The Structure of English for Readers, Writers, and Teachers

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The Structure of English for Readers, Writers, and Teachers

Third Edition

Mary M. Clark

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Preface

The Structure of English for Readers, Writers, and Teachers offers an up-to-date survey of the grammar of English (our pronunciation, our spelling system, our vocabulary, and the structure of our words, phrases, and sentences) with applications for writers, teachers of language arts, and students of literature. The analysis is presented within a simplified generative-transformational framework based on the Chomskian insight that every phrase consists of a head word (a noun, verb, adjective, etc.) together with its specifier, complement(s), and modifiers, and that a sentence can be "transformed" by placing one or more elements outside its normal position, as in the question ***Which book*** *is she reading?*, where the direct-object *which book* appears at the beginning of the sentence rather than in the usual direct-object position after the verb (*She is reading* ***this book***).

Throughout the text, applications are made, as immediately as possible, to real-life questions: Where did our words come from? How systematic is English spelling? How does written language differ from spoken language? What steps do children go through in acquiring spoken, and then written, language? What features distinguish the regional and class-based dialects of English, and how do writers represent those features in the speech of their characters? Attention is given, at appropriate points, to some of the questions that trouble writers: how to use the passive voice, when to allow a preposition at the end of a clause, when to use who and whom, and so forth. The Appendix,at the end of the book, provides authentic samples of English – literary passages, pieces of student writing, and examples of children's early speech – which serve as the focus of exercises throughout the text.

This third edition of the text has been expanded to include applications for teachers of English as a Second Language. It also now includes a final chapter on the grammar of social media. To accommodate this expanded focus, a new chapter has been added on pronunciation, a topic that requires considerably more attention for English learners than for native-speaking students. In addition, most chapters have been re-organized by moving the application sections, which were formally interspersed with the theoretical sections, to the end of the chapter, and dividing them into "Applications for Teachers of Literature," "Applications for Writers," "Applications for Teachers of English as a Second Language," and so forth.

I should, perhaps, say something about terminology. The field of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) is filled with overlapping acronyms such as ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), ESL (English as a Second Language), EFL (English as a Foreign Language), ELL (English Language Learner), and EL (English Learners), which move in and out of political favor. For this text, I have chosen the term ESL (English as a Second Language) over other currently more fashionable terms, for two reasons: (1) In the modern world, most students of English, even those outside Kachru's inner- and outer-circle English-speaking countries, are learning English as a "second", rather than a "foreign" language, in that they expect to use English in their professional or educational lives, as a medium for conducting business or for accessing other academic subjects. (2) Research on second language acquisition shows that students have greater success both in English and in their academic studies if they maintain and strenghthen

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their first language at the same time that they are learning English. The term "English as a Second Language," more than its alternatives, clarifies our goal of *adding* English as a second (or third or fourth) language, rather than *replacing* our students' first language with English.

The present text contains seventeen chapters, which is more than can be covered easily in a single semester; instructors who are using this text for a semester-long course will need to select the chapters and chapter sections that are most appropriate for their own students. For example, Chapter 6 ("The Dictionary") and Sections 12.5–12.8 of Chapter 12 ("Variation in English") will be of interest primarily to students of language arts and literature, while the second half of Chapter 4 ("Pronunciation: Applications for ESL teachers") is directed at teachers of English as a Second Language. Finally, a new Chapter 17 ("The Grammar of Social Media") explores the linguistics and evolution of online communication.

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