

REVIEW of: Casey Keck & YouJin Kim (2014), *Pedagogical Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. ISBN 978 9027212177 (hb), 978 9027212184 (pb), 245 pp.

The present book with the short and general title *Pedagogical Grammar* aims at “provid[ing] a comprehensive overview of pedagogical grammar research” and at “explor[ing] its implications for the teaching of grammar in second language classrooms” (back cover). Researchers in Applied Linguistics as well as teachers will agree that this aim is a challenging enterprise, not only because of the wide variety of relevant topics to be described but also because of the various theoretical strands which can underpin the description of such a grammar. So, it comes as no surprise that on the back cover we further read that the volume “draw[s] on several research domains (e.g., corpus linguistics, task-based language teaching) and a number of theoretical orientations (e.g., cognitive, sociocultural)”. This description triggers the interest of linguists and teachers who hope to find answers to the numerous issues related to “what to teach” and “how to teach” (Boers et al. 2010). With the announcement of these different aspects on the book cover, the authors set the bar of expectations very high.

Drawing on Larsen-Freeman (2003), Ortega (2003), and Wang (2003), Keck and Kim define the concept of their book as “a guide through the pedagogical grammar landscape” which can help teachers in their own instructional context. As a theoretical starting point the volume takes Ortega’s (2003) and Wang’s (2003) tripartite framework for pedagogical grammar research, namely Grammar Description, L2 Grammar Acquisition, and L2 Grammar Instruction. Keck and Kim first propose a historical overview of pedagogical grammar research, thereby focusing on applied linguistics and the impact of pedagogical grammar research on second language classroom pedagogy. The reader gets a sketchy overview of the main approaches: the audiolingual method, the methodology focusing on language competence within Chomsky’s (1959 and 1975) and Hymes’ (1972) models, the approach based on communicative competence (e.g. with Canale and Swain 1980), further Krashen’s (1982) model, Long’s (1980) interaction hypothesis, Swain’s (1985) output hypothesis, followed by Schmidt’s (1990 and 1995) noticing hypothesis, and finally the focus on form with Long (1985 and 1991) and Ellis (1993). As can be seen from the long list of names and strands, the historical overview mainly addresses issues in applied linguistics and concrete principles of teaching methodology and acquisition with a focus on communicative competence. This probably explains why some of the more recent major works in pedagogical grammar research based on Cognitive Linguistics are completely discarded – and this in spite of the authors’ announcement of their interest in cognitive aspects. Here we can quote the book by Littlemore (2009) and the collective volumes by De Knop and De Rycker (2008) and De Knop et al. (2010).

In the following chapter devoted to the definition of grammar and how it can be described, Keck and Kim follow Larsen-Freeman’s (1989 and 2003) framework for a pedagogical grammar which consists of three major components, namely form, meaning and use. According to Larsen-Freeman, L2 grammar instruction should provide information about these three components. This claim is in accordance with the usage-based principle advocated by Cognitive Linguistics, but the authors do not refer to this linguistic model. Instead, they

