

SHEELAGH KANELLI. *Oral Proficiency*. London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1981. 128 pp. Book price in U.K. £1.95. Cassette £5.50.

Only when considering spoken English from a foreigner's point of view does one become aware of the almost overwhelming difficulty of mastering its bewildering idiosyncracies. *Oral Proficiency* by Sheelagh Kanelli has been written to meet the needs of foreign students who have to pass an Oral Examination in the Certificate of Proficiency at the University of Cambridge, and is accompanied by a cassette tape, to aid students aurally.

In order to assess whether the book achieves its aim, it is necessary to know something of the nature of the examination to which it is geared. The Oral Examination consists of two parts; there is an Oral Interview and a Listening Comprehension. The Oral Interview has four parts to it. Chapter 1 of *Oral Proficiency* deals with the first of these, which tests the ability to hold a conversation in a given everyday situation. The author gives general advice about determining the requirements of a situation before giving numerous examples of the sort of responses one is called upon to make, for example, in a shop, at the doctor's or at a restaurant. In each case the situation is sketched, the appropriate method outlined, then sample answers provided.

Chapter 2 deals with the second part of the Oral Interview which tests the ability to hold a conversation revolving around a photograph. The author follows the same format: she offers general guidelines before giving the student twenty practice examples. The photographs she has chosen are thought-provoking but, technically speaking, their reproduction is not all it should have been. They are rather small and in some cases murky, making it difficult to discern the detail the questions refer to. In one instance, one photograph has been accidentally printed on top of another, resulting in a confused blur. This is obviously the printer's rather than the author's fault, but is unfortunate' nonetheless.

Chapter 3 tackles the third part of Oral Interview: the Two Minute Topic. This self-explanatory title requires no elaboration. The author gives concrete, step-by-step instructions as to how to plan a speech, pointing out the difference between the type of language required here and that of the two previous exercises.

The final part of the Oral Interview, the reading passage, is preceded by three detailed chapters on pronunciation. Using the IPA system of phonetic symbols, the author gives comprehensive instructions, illustrated by diagrams and sketches, on how to

reproduce sounds correctly. She devotes one chapter each to Vowels, Consonants, and Intonation. Each group of sounds is illustrated by exercises on the cassette tape (not supplied to me). Fifteen sample reading passages (dialogues in which the candidate reads one part and the examiner the other) then provide practice in these oral skills.

The final chapter of the book consists of twenty Listening Comprehensions. In the examination, the student is required to answer multiple choice questions having listened to a passage being read twice. The passages, printed in the book as well as recorded on the tape, are drawn from contemporary authors, including Graham Greene, Margaret Drabble and Alistair Maclean. The interest of these selections saves this from becoming a dry test of memory and makes it stimulating and enjoyable instead.

The application of *Oral Proficiency* is restricted, offering, as it does, practice in speaking and listening to the sort of English taken for granted by people whose mother-tongue it is. However, its limited scope is not a weakness. Sheelagh Kanelli wholly succeeds in fulfilling her purpose: to prepare students for every aspect of the Cambridge Oral Proficiency Examination. Her approach is direct, her style simple. She avoids the theoretical and concentrates on the practical essentials.

I would certainly recommend a foreign student, floundering amidst the inconsistencies and illogicalities of English, and faced with the frightening ordeal of an Oral Examination, to turn to *Oral Proficiency* for direction.

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PETER WATCYN-JONES. *Penguin Functional English: Pair Work Student A and Student B*. London: Penguin Books Limited, 1981. Student A - 64 pp. Student B - 62 pp. Paperback, £1.25 each.

Peter Watcyn-Jones is a lecturer in English at the English Centre, Lund University, Malmö in Sweden. He has designed this practical course for foreign students who have a basic knowledge of the English language. The course consists of two separate books, one for Student A and the other for Student B. There are forty activities in each book and the students are asked to converse with each other on a variety of everyday subjects, each student being given a different task or role for each activity. As the title *Pair Work* suggests, the students work in pairs and the information