

R E V I E W S

Nicolas Ferguson and Maire O'Reilly, ENGLISH BY OBJECTIVES, with drawings by Josef Stojan, CEEL (Centre Experimental pour l'Enseignement des Langues,) Geneva: Palais Wilson, 1974.

TEACHER MANUAL OVERVIEW

English by Objectives is an audio-visual course ambitiously prepared by its authors. It is highly innovative, making use of situational dialogs and story-telling pictures. Methods and strategies, such as programmed exercises, phonetic exercises, listening exercises, writing exercises, and reading skills exercises aim at optimum student involvement. Mr. Ferguson's system is geared towards small classes (25 maximum) broken up into smaller study groups, thereby making individual responses of pivotal importance.

Mr. Ferguson states that the course is "behaviourally oriented". At the beginning of each lesson, there are listed a number of objectives which describe not what the student will know at the end of the lesson, but what he will be doing when he is demonstrating his achievement. (p. 14) Briefly, these objectives consist in motivating the student to perform within the framework of structured dialogues which run the gamut from relating everyday experiences to giving personal opinions. Students are also required to listen to a dialogue and give a simultaneous commentary on what the two persons are saying. Specially prepared tapes go with the package and much stress is given to competence in proper pronunciation and intonation patterns.

Being eclectic in scope, this work does not minimize the need for developing reading and writing skills. Ferguson states that the student must be able to write what has been learned in the spoken language with no more than 3% incorrect words. (p. 15) Further, the student must read and understand anything that is within the limits of the spoken language, with 5% unknown vocabulary, at a native speed of over 250 words per minute.

The text has been programmed to be complete in itself. The teacher need not search for supplementary aids as there is a plethora of materials already contained within the course proper.

The content of the method has been organized in such a way as to provide a variety of activities and techniques. The material is individualized, thereby allowing the teacher to adapt same to his or (her) personality as well as to that of the students.

Ferguson's basic tenet is that in order to judge whether or not a student

knows something, he must be observed under the following behaviors: doing things, answering questions, speaking. (p. 67) Each unit carries a description of the full objective expected in regard to performance and structure. Evaluating objectives are to be determined by "correctness, fluency, hesitation, pronunciation, spelling and punctuation (in the case of writing), reading speed (in the case of reading)..." (p. 67)

The course is outlined into five "progressions". These are syntactic, lexical, phonological, morpho-graphemic and the progression of objectives.

The methodology adhered to by the author is that of the transformationalists. His structural progression is couched in the generative grammar approach.

1. verb forms)
2. auxiliaries) base rules
3. noun forms)
4. transformations, embeddings and conjunctions. (p. 62)

The course has been programmed for a 400 hour time-span. It is divided into 20 units. Each unit is delineated as follows:

Base sketch	5 - 6 hours
Cartoon	1 hour
Phonetics Exercise	1/2 hour
Dictation	2 - 2 1/2 hours
Listening Exercise	2 hours
Reading	1 - 1 1/2 hours
Case Study, games and free discussion	2 - 2 1/2 hours
Tests	1/2 hour
Programmed exercises	1 hour (plus 3 hours outside class)

(p. 58)

The Base sketch is usually presented on tape. It is in dialogue form. The vignette is often of a humorous nature. The tape is accompanied by corresponding pictures, which the students later use in order to re-enact the dialogue. The base sketch is used as a repetition drill as well.

Programmed Exercises have been devised so as to require:

- active responding
- immediate knowledge of results (p. 28)

At the onset of each laboratory exercise there is a sentence depicting the situation. Example:

Imagine a conversation about Susan's morning. (p. 28)

The exercises have been recorded at a fast clip. Concentrated effort is required if the students are to keep up.

At any rate the stimulus and response form a meaningful whole.

Example:

1. Logical inference;

It's 8: o'clock in the morning.
Where do the Jackson children go?
To school.

2. Question response on information that has been given:

Where does Susan live?
In London.

3. Instruction response:

Ask Susan where she lives.
Where do you live?

