Geoffrey Leech, and others. *English Grammar for Today: a New Introduction*. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press in conjunction with The English Association, 1982. 224 pp. Paperback R16,95.

In the words of the authors, this book is 'an introductory course in English grammar for use in English-medium schools, colleges and universities' (p. xi). It would certainly benefit South African pupils, students and teachers (the latter two groups at both English and Afrikaans-medium institutions of tertiary education) if *English Grammar for Today* were prescribed as a textbook in departments of English. Students in departments of Linguistics oriented to English should also find this a useful book. Judging from the views on grammar reflected in many classrooms and in essays of students in departments of English and Linguistics, there is without doubt a great need for a book of this nature in this country.

A particularly important part of this book, therefore, is the Introduction, which, in the words of the Preface, provides a 'reorientation: dispelling myths, ... seeking a new appraisal of the value of grammar in present-day education' (p. xi). One of the reorientations is the place assigned to the prescriptive approach to grammar. After the observation that 'linguists who write grammars are concerned with *describing* how the language is used rather than *prescribing* how it should be used' (p. 5), prescriptive rules of grammar are not dispensed with outright, but shown to be rules of grammatical etiquette, of value in the sense that linguistic behaviour often has a communicative effect, either negatively or positively, and that this effect may be exploited by the language user. In the place of the prescriptive distinction between good and bad grammar, the distinction between good and bad communication is introduced. The following paragraph give's some indication of the strength and potential of the approach to grammar prevailing in this book:

> Since using language is a skill, it is inevitable that some
> people are more skilled in this respect than others. There
> is no need to shrink from evaluation of this skill - for
> example, saying that one writer has a better style of
> writing than another. It is helpful, for this purpose, to
> be aware of the grammatical resources of the language, and
> the various possibilities which may be open to the user who
> wants to make effective use of the language. In this way
> we gain conscious control over the skill of using language.
> This is one of the main reasons for learning about grammar.
> (p. 13).

The largest and main part of the book is the 'Analysis', which
presents a 'method for describing the grammatical structure of
sentences' (p. xi). The grammatical analysis is based on
Halliday's systemic grammar, and throughout the detailed and
comprehensive description of grammatical structure the authors
relate information about grammatical forms and structure to
meanings, uses and situations. The structures that are described
in Chapters 2 to 7 are arranged according to the rank scale of
words, phrases, clauses and sentences, eventually leading to the
parsing of sentences illustrating subordination and coordination.
The grammatical description is not limited to the constituent
structure model, however, but is extended to include the descrip-
tion of transformations, i.e. both basic and derived structures
are described. A valuable aspect of this section of the gramma-
tical description is that attention is given to the stylistic
function and the communicative effects of transformations. The
reader is made aware of the difference in the impact of, for
instance, passive as opposed to active structures.

In the third part of the book, 'Applications', the method of
grammatical analysis described in the 'Analysis' is applied to
the study of style in the sense of discourse analysis and the
analysis of literary discourse. The chapter devoted to literary
stylistics makes stimulating reading and shows, by means of an
illustrated method of stylistic analysis, that a knowledge of
grammar is essential to the appreciation of literary style.

In this part the chapter on problem areas of usage ranges from
the much debated use of personal pronouns (for instance, the
choice between *who* and *whom* in certain cases; and the well-known
confusion in the use of *I/me*) to the more current problem with
the generic masculine. An interesting solution suggested by the
authors is what they call their 'principle of discretion':   'When
you are faced with the dilemma of either disobeying a prescrip-
tive 'rule' or awkwardly and conspicuously obeying it, reformu-
late the sentence so that the dilemma does not arise' (p. 173).

The last of the *applications* is that of grammar to composition,
a useful chapter of precepts of good linguistic behaviour in
written composition, illustrated by many examples.

Each chapter of this book is concluded by a brief summary of its
contents and a section containing groups of excercises referred
to in the chapter itself, answers to which are provided at the
end of the book, together with useful suggestions for further
reading. These exercises stimulate student or reader partici-
pation, since they are interesting and formulated in such a way
that they invite comments and creative activity on the part of

the reader. Cross-references in the text ensure continuity in
the reader's progress through the book. At the beginning of the
book, a list is given of the symbols and conventions used in the
text, and at the end a detailed index of seven pages is provided,
leaving the reader with an impression of well-structuredness.

INA BIERMAN
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Michael P. Jordan. *Rhetoric of Everyday English Texts*. London:
George Allen & Unwin, 1984. 160 pp. Paperback £5,95.

The theory of the 'metastructure' of short texts on which Michael
Jordan has based his text book is that of Eugene Winter's
Towards a Contextual Grammar of English. It posits that there
are four parts to the metastructure: 'Situation – Problem –
Solution – Evaluation'. After showing how closely linked the
writing of short texts is to the writing of summaries, Jordan
begins his account of the metastructure with straightforward
texts which follow the basic paradigm, and then proceeds to
consider variations. For example, a text may consist only of
'Solution – Evaluation', 'Problem – Solution' or 'Problem –
Solution – Evaluation'; or the sequence of the components may
be varied.

In the course of the book the four parts of the metastructure
are identified and analysed in two ways: linguistically and
semantically. Each short text which the author quotes is
analysed for the linguistic features which signal the different
parts of the text. For example, overt signals of 'Problem' are
words such as 'snag', the negatives 'unavailable, incompatible',
words such as 'smelly, stain', and words of quantity, 'not
enough, lack, too'. All such signals are classified and listed
in separate indexes at the end of the book. More complex,
semantic, signals are also illustrated at length.

For his analysis of the semantics of the metastructure, Jordan
concentrates in the last chapters on the nature of 'Problems'
and 'Evaluation'. His chapter on 'Problems', for example, deals
with 'Decisions signalled as problems, dilemmas and decisions,
needs and aims, corporate aims, formal requirements, psycholo-
gical problems, "need-to-know" problems'. The index on Types