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# Introduction

Teaching grammar is, in some ways, very different from teaching reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Grammar is an important component in all language skills. Knowledge of grammar form, meaning, and use (FMU) can aid in both receptive (reading, listening) and productive (speaking, listening) skills. Grammar teaching requires explanation of rules—a clear way of presenting how words fit together in some ways but not in others. For example, to explain why *eat it up* is preferred over *eat up it*, some teachers may decide to explain the different types of multiword verbs and provide rules (or even lists to memorize) of multiword verbs; other teachers may not really be able to explain why "eat up it" sounds strange or may not even think an explanation is worth providing.

In fact, grammar teaching consists of two different types of knowledge: teacher knowledge and teaching knowledge. From a teacher knowledge perspective, teachers need to know how to explain grammar. *Teacher knowledge* involves knowing something about relative clauses, subject–verb agreement, comparative constructions, modal verbs, tense, and many other aspects of grammar. *Teaching knowledge* relates to the techniques and approaches that help students use grammar effectively (appropriately and accurately) and effortlessly (so that they can be free to address other considerations). To address grammar effectively, teachers need to have some level of comfort in both teacher knowledge and teaching knowledge of grammar.

Additionally, effective teaching also relates to confidence. Obviously, teaching experience contributes to confidence as does the

interest in subject matter and belief in the curriculum. Another way to gain confidence in teaching is through reflective practice, which provides teachers with an opportunity to select those aspects of teaching that seem most relevant to them at a given time.

This book uses reflective practice to help teachers become comfortable with teaching grammar. The following chapters define grammar from a teacher perspective (Chapter 2), show how corpus linguistics can be a useful tool for grammar teachers (Chapter 3), cover some basic concepts of grammar teaching found in research (Chapter 4), and address important considerations and components of teaching grammar (Chapter 5).