The responses do not appear in the student manual. The students are to do them in writing after having done them in the lab.

Each teaching unit has a cartoon or cartoon strip for further development of the spoken form of the language. There are individual instructions for each cartoon.

There is a cartoon or cartoon strip for each teaching unit. These give more practice in the spoken language. Individual instructions are included in each unit.

Each writing exercise is recorded on tape. The exercise is presented in narrative or dialogue form. Key sentences are given. Then the students work with these clues, building their own questions and answers, improving on their pronunciation and intonation patterns, and finally, the tape is played again so that students can take down the dictation and score their mistakes.

The listening exercises are, of course, also recorded. These are usually short narratives giving extra practice on the structures found in the base sketch. A small amount of new vocabulary is introduced at this time. Again, with this type of exercise, much stress is given to repetition drills and to question-answer exercises.

The purpose of the reading exercises is to train the students to read silently. The students are not required to read aloud. In the reading process, the visual and the intellectual aspects have been taken into consideration. (p. 43)

The reading texts and exercises are included in the Student Manual.

Students are trained to read for inferences, reasoning cause and effect, anticipating endings, discovering relationships, and so on. The aim is to teach students to read faster, as well as to enhance their comprehension of the printed word.

Case Studies included in each unit are classified into three types:

1. a language game
2. problem solution
3. role playing

The case study is the final development of the teaching unit. The purpose of it is to demonstrate whether the teacher has helped the student to reach his objective. (p. 51) Each case is different and individual instructions are given for each one. It is an exercise in free group discussion. The teacher's participation is held at very low-key. A description of the problem case is included in the Student Manual.

Each unit contains nine control tests. There are three tests for listening comprehension, three tests for the mechanics of writing, and three tests of written expression. (p. 54)

Teaching English by Objectives presents a vigorous challenge. The project would probably demand a well-oriented team of instructors and a good stock of present-day electronic equipment in the language department of your school or college. Nevertheless, the text whets the pedagogical imagination and forges deep into the realm of super-motivating vehicles.

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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.
 Nicolas Ferguson (Foma, Lausanne, 1972.)

Although the author admits certain changes in more recent years in some concepts of teaching English as a foreign language, this general guide for the classroom teacher deserves a prominent place on our reference bookshelves.

Some important basic premises on the teaching and learning of a foreign language were taken into account when presenting suggestions for improvement of classroom teaching. Of utmost importance is the realization that unfortu-

nately the ability to speak and write a language are still held as being synonymous with the ability to teach it even though linguists have long since proven otherwise.

This book aims at introducing teachers to methodologies which carry language teaching beyond individual common-sense principles into the realm of specialized technology designed to meet real needs.

The content includes an analysis of developments in foreign language teaching during the period 1920-1970, some fundamentals in methodology, the English phonetic system and suggestions for correction by means of the Verbo - Tono System, the structure of English and the use of comprehension questions for clarification instead of traditional explanatory methods. Special guidance is given to teachers in preparation of audiovisual lessons. Sound psychological principles dominate in Ferguson's discussion of criteria which should be used in developing reinforcement exercises to obtain maximum effect and efficiency in learning. Naturalness of response is emphasized for all exercises, including language laboratory material. An ample bibliography aids those teachers interested in motivating students at all levels through the use of games, rhymes and songs as well as references for furthering technical linguistic knowledge.

The availability of Ferguson's book is somewhat limited in Mexico but it is distributed in the Mexico City area by Sistemas Educativos, S. A.

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Papers On Language Testing 1967 - 1974. Leslie Palmer and Bernard Spolsky, co-editors, Washington, D. C.: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1975. Pg. v. 228

It is often difficult for the teacher of English as a foreign language in Mexico to obtain access to information about new ideas and trends in our field, and about the results of research going on in other parts of the world, or, indeed, in other parts of the Republic of Mexico. Such is the case with language testing, an area of concern to all EFL teachers because it is such an integral part of teaching. It is one of the areas of our profession which is undergoing a great number of changes and which has been under continual investigation and research in recent years. One way to find out some of the things that have been happening in the area of language testing recently is to read the collection of articles in Papers On Language Testing 1967-1974.

