

R E V I E W S

Jordan, R. and Mackay, R., A HANDBOOK FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSISTANTS: London: Collins, 1976.

Although this book is written specifically for teaching ESL in Europe, it has many valuable suggestions for English teachers in Mexico. In the first chapter there is a long list of possible realia (from newspapers and money to personal photographs of family and special occasions) to carry into the classroom to emphasize the reality of the language and culture being studied.

The book continues in the next ten chapters to give many useful suggestions and wise professional comments about developing oral skills. For example, in the second chapter, there are comments about when, what, and how to correct a student. Jordan and Mackay feel that over-correcting, especially at early levels, impedes the development of fluency, which is the main oral goal. They suggest, then, other ways to get at errors, rather than stopping and correcting individuals at the moment a mistake is made. To beginning teachers or students in a teacher-training Course, the practical suggestions contained in these chapters make the book well worth having at hand. Even the experienced teacher will find some new ideas and be reminded of forgotten techniques. The authors stress the need for thorough preparation and go into detailed description of all types of oral activities, from quite controlled picture description to debates and free discussion. There are also illustrations of simple chalkboard drawings, examples of useful songs and rhymes, and a discussion of simple audio-visual aids and their use in English teaching. In the appendix there is a selected bibliography of magazines and books.

The chapters are extremely well organized and clear. An experienced teacher might feel a little frustrated because some sections are superficial and brief, although in such a handbook this would naturally occur. Other sections are very detailed, including all the points an experienced teacher takes for granted, such as the list of recommended techniques for oral lessons on page 28, which begins with the suggestion to smile.

Throughout the book cultural content from Great Britain is infused in the examples. To an American this abundance of unfamiliar references could inhibit his envisioning the use of the techniques in his own classroom. Since the book is so clearly written though, this minor problem should not be a hindrance. A Handbook for English Language Assistants is recommended as a valuable resource book for novice as well as experienced EFL teachers.

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Gretchen, Bloom, ENGLISH FOR CAREERS: THE LANGUAGE OF HOSPITAL SERVICES IN ENGLISH. (New York: Regents, 1976.)

The Language of Hospital Services in English is one book in an ambitious series titled ENGLISH FOR CAREERS. To date, this series represents the most comprehensive American attempt to meet the growing need for Specialized English around the world. The list of titles in print has reached approximately twenty four and the publisher promises many more, some covering completely new areas for the student of Specialized English.

The Language of Hospital Services in English consists of ten units, ninety-four pages of reading selections, vocabulary explanations, comprehension questions and suggested discussion topics. The reading selections are devoted to the various parts of a hospital, medical and non-medical, which are necessary for the patient's treatment, well-being, comfort and convalescence. A complete trimester or semester of study would be necessary to cover the abundance of material provided in the book.

In the Foreword, the author states the following purpose: "The book is not intended as a training manual, but rather, as a broad introduction both to the occupations and the problems involved in this kind of work". The author has accomplished this purpose admirably, giving us a wealth of interesting material in a very readable style. This type of information and presentation would be of enormous value to a high school guidance counselor in his efforts to orient students to various fields of work.

It is questionable, however, that the foreign medical student would need this type of basic information on the general set-up of hospitals. Most students of medicine have been pursuing an interest in this field many years prior to their internship and often in advance to their entrance to medical school. They can be found working in hospitals as nurses' aids, orderlies, orthopedic technicians and stretcher bearers. They have been reading autobiographies of famous doctors, following TV's contribution to this area; and reading medical articles. Hence, for many, an explanation of how a typical hospital is run would be superfluous. However, it must be pointed out that in spite of the claims made in the Foreword, the author does not describe a typical hospital. She has chosen the highly complex, multi-layered structure of a modern medical center in the United States. Herein lies both a strength and a weakness in the book.

It is quite probable that many students and doctors who are proficient in English would enjoy reading this book and would gain much from it about the complexities of a medical center. But it is equally probable that the medical student doctor trying to learn English from this book would find that he was struggling with words and phrases which only lead him

to descriptions of basic departments, functions, personnel and problems, many of which he already knew about.

Descriptions is emphasized because this approach presents a fundamental problem with this book. If the medical student or doctor is already familiar with the basic hospital set-up then what are his needs in Medical English? He may have one or several or all of these needs: to read medical texts and journals; to converse with English-speaking patients; to talk with English-speaking doctors and paramedical personnel. The reading selections in The Language of Hospital Services in English do not represent the technical type of writing found in medical textbooks or journals, nor are there any exercises other than comprehension questions which would help a student acquire skill in reading. (Though many discussion situations are given as exercises for the student, there are no dialogs in the book, either between doctors and patients or between doctors and medical and paramedical personnel. No explanations are given of the troublesome non-technical words and phrases such as "confined to."; "may give rise to"; and "may be brought about." Rather, the vocabulary explanations are dedicated to hospital departments and functions within these units and to names of the various positions.

