

English Grammar for Students of Japanese (The Study Guide for Those Learning Japanese) by Mutsuko Endo Hudson. Ann Arbor: The Olivia and Hill Press, 1994 vii + 204 pp.

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English Grammar for Students of Japanese provides a concise explanation of the key concepts and terminology of English and Japanese grammar. The title of this book may be somewhat misleading, since Hudson does not necessarily emphasize the grammar of English, but rather affords equal emphasis to the grammars of both English and Japanese. The description of English grammar and the contrastive presentation of the two grammar systems are intended to help students learning Japanese to understand its basic grammatical notions in light of the grammar of their own native language, which, the author assumes, facilitates the understanding of a foreign language grammar.

The grammar points are addressed in separate chapters in the following basic order: parts of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs), inflections, various sentence level phenomena (e.g., subject, topic), sentence type (e.g., affirmative vs. negative, declarative vs. interrogative), tense (e.g., present tense, past tense), voice (e.g., active, passive), and types of clauses (e.g., conditional clauses, relative clauses). Each chapter is headed by a question such as, "What is X?" or, "What is meant by Y?" In each chapter, first the particular term is defined in simple, non technical words. Then the author describes how that concept is expressed in English and how it is expressed in Japanese. In the description for the Japanese counterpart, the emphasis is on both similarities and differences in the two languages for that particular construction. Furthermore, Hudson draws special attention to areas which are likely to involve possible conceptual transfer from English to Japanese resulting in ungrammatical or unacceptable expressions, such as the overuse of personal pronouns in Japanese. These descriptions will answer the students' questions that may arise after classroom instruction, as well as raise learners' awareness of these types of errors.

This grammar book is unique in the sense that the author intends to first expose the students to the grammar of their native language as the basis for their acquisition of a foreign language grammar. This is an important approach that has not been considered by previous foreign language teaching theories and grammar books. It could be more effective to introduce new grammatical concepts in the learners' native language, rather than to go immediately to the foreign language grammar, since the explanations and examples will appeal to

their native speaker intuition. Thus, this book will serve as a helpful guide for those who do not have knowledge of their native language grammar or basic grammatical terms, and therefore have difficulties understanding foreign language grammar.

This book is designed to be a supplementary guide to fill the gap between classroom grammar instruction and the students' understanding of it, enabling the students to study issues not made clear in the classroom or in other textbooks on their own. The user will notice the special consideration by the author in the transparency of the explanations; the explanations are all fully detailed and concrete, and nothing lacks definition. Most of the grammar terms in the text are followed by a reference to the page on which they are defined within the same book, so that when an unfamiliar term obstructs his/her understanding, the student can immediately consult that page. Thus, students who have difficulties understanding grammar descriptions or those who have no experience in studying a foreign language will find the book very helpful.

One drawback is that since the book is aimed at the contrastive description of English and Japanese grammars, it fails to offer explanations for those grammatical notions in Japanese for which no equivalent counterpart exists in English. For example, the book does not address the alternation between object marker *o* and subject marker *ga* (e.g., *watashi wa CD o katta* 'I bought a CD' vs. *watashi wa CD ga hoshii* 'I want a CD,' *haha wa keeki ga suki da* 'My mother likes cakes,' *kare wa nihongo ga wakaru* 'He understands Japanese.') Explanation of evidential markers in Japanese is also missing. For example, there is no discussion of *-garu*, meaning 'to show signs of,' which is attached to most verbs of internal feelings when they occur with third person subjects, that is, when the internal state is not experienced by the speaker (e.g., *watashi wa kuruma ga hoshii* 'I want a car' vs. *otooto wa kuruma o hoshigatteiru* 'My brother wants a car.'). Thus, teachers should keep in mind that this book is not a complete grammar of Japanese.

Also problematic is the quality of the exercises offered after each chapter. First, the purpose of the practice is inconsistent. Some are designed to test the user's understanding of Japanese grammar, and some are made to test English grammar. Secondly, many of them do not seem to be effective ways to confirm the students' understanding of the section or to aid their learning of the grammar. For example, some exercises require the students to follow the author's exact explanation about the grammar point in order to provide the correct answers; the students are forced to "think" the same way as the author did, than to think in their own ways to show comprehension. Also, there are exercises where the student is required to explain the grammar points in English, a task which is more oriented towards verbalizing rules of grammar rather than using those rules to communicate with others. If the audience is really assumed to be beginners in Japanese and not beginning learners of grammar, the real effect of these exercises is somewhat questionable. My suggestion to teachers is that their use of the

exercises should be selective, depending on the level of the students and their reasons for learning Japanese.

The strength of this book is its clear-cut presentation of the similarities and differences between the two languages. This will not only help learners of Japanese but also help Japanese learners of English. Furthermore, the book may serve as a good introduction to those who intend to study grammar and pedagogy of both languages, since the contrastive description may motivate further research in linguistics, language teaching, and language acquisition. Endo Hudson has produced an interesting and unique grammar book which is well worth reading for various people with different purposes.

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