This volume contains twenty-two papers on various considerations and

aspects of language testing, presented or published during the seven-year period between 1967-1974. The majority of the papers in this collection was selected from those published on language testing in the *TESOL Quarterly* during that period. The other five papers were selected from those presented at the International Seminar on Language Testing, sponsored jointly by TESOL and the Commission on Language Tests and Testing of the International Association of Applied Linguistics, which took place at San Juan, Puerto Rico in May 1973.

Palmer and Spolsky have divided their collection into two parts. Part One, under the heading of "Test Development," includes sections on "Techniques," "Oral Tests," and "Specific Test Instruments." Part Two is entitled "Theory and Interpretation of Language Tests," and here are included sections on "Validation," "Sociolinguistic Aspects," and "Cultural Considerations."

The EFL teacher in this country is more often than not left to his own devices to develop tests for his programs. Even those few published or "standardized" tests which exist in other parts of the world may be either unavailable here, or too expensive to obtain. Therefore, a major concern of the EFL teacher in this country in the area of testing is in the actual development of tests. In Part One of the collection, the reader finds a number of papers dealing with test development, from general approaches to testing to the description of some specific test instruments.

Francis A. Cartier's paper, "Criterion-Referenced Testing of Language Skills," contrasts the criterion-referenced approach to testing with the more traditional norm-referenced approach. In the former, the test is essentially a statement of course objectives (the criterion) and the student is expected to perform well on the entire test. In the second case, the test content is merely a sampling of the course content, and the student is rated in relation to how he compares with the class average (the norm). Cartier describes some of the problems involved in applying criterion-referenced testing to language evaluation, and discusses those aspects of language training for which it has been used successfully. Teachers in schools where the curriculum is determined by the Secretaría de Educación Pública or by the universities with which they are incorporated, as well as teachers who are concerned with the evaluation of achievement as a basis for student promotion, will find the issue of criterion-referenced testing an important and vital one.

Several of the papers in Part One report results of experiments with techniques. David P. Harris, in "Report on an Experimental Group-Administered Memory Span Test," describes an experiment with a controlled "dictation test in which the students were asked to write down each of sixteen sentences of increasing complexity after one hearing. Harris writes that while, as a test, this type of exercise has limitations, it "shows considerable promise" as a classroom tool for the teacher. In a paper by John W. Oller, Jr.

and Nevin Inal entitled "A Cloze Test of English Prepositions," support is offered for the use of the much-debated cloze technique, a technique whereby words are systematically or randomly deleted from a passage, and the examinee is required to restore the missing words. The authors present evidence to support their view that this technique is useful for measuring skill in the use of English preposition. In another paper, "Assessing Competence in ESL: Reading," John W. Oller, Jr. discusses techniques which measure reading skill, and presents correlations between these and other tests, such as grammar, listening comprehension, and vocabulary. He argues that test instruments should measure more integrative skills, and urges teachers to look into and experiment with devices such as cloze tests and dictations.

A number of papers deal with oral tests. Because such tests are used so widely in Mexico, at all levels and for many purposes (placement, proficiency, progress, achievement, diagnostic, etc.), the reader will find these papers of interest to him. One of these is John A. Upshur's "Objective Evaluation of Oral Proficiency in the ESOL Classroom." The author strongly supports the desirability of classroom testing by the teacher, even though standardized tests may be available, because the classroom teacher can thus provide the student with the feedback about his performance which is necessary for him to learn. Upshur describes what he believes testing entails, and suggest several ways to improve general oral proficiency tests.

