

Clearly this bias precludes such a course from being prescribed in South Africa. Nevertheless, the stimulating approach and the de-emphasis on actually testing communication skills make this package an excellent source book for teachers of English as a second language.

*Finuala Dowling*

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*Longman dictionary of contemporary English*, second edition 1987, Longman Group UK Ltd., 1 229 pp + 51 pp. Intro. and 29 pp. tables.

*Longman English grammar*, L.G. Alexander, first edition 1988, Longman Group UK Ltd., 374 pp. + 10 pp. Intro. About R16,00.

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'Contemporary' = 'belonging to the present time.' So it's no surprise that this dictionary contains definitions of 'yuppie', 'shuttle diplomacy', 'fax' and other modern terms.

However, this dictionary is very much more than a mere list of words and their meanings. It is liberally sprinkled with clear line drawings to illustrate, for example, the various woodwind and brass instruments of the orchestra.

It also has aids to learning which this reviewer found new and helpful. There are twenty 'Language Notes' at appropriate points. The Note on 'Tentativeness', for example, has clear pointers to the correct use of 'maybe', 'perhaps', 'possibly', 'I wonder' and 'quite'.

It has very many 'Usage Notes' aimed at helping the reader to differentiate between words of roughly similar meaning (pile/heap), to clarify points of grammar and style and to explain differences between American and British English (hire/rent).

The dictionary focuses strongly on 'Pragmatics' - 'the study of how words are *used* and what *speakers* mean.' Here, of course, one cannot lay down rules but one can (and the dictionary does) offer helpful guidelines about the appropriate context for using words such as 'please', 'surely' and so on.

Pronunciations are shown using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), with the IPA symbols being listed in one of the tables. Where American and British pronunciations differ (contradict/assume), the differences are shown. Similarly where the same word has different meanings in Britain and the USA (pavement, corn, to table) these differences are indicated.

The target reader is the student for whom English is a second language (ESL) and who needs and is able to 'graduate' from a bilingual dictionary. These and other features make it well-suited for this purpose.

The Grammar is also written particularly for ESL students. The writer's experience makes him well-qualified for the task, since he has taught the language both in Germany and in Greece. He is thus keenly aware of the pitfalls it presents to such students.

An appendix gives special attention to words and phrases which often cause difficulties for learners. It must be a 'hair-out-tearing' exercise for ESL students to work out why we say 'Twenty-two minutes to seven', but 'ten (no minutes) past five' or 'a quarter (of what?) to twelve.' And what are they to make of 'today week' or 'a month yesterday'? The Appendix ought to be a great help in unravelling such mysteries. It does seem, though, that the writer is focusing on British English, for no mention is made of, for example, 'a quarter of eleven' or 'twenty after six'.

The sections are clearly presented, with headings numbered and sub-sections making for ease of use. The extensive system of cross-references and the comprehensive index call for some work on the part of readers for them to be able to use these with comfort and confidence, but they do make the contents of the book readily accessible.

One minor omission is puzzling. The chapter on prepositions offered no guidance that this reviewer could find on whether a preposition is, or is not, an acceptable word to end a sentence with.

*Robert Orr*

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Rose, Angus. *OUR LANGUAGE: A series of articles on the English Language*, Shuter and Shooter, 1988. R10,75.

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English is such a language of inconsistencies that there is a considerable industry involved with explaining it and commenting on it to anyone prepared to listen. Angus Rose has considerable experience and expertise in the field of the English language, and it is both instructive and entertaining to read this offering of his. *Our Language* is a selection of 115 feature articles from *The Natal Witness* on the subject of the English language, some of which have already appeared in the pages of this publication. The range of interests tackled is wide and as each article is brief, the collection remains highly readable throughout.

Mr Rose's views on language are characterised by a moderate display of good common sense. Usage, according to him, is ultimately the crucial test, although various abstract ideals can, and maybe