Would the book be useful to the student of general English who has arrived at the "high intermediate or advanced level", the level of learning for which the author states the book is appropriate? This is also questionable. It is difficult to imagine the type of student who would feel he was gaining useful vocabulary when it is dedicated to hospitalese such as "prepping the patient", "administering I.V. s", and the fine differences between "malpractice and negligence", LPN's, RN's, and Candy Strippers.

This book, like so many in Specialized English, has been compiled for students of all cultures with no regard for the particular problems individual language groups encounter in learning English. Many of the terms in the book are Spanish-English cognates. Words such as ambulance and dentist will be no problem for the Spanish-speaking student, whereas a Japanese or Finnish student would not be able to recognize them. The roots of the problems in Technical English mostly are not technical terminology or concepts, but non-technical words used in explanations, definitions, and descriptions.

The mixture of general information and technical terms in this text makes it difficult to understand what language learning group would benefit from using this book. Had the author incorporated her interesting material into typical dialogs situated in the various parts of the hospital she describes so well, the text would have filled a real need for hospital and medical personnel.

These comments aside, The Language of Hospital Services in English does provide interesting reading in a specialized field hitherto not touched upon in EFL teaching materials.

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Anthony Howatt, John Webb, and Michael Knight, *A MODERN COURSE IN BUSINESS ENGLISH*, London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

For those of us who are strong believers in the teaching and learning of languages for special purposes, a new text in Business English is available. And although we debate the issue of introducing a specialized language course to beginning level students, all such texts designed for students below the advanced level warrant our immediate attention.

*A Modern Course in Business English* is suited for the intermediate adult learner of English who is engaged in commercial life or is interested in economic affairs in general. It presupposes a basic knowledge of English but is specially constructed to review familiar basic patterns of the language and to take the student to a more specialized knowledge at the same time. Bridging foundation and specialist English is one of the main objectives of the course. The underlying assumption for this objective is that before using this text, the student has studied "regular" English, and beginning with this course he will develop his English with a more meaningful approach, one appropriate to his career orientation in business.

The course provides a wide variety of types of English, topics of discussion, and kinds of activities in order to suit as extensive a range of student abilities and interests as possible. Along with a textbook for students and a teacher's guide, the course also consists of a set of tape recordings and a supplementary book of programmed self-instruction units which deal in detail with the basic patterns in the class text and provide the opportunity for a very thorough preparation of the class text material at home.

Here is a brief description of Unit Two which will enable the reader to make a critical evaluation of the basic components included in the course. (1) There is a pretest for the use of 'can' and 'may' in the programmed units booklet. Next the student reads a small passage entitled "Mr. Carlson's Arrangements" which is followed by a grammar discussion on the difference between 'can' and 'may'. On his own initiative, the student can proceed through the 19 programmed exercises, which aim to reinforce the correct usage of 'can' and 'may'. Following the exercises, the pretest reappears (in the form of) a post-test. (2) which begins with the class text, which is a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Carlson concerning their arrangements and appointments. Suggested new vocabulary with their phonetic spellings follow the class text. As well, there is an explanation of expressions used, such as "Let's talk shop." (3) The dialogue follows and is composed of a telephone call in which Mr. Carlson confirms his appointment with Mr. Smith. Again, vocabulary and expressions are provided. (4) This chapter deals mainly with auxiliaries, therefore an exercise in them is given. The student has to interpret the short forms of a diary while inserting correct auxiliaries. (5) The first phase of drills for the chapter is over a phone conversation and the use of auxiliaries (available in tape form). (6) The Reading Text is a factual passage concerning a related topic; for this unit, it is entitled "Sending Messages." Again we see vocabulary, yet this time there are extras, i.e. Information Notes and Language Study. Also

accompanying the Reading Text is a chart of the national newspapers in England as well as the London evening papers. The chart tells us the title of the newspaper; who it is controlled by; and the average daily circulation figures for the period of January to June, 1974. (7) "Good old" Comprehension Questions. (8) We are introduced to a different type of vocabulary exercise, as for example: the act of making a sentence stronger by changing "I don't understand" to "I simply don't understand". (9) Each unit has a problem or problems to solve. The student is given a certain amount of information and has to use that information to solve the problem. (10) The second phase of drills is composed of a practice for asking questions and an active listening comprehension exercise. (available on tape)

The most efficient way to analyze a new textbook is to use it. A Modern Course in Business English is highly recommended as a useful intermediate course in business English.

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