive and noticeable. A second strength is the effort given over to encouraging teachers to become researchers of language themselves. It provides numerous opportunities for the reader to make observations on English grammar. Each chapter includes exercises aimed to help teachers develop their language awareness. Part E, ‘Extension exercises’, suggests projects to encourage teachers to research and become observers of language themselves. A further feature of the book is a link to yet further extension exercises on the Cambridge University Press website.

Grammar for English language teachers marks a departure from conventional descriptions of English grammar. It puts the classroom needs of English teachers and their learners at the forefront of language description. The work will appeal to a great many teachers because teachers need easily accessible solutions to the everyday problems of providing explanations of grammar in the classroom and for dealing with learners’ difficulties with aspects of English grammar. It will appeal also to those running teacher development courses because of its focus on developing teachers’ knowledge of the grammar system and awareness of language use. It may not appeal so strongly to those seeking detailed linguistic analysis as a basis for lesson planning, but then no book can really do it all.
Notes on contributors

Gary Barkhuizen is a senior lecturer in the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics at the University of Auckland. He has taught and been involved in teacher education in South Africa and the United States. He has published numerous articles in various professional journals on language teacher education, language-in-education planning and policy, and language learner perceptions of their learning.

Helen Basturkmen is a lecturer at the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning, the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her areas of specific interest are classroom interaction and discourse analysis.

Eva Bernat has a Bachelor Degree in Adult Education and a Masters Degree in TESOL. She has extensive teaching experience from Australia and abroad, and is currently involved in various aspects of teacher training in the Postgraduate Certificate in TESOL at NCELTR. She is also a doctoral candidate at Macquarie University. Her main interests are andragogy, and the role of affective variables in second language acquisition.

Hazel Davidson works part-time in the AMEP programme in Queensland and devotes the rest of her time to writing materials suitable for adult NESB students with literacy problems. She and co-author, Dorothy Court, have produced a phonics-based CD English Spelling vol 1, also for CSWE I learners. Hazel has been teaching ESL for some 20 years and has worked in Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland.

Shem Macdonald has worked as an ESL/EFL teacher to adults within both AMEP and ELICOS programs in Australia for many years. He currently works at La Trobe University where he is a language and academic skills adviser for NESB students.

Alageswary V A Muniandy is a lecturer at the Faculty of Language Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her areas of specialisation are textlinguistics, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, computer mediated communication, reading in ESL/EFL and materials design. Her professional experience ranges from having taught proficiency courses (Reading for General Purposes, Academic Reading, Oral Communication for Business) to currently teaching content courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Undergraduate courses include Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics, Varieties of English, Practical Contrastive and Error Analysis, and postgraduate courses include Varieties of English, and Text and Context.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Akira Tajino (PhD Lancaster University) currently teaches at Kyoto University, Japan. His research areas include Classroom Research and Materials Development. His publications include two books on pedagogical grammar (Kodansha 1995; Maruzen 1999) and articles on teaching methodology for international journals such as ELT Journal and Language, Culture and Curriculum.