prefer to focus on Celce-Murcia's (1975) contextual analysis which provides important tools for L2 grammar teaching. But they recognize that contextual analysis must be enriched by the use of corpora, as advocated by Corpus Linguistics. Only with corpora is it possible to analyze language in context and to make frequency-based descriptions (Biber et al. 1999). The following Chapter 4 zooms in on the "lexis-grammar interface" and deals more specifically with phraseology, collocation, and formulaic sequences. Although the link to the previous chapter is possible thanks to Corpus Linguistics, this chapter comes a bit abruptly and the reader may wonder why issues related to non-phraseological language are simply skipped. But with the reference to Sinclair's (1987) seminal work, this chapter can be regarded as a complement to the historical overview. It deals in detail with formulaic language, its identification, terminological and frequency issues, and then rather shortly with the difficulties encountered by learners of foreign languages when confronted with phraseological units. Chapter 5 adopts a more concrete approach as it focuses on "[e]valuating and adapting existing materials". This chapter critically discusses many examples from teaching manuals and highlights some important teaching principles for lessons and courses. The chapter is useful for the researcher looking for concrete ideas in language pedagogy. Chapter 6 comes back to the use of linguistic corpora discussed in the former Chapter 4, but in line with Chapter 5 it proposes concrete applications of the work with online corpora either "behind the scene", i.e. for the teacher to prepare his lessons, or together with the students during the lessons. Here too the concrete examples are useful and can give teachers some ideas on how to exploit the new tools in the class-room. By contrast, Chapters 7 and 8 deal with a completely different topic, i.e. the learner language and its dynamic nature on the one hand and the learner's interaction with the environment on the other hand. Chapter 7 introduces some major concepts in L2 language learning, for instance the concept of 'interlanguage' defined by Selinker (1972) which plays a crucial role in the understanding of the learning process and the ability to use the L2. Here too the chapter has a historical focus with the description of the first morpheme order studies (Corder 1967 and Brown 1973). It further discusses McLaughlin's (1990) "U-shaped curve of development", exemplifying it with tense and aspect issues, the Teachability Hypothesis, the definition of the target language, the goal of near-nativeness. Chapter 8 continues with the definition of relevant concepts and defining principles and issues, like explicit vs. implicit instruction, meaning-focused communication tasks, the corrective feedback and Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) regulatory scale, the role of learners' peers, the limitation of attentional resources, Robinson's (among others 2001) Cognition Hypothesis. Chapter 9 deals with the design of grammar-focused communication tasks. The "task-based language teaching" is claimed to have a sociocultural and cognitivist orientation. Although these two terms are used on the back cover to set the theoretical framework, the reader gets little explanation about what is meant with them. Here again the authors prefer to focus on concrete applications of tasks which promote collaboration between learners, but also between learners and the teacher, like the focus on form and the corrective feedback (sociocultural approach). The cognitive aspect of task complexity depends on several cognitive factors, like affective and ability variables, to name just a few (Robinson 2011). Chapter 10 concentrates on the question of assessing grammar knowledge within a framework of communicative competence. Important assessment concepts are presented in this chapter and critically discussed. The

authors advocate task-based performance assessment which allows teachers to “examine how students use grammar as a resource for accomplishing task goals” (221); another alternative is dynamic assessment in which teachers “provide graduated assistance to students during the assessment task” (221). Finally, Chapter 11 makes some suggestions for further topics and study.

The volume is characterized by a wealth of important concepts relevant in language pedagogy and foreign language learning, illustrated by many concrete applications. Here the reader will find a rich source of inspiration. But the structure of the book is not very convincing. It starts with the general title *Pedagogical Grammar* which is somewhat misleading as the reader might expect a comprehensive list of topics and grammatical issues that should be addressed in foreign language teaching and foreign language learning, for instance issues related to language typology, differences in conceptualization, linguistic phenomena which cause problems to learners,... The theoretical orientation of the volume, i.e. the focus on communicative competence, could have been specified already in a subtitle. The different chapters of the volume build a kind of eclectic collection of topics, e.g. the problems related to formulaic or phraseological language, the use of linguistic corpora, task-based teaching, and so on. As a consequence, the chapters of the volume can be read as autonomous articles - which can be positive if the reader is quickly looking for specific information. But s/he will miss detailed descriptions of the cognitive and sociocultural models announced on the volume’s back cover, as well as important references in pedagogical grammar research which have already dealt – admittedly in other frameworks like Cognitive Linguistics – in detail with issues relevant in teaching methodology or language acquisition (e.g. Littlemore (2011), De Knop and De Rycker (2008) and De Knop et al. (2010)). In the discussion about formulaic language, we would also have expected a reference like Wray (2002) for instance.

At the formal level, there are a few problems with typos (e.g. p. 79, 204,...), but also with missing references quoted in the text but not in the reference list (e.g. Ellis and Larsen-Freeman 2009, quoted p. 64, Larsen-Freeman 1989, quoted several times in the different chapters).

Still, the volume can be recommended to teachers and applied linguists looking for ideas of class activities and who want to understand some of the pedagogical and learning concepts, principles and processes.

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