

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, psychological problems, "need-to-know" problems'. The index on Types

of Problems groups under a key heading references to the problems in each of the texts he has used as illustrations. For example:

Reduction or Loss 3/2 loss of tensile strength; 4/1 loss of pressure; 56Ab staff loss; 57/2 loss of tax revenue; 73/2 flux deterioration; 104 lose heat.

(The numbers give the reference to the texts quoted.)

In case readers of this review are wondering what the book is getting at, they are welcome to try to read it for themselves, but I cannot offer much hope. It is not that the book is difficult; on the contrary, most of what it contains is obvious, but appears somewhat unfamiliar because of the unusual conceptual framework. I found myself constantly going back to search the cover notes and the preface to find out what I was supposed to be getting from the book. The danger signals are there in the first paragraph. In teaching rhetoric, a first principle is to have one's *intention* and *audience* fixed; yet here is Jordan's catch-all:

This introductory study is designed with many possible uses in mind. The obvious uses are as a text for 'communication' courses for students whose primary interest is not in language, and as an initial text for language students studying discourse structures and contextual grammar. The text is also suitable for use in advanced English as a Second Language courses and introductory courses in stylistics; with deeper analysis of the examples provided, the book could also be used in later years of language degree programmes. In addition, the book could be used in courses of journalism and in the education of teachers of English. Finally, it could prove useful for scholars of English usage and for researchers seeking to understand and test comprehension levels of sentences in context. Because of the wide range of potential users, few specialist language terms are used.

As might be expected, the result is a hotch-potch of style, tone and level of comment that is patronising, banal, hyperbolic, and pathetic. Readers (who include scholars and 'researchers') are told on p. 4, 'In order for you to learn from the analysis of short texts, you will have to develop a keen awareness of the power of certain words that control and direct structures of the texts'; and on p. 57, 'You need to learn to recognise problems when they are signalled in the text'. Advertisements, we are told, are often made up of 'Problem - Solution'.

Naturally, in the course of the analysis of so many texts, some useful and enlightening insights are given. Significantly, these

are often comments on linguistic features of register or style that are actually outside the author's conceptual framework for the book. Such comments would be helpful to students trying to improve their own style. A good teacher could also use the book to improve students' writing of letters, summaries, abstracts and short factual reports, and to some extent to teach comprehension.

Prospective users of the book should note that the texts chosen for analysis and as exercises are largely scientific reports or factual reports in newspapers, which would enhance the appeal of the book to students of communication in science and engineering courses, but would switch off anyone else.

E.R. JENKINS
VISTA UNIVERSITY

R.A. Close. *English as a Foreign Language. Its Constant Grammatical Problems.* Third Edition. London: Allen & Unwin, 1981. 219 pp. Paperback R14,75.

The third edition of this well-known book constitutes a strong re-affirmation of the role grammar has to play in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, in the light of the recent emphasis on notional syllabi and the communicative approach to language teaching. The author stresses that 'there would be no sense in excluding grammar from the curriculum' (p.8) and defines the subject matter of the book as 'the grammatical problems which arise wherever English, as a foreign language, is studied and taught.' (p.8)

The book's selecting and organising principle centres on the notion of grammar as a question of choice. Close posits English grammar as a 'solid core of linguistic facts' surrounded by a more nebulous area in which the choice of the right form is involved with subtle distinctions of thought, personal attitude and context of an utterance. For example, whether to say *I write* or *I'm writing*, *have written* or *wrote*. It is this nebulous area in which the student has to learn to make the right choice which is the subject of the book.