

ease of application and universality. The basis for Larsen-Freeman's suggestions is the analysis of 212 compositions (a similar test was carried out with conversation and story retelling) performed in two steps, estimation and identification of units and errors. The best discrimination measures singled out were the average number of words written per T-unit (= test unit, roughly corresponding to a clause), the total number of error-free T-units plus their percentage, and the average number of words per error-free T-unit (which increases with proficiency, as do syntactic elaboration and error elimination). So far this promising preliminary version is valid for English only.

It is regrettable that this reader is not furnished with an index allowing for cross-sectional comparison. Since most of the papers (especially those within the same section) show a strong correlation in their theoretical parts an index would be most helpful for the collection of parallel information. A survey is however given in the introduction (Seliger and Long) as a guideline to the topics discussed in this comprehensive book.

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McDonough, Jo, *ESP in Perspective. A Practical Guide*. London: Collins ELT, 1984, pp. 154.

This medium length teacher-directed textbook is divided into eight chapters. The first six take the reader from the general to the particular—from the general context of ESP, through the collection and interpretation of basic data (chapter 2), needs analysis (chapter 3), types of syllabus approach (chapter 4), course and material design (chapter 5) and then to the ESP classroom and its relationship with the "target world". The final two chapters deal usefully with two other important issues (Testing, and the ESP Teacher) but ones which would be more difficult to integrate into the core ESP processes and practices discussed in the opening six chapters. Thus, *ESP in Perspective* is a well-planned book, both in terms of its organization and (with one major exception to be considered below) in terms of its coverage and balanced distribution of particular topics. The only drawback that I can see to the book's structure is that from a teacher's point of view—as opposed to that of an ESP specialist—the second chapter entitled *Fundamental Variables* may be rather heavy going because of its concentration on the initial stages of course design and its consideration of financial and space resources, etc., i.e. matters that are not likely to involve teachers *beginning* a career in ESP.

In my view, some of the individual chapters are more successful than others. Perhaps the most successful of all is Chapter 3, *The Analysis of Learners' Needs*. McDonough here handles a complex literature with great skill and confidence and leads the reader through

the multifarious interpretations given to the word “need” in a most enlightening way. My only regret is that she did not discuss the Case Study along with the questionnaire and the interview as a means of eliciting information about the needs of learners. Whilst it is true that much of the interesting recent work in the case study approach has appeared after this volume would have gone to press, certainly the closing section of the chapter would be enhanced by discussion of, say, Schmidt (1981).

In contrast, the following chapter, *Approaches*, is one of the most contentious. In part, I suspect that my difficulties derive from McDonough’s views about the proper relationship between Applied Linguistics and ESP, which are iterated in this chapter but also resurface in other chapters. Although I have no problem with the statement that “Applied Linguistics and language teaching stand in a dynamic relationship, each drawing on the other in order to develop” (48), I would wish to question the ensuing chart which permits no direct relationship between ESP Research and Linguistics, but only one mediated through Applied Linguistics. If we take linguistics in its “macro” sense of encompassing Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics, then the denial of this direct link may explain McDonough’s decision to assign little space and significance to “varieties” or “registers” or “genres” of English. For instance, her discussion on page 53 of the language structure of science has a distinctly historical flavor in that she cites only the following investigations (Savory, 1953, Huddleston, 1971, Stevrens, 1973). In those terms, of course, she is able to claim that the language of specific academic disciplines and professional areas differs from other varieties principally in vocabulary and the frequency of occurrence of grammatical items, and thus cites with apparent approval Williams’ 1978 attack on subject-specific courses. A little later McDonough refers again to the Stevrens’ paper:

Stevens (1973), having referred to the levels of grammar and lexis, incorporated into his discussion on examination of the ‘rhetorical features’ of technical, technological and scientific English; in other words the ‘logic’, or the ‘argument structure’ of a text (for example, expressing causality and hypothesis, or setting out a sequence of ideas). There is no space here to describe other research of this kind (56)

I would suggest that space should have been found for such descriptions. It would seem essential that, in the nineteen-eighties, any perspective on ESP incorporate an informed perspective on the discursal and rhetorical patterns that bring together and keep apart research paper, textbooks, lectures and technical manuals on the one hand, and the “argument structures” and disciplinary cultures of science, social science, medicine and business on the other. As I have argued elsewhere (e.g. Swales, 1981), the debate about subject specificity cannot be discussed responsibly only in terms of ESP pedagogy (*pace*, Williams 1978) but also needs to take into account what actually happens in differing educational and professional environments.

With the major omission noted above, McDonough has largely succeeded in her “attempt to draw together some of the many lines of growth (of ESP) and to put them in a wider language teaching perspective”. I would imagine those looking for a *practical guide* would expect to find two things: clear step-by-step fully illustrated procedures leading the reader from basic questions to actual classroom activity; and secondly, a sense of firm evaluation if not an actual list of “do’s” and “don’ts”. McDonough certainly describes procedures and discusses various approaches to them, but the only full illustrations of materials occur

in the chapter on Testing. Further, her over-all stance is one of proper academic caution, rather than one of practically-oriented admonition or commendation. *ESP in Perspective* is certainly none the worse for not being a practical guide; it just isn't one. The sub-title is misleading and should be deleted in any subsequent editions.

ESP in Perspective is not as fresh and as attractive an introduction to ESP as the textbook by Kennedy and Bolitho (1984).¹ It does not have the bibliographical coverage of Robinson (1980),² although the bibliography is adequate except in the area of applied Discourse Analysis. It does not have the intellectual rigor and careful argumentation of Widdowson's *Learning Purpose and Language Use* (1983). All that said, McDonough's book is a very welcome addition to the small but growing number of books aimed at the ESP practitioner. It succeeds better than the others in integrating theory and practice and in illuminating the compromises that often need to be made between idealism and reality.

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NOTES

¹ To be reviewed in a future issue of *System* by Pauline Robinson. [Editor's note].

² For a review of this book from the pen of the late Max Gorosch cf. *System* 10 (2) 201–203 [Editor's note].

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La Forge, Paul G., *Counseling and Culture in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1984, 142 pp, £4.70.

If the author of this eminently concise and informative volume had added a rider to his title, such as ‘the Japanese experience’, it could have helped the reader—in an age which necessitates the rapid assimilation of reading material—to prepare himself to embark upon a journey into a realm of experience which is very different from the kind of language learning territory the majority of us are familiar with. Perhaps such a rider would also, however, have had the less desirable effect of scaring off the casual reader, who might feel that the experience of teaching English in Japan might be too remote from his or her own work to be of interest.

Having come without any forwarning to Mr La Forge's slim volume, your reviewer feels bound to admit to having somewhat mixed feelings about the likely application of the