Specific test instruments are described in several papers in this collection. Among them, is E. A. Levenston's culture-loaded oral proficiency test, which seeks to measure the examinee's "ability to function in face-to-face speech situations." This test is described in his article entitled "Aspects of Testing the Oral Proficiency of Adult Immigrants to Canada." Although the author describes an instrument which was created for use in Canada, many of the ideas presented and questions raised are applicable to the EFL teacher in Mexico. In another paper, entitled "Three Functional Tests of Oral Proficiency," Bernard Spolsky, Penny Murphy, Wayne Holm, and Allen Ferrel describe two tests designed for six- and seven-year olds, and one oral placement test for nonliterate adults. These three experimental proficiency tests were designed to classify students by their "ability to operate in a specific sociolinguistic situation with ease or effect," and to be used by relatively untrained examiners. In "Structure Placement Tests for Adults in English-Second-Language Programs in California," Donna Ilyin describes the procedures used and many of the problems encountered in the development of placement tests of English structure for adults. Peter J. M. Groot, in "Validation of Language Tests," describes the development of still another test of communicative competence, in the area of language listening comprehension, which makes use of "authentic, lifelike testing situations." He discusses the problem of validating tests which purport to measure communicative competence.

One of the central issues in language testing today is how to measure

language proficiency. There are two quite different views of language proficiency testing. One view holds that language proficiency should be determined by measuring an individual's knowledge of specific isolated linguistic components (discrete points), that is, by measuring skills and definable phonological, lexical, and syntactic elements separately and one at a time, and then considering the results of these measures to characterize over-all language proficiency. According to the other view, language proficiency is a measure of an individual's ability to communicate, to function appropriately and adequately in defined communicative situation (communicative competency). This debated issue is discussed by several of the writers in Part One of this collection (see above, Oller, Upshur, Levenston, Spolsky, et al, and Groot), and is treated again in Part Two, "Theory and Interpretation of Language Tests," in a paper by Bernard Spolsky entitled "Language Testing -- The Problem of Validation." In this paper, Spolsky divides language tests into two categories: those which are used to control instruction (e.g., achievement tests) and those which are used to make judgements about an examinee's future (e.g., proficiency tests). Spolsky argues that while discrete-point tests "are obviously of very great value in the control of instruction, whether as diagnostic or achievement tests," an integrative, functional approach to testing is more promising in the measurement of language proficiency. He suggests a strategy for the development of such tests of communicative competence, and discusses the problem of establishing their validity.

Other issues in Part Two of this collection are of interest to the EFL teacher in Mexico. Among them is the question of language attitude in second language learning, and is treated in "Some Issues in the Theory and Measurement of Language Attitude," by Robert L. Cooper and Joshua A. Fishman. In T. H. Plaister's paper on "Testing Aural Comprehension: A Culture Fair Approach," the problem of the influence of culture on test results where pictures are used is discussed, and a test is described which attempts to reduce such picture-reading cultural interference.

The value of this collection of papers lies not only in giving the reader a good idea of recent research and trends in language testing, but in suggesting ideas for further research. Hopefully, Papers On Language Testing 1967 - 1974 will encourage the EFL teacher in Mexico to try out his own ideas on testing, to investigate areas of interest and question, and to report his findings to all of us.

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WORK AND LEISURE: Composition Practice for Proficiency, Peterson, Botton, Walker and Hagens (London, England, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1972.)

WORK AND LEISURE is the first of two books for advanced students aimed at stimulating interest in British and American writing. The selections, which are ideally short for work within the normal one or one and a half hour class, were taken from a wide variety of sources such as journals, magazines, novels and advertisements so as to familiarize students with multiple writing styles.

Carefully graded, the selections become progressively more difficult, leading on to the second book Our Environment.

Of special interest to the classroom teacher is the development of comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises and suggestions for discussion and composition activities related to each unit. Tests for checking reading comprehension with a special emphasis on interpreting vocabulary from context facilitate the teacher's preparation.

Student response to the content of the book is excellent due to a realistic treatment of universal social problems, especially those related to work endeavors and employment of leisure time. The text is well suited to adolescent and adult users.

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Ann Baker, English to Get on with: A Situational, Structured Approach to Phrasal/Prepositional Verbs, (New York: Heinemann, 1976.)

