

Anthony Howatt, John Webb, and Michael Knight, *A MODERN COURSE IN BUSINESS ENGLISH*, London: Oxford University Press, 1976.

For those of us who are strong believers in the teaching and learning of languages for special purposes, a new text in Business English is available. And although we debate the issue of introducing a specialized language course to beginning level students, all such texts designed for students below the advanced level warrant our immediate attention.

A Modern Course in Business English is suited for the intermediate adult learner of English who is engaged in commercial life or is interested in economic affairs in general. It presupposes a basic knowledge of English but is specially constructed to review familiar basic patterns of the language and to take the student to a more specialized knowledge at the same time. Bridging foundation and specialist English is one of the main objectives of the course. The underlying assumption for this objective is that before using this text, the student has studied "regular" English, and beginning with this course he will develop his English with a more meaningful approach, one appropriate to his career orientation in business.

The course provides a wide variety of types of English, topics of discussion, and kinds of activities in order to suit as extensive a range of student abilities and interests as possible. Along with a textbook for students and a teacher's guide, the course also consists of a set of tape recordings and a supplementary book of programmed self-instruction units which deal in detail with the basic patterns in the class text and provide the opportunity for a very thorough preparation of the class text material at home.

Here is a brief description of Unit Two which will enable the reader to make a critical evaluation of the basic components included in the course. (1) There is a pretest for the use of 'can' and 'may' in the programmed units booklet. Next the student reads a small passage entitled "Mr. Carlson's Arrangements" which is followed by a grammar discussion on the difference between 'can' and 'may'. On his own initiative, the student can proceed through the 19 programmed exercises, which aim to reinforce the correct usage of 'can' and 'may'. Following the exercises, the pretest reappears (in the form of) a post-test. (2) which begins with the class text, which is a conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Carlson concerning their arrangements and appointments. Suggested new vocabulary with their phonetic spellings follow the class text. As well, there is an explanation of expressions used, such as "Let's talk shop." (3) The dialogue follows and is composed of a telephone call in which Mr. Carlson confirms his appointment with Mr. Smith. Again, vocabulary and expressions are found. (4) This chapter deals mainly with auxiliaries, therefore an exercise on them is given. The student has to interpret the short forms of a diary while inserting correct auxiliaries. (5) The first phase of drills for the chapter cover a phone conversation and the use of auxiliaries. (available in tape form). (6) The Reading Text is a factual passage concerning a related topic; for this unit, it is entitled "Sending Messages." Again we see vocabulary, yet this time there are extras, i.e. Information Notes and Language Study. Also

accompanying the Reading Text is a chart of the national newspapers in England as well as the London evening papers. The chart tells us the title of the newspaper; who it is controlled by; and the average daily circulation figures for the period of January to June, 1974. (7) "Good old" Comprehension Questions. (8) We are introduced to a different type of vocabulary exercise, as for example: the act of making a sentence stronger by changing "I don't understand" to "I simply don't understand". (9) Each unit has a problem or problems to solve. The student is given a certain amount of information and has to use that information to solve the problem. (10) The second phase of drills is composed of a practice for asking questions and an active listening comprehension exercise. (available on tape)

The most efficient way to analyze a new textbook is to use it. A Modern Course in Business English is highly recommended as a useful intermediate course in business English.

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