

○ **A. HEWINGS AND M. HEWINGS *GRAMMAR AND CONTEXT: AN ADVANCED RESOURCE BOOK***

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The impact of context on the way language is used to get things done is a core concern of researchers and teachers working in a range of fields, particularly applied linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, educational linguistics, and communication studies. The diversity of these endeavours is evident in *Grammar and context: An advanced resource book*, which focuses on the ways in which grammatical choices influence and are influenced by context. Written primarily for upper level undergraduate students and postgraduates, the text explores the relationship between grammar and context of interaction from a range of theoretical perspectives and socio-cultural, global, and pedagogic contexts. It also examines different dimensions of context. Part of Routledge's Applied Linguistic Resource Book series, *Grammar and context* contains three main sections: Introduction, which establishes key terms and concepts as well as providing some tools for grammatical analysis; Extension, which builds on the introductory section by providing excerpts from influential readings and commentary designed to engage the reader to evaluate the theories, findings, and perspectives presented in the readings; and Exploration, the most 'hands-on' section of the text, which encourages readers to apply the knowledge gained in the first two sections by analysing selected data and developing research directions. All sections include tasks designed to prompt discussion and further exploration as well as a summary of the main points. In the final section, Exploration, the tasks include a feedback component, as these tasks involve grammatical analysis rather than points for discussion and reflection.

The first unit in the introductory section, 'Grammar, grammars and grammaticality', is essentially an awareness-raising chapter in which the reader considers various meanings of the term 'grammar' and the purposes of functional, structural and pedagogic descriptions of grammar. While the examples are mostly of English language data, the discussion of attitudes towards grammatical correctness draws on examples from English, Arabic and French. The next three units address the notion of context and examine different dimensions thereof. Unit 2, 'Context: some preliminaries', alerts readers to their ability to predict context from isolated grammatical sentences and phrases as well as to predict grammatical choices depending on a given context. A most useful inclusion in this unit is the discussion of the multi-faceted and dynamic nature of context, with the authors

distinguishing the local linguistic context (co-text) of an utterance, the wider linguistic context (genre and intertextuality), the situational context, and the wider socio-cultural context. The last two contexts form the focus of the next two units, with the authors elaborating on the relationship between language and situational context with reference to the work of Firth, Hymes, and Halliday, and then illustrating their main points by focussing on one aspect of situational context – audience. In these introductory units, the degree of technicality and necessary background knowledge is kept to a minimum, with suggestions for further reading for each unit provided at the end of the book. This results in an uncluttered, easy to digest text; however, potential confusion can arise when dealing with different terminological uses. For example, readers familiar with Halliday's concepts of field, tenor and mode will know these terms collectively as register variables in situational context, whereas registers in these units are discussed only in terms of varieties of English associated with occupational or social groups (p. 37). Similarly, in Unit 4, with its focus on the wider socio-cultural context and the registers and genres of particular discourse communities, there is no clarification of the ways in which the terms 'discourse' or 'genre' are used, nor is there any clear distinction made in the discussion between levels of grammatical aspects and the discursive features of a text. Unit 5 examines several approaches to grammar and discusses the extent to which these approaches consider context. Of considerable interest in this unit for ESL and EAP teachers is pattern grammar and its association with corpus linguistics, as this approach to grammar can inform the ways in which second language teachers teach grammatical structures. Unit 6, 'Presenting a view of the world through grammatical choices', introduces transitivity and discusses the impact of representing participant roles as actors or acted upon, as well as the role of nominalisation for text organisation. This unit requires a knowledge of grammatical systems, as does Unit 7 with its focus on interpersonal meanings; however, the examples from media texts and academic discourse used to illustrate the impact and function of modality, choice of reporting structures, and choice of personal pronouns help to balance the extra cognitive load. The 'further reading' suggestions for these units would benefit from the inclusion of workbook-type texts which focus on developing knowledge of grammatical systems and related analysis skills (e.g. Martin et al. 1997). The engaging discussion in Unit 8 of standards and varieties of English and of grammatical aspects of text messaging and colloquial Singapore English is likely to have broad student appeal amongst speakers of both international and local Englishes studying in Western universities. The final unit in this introductory section, 'Corpus approaches to the study of grammar', introduces a slightly different concept of context: varieties of text which are removed from their contexts of production and interaction and stored electron-

ically. The discussion focusses on how such corpora can provide insights into grammatical patterns in different contexts, changes in grammatical usage over time, the grammar of learner English and grammar in translation.

The following two sections, Extension and Exploration, are particularly well designed for independent study as each unit is well-structured and cross-referenced. It is in these sections that the authors' expertise as teachers and in distance learning is apparent. For example, in the Extension section, the units begin with an explanation of how the readings relate to concepts introduced in the earlier units. The pre-reading tasks are designed to stimulate critical reading and check understanding as well as to help the reader identify connections and differences between the various excerpts. The first five units in Extension focus on different modes of communication, including spoken, written and electronic texts. Excerpts from published research in these sections include Halliday's paper on grammatical metaphor in scientific writing and Crystal's paper arguing that Netspeak is a new form of communication. The analyses and data in these units range from the grammar of personal ads to power relations and the management of talk in talkback radio, and in doctor-patient interactions. In Unit 6, the focus is on discursive features as well as grammar in children's language development and on language loss in elderly people with dementia. The impact of the classroom context on second language learning features in Unit 7. The themes of the remaining three units are grammar and gender, social class, and grammar in international varieties of English. Students are likely to enjoy the paper on gender differences in the use of the discourse marker 'like' by Stephen Levey (2003) 'He's like "Do it now!" and I'm like "No!"': some innovative quotative usage among young people in London', while the supporting discussion of the excerpt from Bernstein (1971) 'Class, codes and control' will aid students to come to terms with Bernstein's influential work on the importance of language in society and education. The final section, Exploration, provides opportunities for readers to be active researchers in order to examine how grammar is influenced by and influences context. Short text excerpts include spoken monologues, casual conversation, MSN messages, small newspaper ads, and second language learner data. Each unit includes a background section with cross-references to previous chapters, tasks, commentary on the completed analysis, and ideas for further research. While the 'ideas for further research' is a valuable component of each unit, a little more space could have been dedicated in this section to tips for getting started with analysis; for example, how to organise spoken interactions into turns, identify clause boundaries in written texts and so on. As the classification 'Exploration' implies, this section requires considerably more background knowledge.

Grammar and context is an ideal coursebook for postgraduate education, TESOL, and Applied Linguistics students, particularly for students in distance courses. Teachers designing courses can select thematically-related units from the Introduction and Extension sections, and include units from the Exploration section for more demanding courses. *Grammar and context* is also useful as a refresher text for ESP/ESL/EFL teachers, who may also find the ideas for further research in the final section inspirational. *Grammar and context* is a most valuable resource book for researchers and teachers interested in the ways in which language is used to make meanings in social life.

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REFERENCES

Martin, J.R.; Matthiessen, C.; Painter. C. 1997. *Working with functional grammar*. London: Arnold.