To teachers who often feel at a loss when dealing with multi-word verbs in English, Ann Baker's English to Get on with offers a course that is certainly worth trying. The idea behind this book is that these verbs deserve separate handling. Intended for "mature" intermediate students from secondary school through adult level, it presents the most common phrasal, prepositional and phrasal-prepositional verbs based on go, put, make, come, call, run, turn, break, get, look, and take. The course can easily be completed in a semester of daily classes by teaching one unit per week while the regular textbook is being covered, or it could be extended over a year's time. The book contains thirteen units, as well as review sections in the middle and at the end. Each unit covers from eight to ten multi-word verbs and contains a reading passage, exercises and tests.

These verbs are presented in the context of a single serial story which

runs through all thirteen units. On the one hand, this feature compares very favorably with such texts as Dixson's Essential Idioms in English, which simply offers a number of (usually) unconnected example sentences for each item presented. On the other hand, one wonders if a single story line throughout the course would not become boring to student and teacher alike. Whether or not this is so, the reading passages themselves are sometimes forced and repetitious, as in the following example from Unit Two:

The party was very successful. George went in for hunting, and later in the evening he had a shooting competition for his guests. Everyone except Fred went in for it. Monica had never used a gun before, but she hoped that she would win a prize. She was very excited about it and she shouted so loudly that one of George's dogs went for her. It didn't bite her, but she cried a lot and asked Fred to take her home.

Another question concerning the text is if multi-word verbs would really occur so frequently in formal prose. If this is not the case -- and I believe that it is not -- then we must ask ourselves why we should, at this level, furnish students with prose that is atypical of what they will soon be required to read in or out of school.

A point very much in favor of the book is its structured presentation. Not only is there a theme-verb (go, put, make, etc.) for each unit, but the multi-word verbs are usually grouped according to pattern (phrasal, prepositional, etc.). The different patterns are handled separately in the initial units before such problems as passivization and object pronoun variations are approached. Synthesis of patterns comes in the test sections of each unit and in the final review unit.

The way in which the material is exploited also reflects close attention to structuring. The exercises, which are preceded by a repetition drill intended to familiarize the student with the stress patterns involved, are grouped according to the class of multi-word verb to be practiced. They are varied in type, consisting of different sorts of substitution drills, tables for sentence formation, completion exercises and other frames. If a multi-word verb appears in more than one meaning (as is the case of run into and run down, for instance), its different meanings are exploited separately in the exercise section. All of this ensures maximum avoidance of the confusions which so often arise in teaching these verb forms, and it discourages the teacher from requiring students to make up their own examples -- an activity which should be postponed to a far more advanced level.

Another very positive feature of the book is that it gives the student

an introductory unit in which he is enabled to learn the basic theory of multi-word verbs in English. After years of grappling with these structures in the classroom, I am convinced that it is a virtual impossibility to teach them in any systematic and efficient way unless the student is provided with some theoretical orientation.

One word of caution must be offered to teachers using Ann Baker's book in this hemisphere, especially if English is not their native tongue. When multi-word verbs are presented to the student in a strictly British context, he will often find them to be a source of confusion if he goes to the United States. This is due to the discrepancies in meaning and usage between British and American multi-word verbs, which become apparent even when we consider the title of the book. An American would probably call it "English to get along with" since the meaning of the phrasal-prepositional verb here is obviously to "succeed" rather than to "proceed"-- "to get on with" normally being restricted to the latter meaning in American English. From a random search, I was able to find such divergences as the following in one unit alone: "put up the price of butter" (Am.: "raise the price of butter"); "they're putting back the clock" (Am.: "they're setting/turning back the clock"); "put on the light" (Am.: "turn on the light"). The book is, of course, replete with other Britishisms such as "in hospital" for "in the hospital", "round" for "around", "super" for "great/terrific", and "doing the washing-up" for "washing the dishes".

All in all, I believe the book is sound in its fundamental principle that multi-word verbs require special treatment and material. If I were to attempt integrating it into a regular intermediate-level course, I would also avoid using it as a reading text. With these reservations, it should prove very helpful as a supplement to a general English course.

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