

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.

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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

3. Punctuation
4. Division of words (Hyphenation)
5. The word and its meaning - the semantic aspect of the word
6. Extension of vocabulary - terminology in different fields
7. Formation of words
8. English usage

*SECTION 2. Oral communication*

Introduction

9. Non-verbal factors
10. Verbal factors
11. Practical application - dialogue and the interview
12. Practical application - group discussion
13. Practical application - public speaking
14. Practical application - other types of oral communication

*SECTION 3. Written communications*

15. Concise communications
16. Very concise communications
17. Composition
18. Correspondence and advertising in the business and professional world
19. Examples of different kinds of letters
20. Advertising
21. Report writing - reports and memoranda
22. Meetings and procedure at meetings

*SECTION 4. Clear thinking and style*

23. Clear thinking
24. Style

*SECTION 5. Reference section*

25. How to consult sources of information
26. Abbreviations
27. Translations
28. Words often confused
29. Terminology
30. Idiomatic usage
31. Formal modes of address
32. Metrication
33. Recommended reading list
34. Examples of visual aids to further communication

*SECTION 6. Remedial exercises and assignments for students*

35. Questions on English usage
36. Topics for discussion or composition (essays and articles)

37. Comprehension tests
38. Passages for summary
39. Topics for composition (essays and articles)
40. Assignments on correspondence and advertising
41. Assignments on reports and memoranda
42. Assignments on meetings
43. Exercises on clear thinking and style
44. Test papers
45. Examination papers

### *Bibliography*

It would be difficult to choose any one section from this range as being more important than the rest. However, for the student who is not at home in English, I imagine that the whole of Section 1, in particular the sub-section on English usage, will prove the most informative. Here, for instance, the problems of concord are given priority. Each point she makes is followed by a clear example and for those grey areas where there is a choice between the singular and a plural form of the verb, her advice is eminently sound. Thereafter - and again with clarity - she deals with tenses, choosing those forms that are continually being mismanaged by the unsure user. She then provides neat and practical bridges over the pitfalls of the noun, the pronoun, and the dreaded preposition. What I also appreciate is her selectivity in all this: it would have been so easy to become bogged down by tedious and daunting detail - but this she has wisely avoided by simply concentrating on the prevalent areas of error.

Of special interest to our Practical English students are those sections of her book that attempt to remedy the damage done by many of our schools. There are also those sections that assist directly in the Practical English student's activity by giving instruction on how to write an essay, a letter, and a report. In all she says under any of these heads I do not think that there is a single statement with which I disagree. This could of course, mean that I am losing my grip as an academic but, in fairness to Helena van Schalkwyk (and to me), it could also be that she has produced the book for which we have all been waiting for a long time.

And, if only to show that I am an ally in her cause, I cannot resist a parting shot. In her preface she says: 'I trust that this book will aid those in professional, official and commercial positions, as well as students working towards careers in these fields'. I

should like to add another category: interviewees on S.A.B.C. radio and television programmes.

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