

A Dictionary of South African English is more than an entertaining book, and more even than a handy reference tool: it is a record of South African life. For, as M.H. Dohan expresses it, the vocabulary of each generation 'reflects its historical climate and - unconsciously created - reveals as no mere history can the spirit of a time' (*Our Own Words*, p. 3).

A.D.A.

Nicolas Ferguson. *Language Learning by Objectives*. London: Evans Brothers Limited. 1979. vi + 122 pp. Paperback, n.p.

Language Learning by Objectives deals with the teaching of English as a foreign language (TEFL) and belongs together with the course *English by Objectives*. The approach of this book is sensible and realistic. In his Preface, Mr Ferguson isolates 'three striking sources of inefficiency in modern teaching'. They are:

1. '... teaching is generally divorced from the use we make of language. We teach an unapplied system ...'
2. '... we teach students to do and say things with language which are fundamentally insignificant to them as persons, and consequently they say these things formally and impersonally.'
3. We teach 'all the students in a group at the same rate'.

Mr Ferguson thereafter points to five types of institution involved in language teaching. They vary from 'private institutions, with trained professional teachers, and motivated students studying under excellent conditions' to 'school systems with polyvalent teachers teaching under great pressure, with a very imperfect command of the language they are teaching, and with students of varying backgrounds, some of whom are almost totally lacking in motivation, placed together in very large groups of unbalanced levels' (Introduction).

The implication of these two sets of lists is presumably that this book, and more particularly the method it proposes, will avoid present sources of inefficiency and be suited to all five categories of teaching institution. The content of this book ought, therefore, to be evaluated accordingly.

'Many course writers,' says Mr Ferguson, 'are only indirectly in contact with the reality of the teaching situation in schools' (Introduction). In contrast, this book aims to present a practical approach that focusses

not on *content*, but on *function*. This approach Mr Ferguson calls *Teleopedia*, or teaching by objectives.

The book is divided into two parts, 'Theory' and 'English by Objectives' (i.e. Practice). The former takes the reader through a step-by-step introduction to the subject of performance objectives; the learning process; overt and covert activities; equipment needed for language teaching; and the role of the teacher. Two sequences of programmed instruction and a final 'Self Test: The Fundamental of Teleopedia' help to convey the essential aspects of Part One. Furthermore, three lists of references offer the enthusiastic or curious reader a selection of additional reading.

Part Two deals with the practical application of objectives to TEFL. To do so it takes a unit from *English by Objectives* and illustrates its use. The main characteristic of this course, according to Mr Ferguson, is the use of 'learning strategies', which he defines as follows:

Learning strategies involve small groups of students working together without any direct intervention from the teacher, in situations calling for a high degree of affectivity and involvement. The teacher's role during a strategy is one of group animator, to stimulate interaction within the group.

(p. 46)

Unit 4, presented in full here, shows varied and thorough use of taped presentation of a basic sketch, of cue cards, of silent cartoons, programmed exercises, listening exercises, writing exercises, reading exercises, case studies ('human problems which involve the class as persons, with an interchange of real opinions', p. 48) and tests (six written and three listening tests). I find the variety of skills and approaches thorough and appealing.

In general, the book is clearly written, with a logical presentation. In beginning his course with twenty-five hours of oral work, Mr Ferguson has recognized the primacy of the spoken word. He carries this over into the written word in his preference for a colloquial 'who' in place of 'whom' in such sentences as,

Who did Jenny meet in the street?

(p. 57)

Ask Bill who he went to Italy with.

...

Who did you go to Italy with?

(p. 66)

The three dots separating question and answer indicate to the student that he must not move the card covering the answer and subsequent questions and answers until he has given his own answer.

Although the issue of 'who' and 'whom' is a contentious one, I should have liked to see Mr Ferguson draw attention to and justify his choice of 'who'. The justification is only implicit in his discussion of 'marked' (i.e. over-formal or inappropriately stilted) language on pp. 40-42).

A few printer's gremlins have intruded:

If any individual sentence heeds correcting ...

(p. 52)

On p. 46 Mr Ferguson mentions 'audio-aural' aids.

What do people normally have trouble parking?

(p. 82)

After on minute ...

(p. 97)

These are minor errors, however. More irritating is Mr Ferguson's idiosyncratic and excessive use of the phrase 'in function of', as in:

Up till recently, this has been done in function of the syntax of the language ...

Teaching has also been considered in function of existing conditions in schools round the world.

(Introduction)

When we define objectives, these should be considered in function of what the weakest student in the group is capable of achieving in a given time.

(p. 3)

And so on.

In conclusion, this book is a worthy attempt at unifying theory with practice in the field of TEFL. It will be of interest also to teachers of foreign languages in

South Africa, although it does not, to my mind, overcome the problem of unmotivated children or large classes or inadequate 'material'. Lack of motivation, at any rate, is a symptom of a wider educational malaise.

K.J. Kaycell

University of South Africa

Helena van Schalkwyk. *Language Communication - English*.
Johannesburg: McGraw-Hill, 1979. 641 pp. Boards.
R11-95.

It seems that the review that shows complete approval of a book has quite gone out of fashion. If this is so then what is to follow will be a most unfashionable review. Also, if the accepted practice is to nod somewhat haughtily at the author's efforts and then launch into a series of reservations and suggestions for improvement, then what I am about to say is not in the nature of a review. What I *do* say, however, is that from among the dozens of books that I have seen lately - all with the honest purpose of wanting to assist students to express themselves more effectively in English - one, in particular, stands out: Helena van Schalkwyk's *Language Communication - English*.

It soon becomes apparent that the author has had long experience of teaching English: she knows precisely where the weaknesses in the South African's use of the language lie. And, possibly prompted by exasperation (although this never shows in the book), she has set out to compile a book that serves as both a reference work and guide as well as one that corrects by way of explanation, example, and exercise. What strikes me most about her work is the practical way each problem is dealt with. The only means of reflecting this and the scope of *Language Communication - English* is to quote the Contents pages:

Introduction

Communication

Communication studies

The role of language in communication

SECTION 1. English as a medium of communication

Introduction

1. Pronunciation and stress
2. The spelling system of English