
Book Reviews

English for Business Studies in Higher Education Studies

Carolyn Walker

Garnet Education, 2008.

Coursebook 132 pages, 2 CDs.

Teacher's Book 280 pages

Reviewed by: *Ellen Pilon*

Of the many business English ESL coursebooks available, only a handful are high-level. Garnet Education has filled the gap by introducing a series of three business coursebooks for upper intermediate-level international students entering undergraduate university business or management programs. The three are *English for Business Studies*, *Banking*, and *Tourism and Hospitality*.

The content of *English for Business Studies* combines business subjects with academic skills for students who have completed a general English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course and have at least an IELTS 5 (iBT TOEFL 61). The academic content, however, is still relevant for business professionals who need to practice writing, summarizing, and notetaking skills. The text is thus adaptable to almost any high-level business English class.

Many of the good business English coursebooks are British, with British idioms and vocabulary and British pronunciation in the listening resources. Although the authors of *Business Studies* and the series are not North American, the content focuses on academic and business English that is useful anywhere. Thus much of this text is universally applicable to business students anywhere. The authors and publisher have also succeeded in producing CDs that reflect a variety of English accents including North American. Conveniently, the CDs are included with the text.

To interest students and teachers, the text has been designed so that chapters are not carbon copies of each other. Odd-numbered chapters focus on listening and speaking skills, whereas even-numbered ones focus on reading and writing. Each chapter is eight pages. Activities in each chapter follow a similar sequence of vocabulary terms and phrases; reading or listening practice; and extending skills with more vocabulary, writing, or pronunciation practice. Each chapter concludes with a useful vocabulary bank and skills bank; both are thoughtfully prepared and useful for first-year academic students. Individual practice exercises and the content of the skills banks vary from chapter to chapter, bringing spice to the pattern.

Other features include colors in varying shades of blue balanced with a judicious amount of white space: not so much that it cheats you of your dollar, but not so little that it cramps readability. Complete transcripts at the end of the book are readable in a full-size typeface, so teachers are spared the nuisance of enlarging and then cutting and pasting transcripts of individual listening tasks.

Each of the 12 chapters focuses on a theme: general business, organization, productivity, technology, people and markets, products and strategies, production, efficiency, finances, funding, external influences, and change. The source of much of the content is a fictional Hadford University. The authors thus were free to create material that would not become quickly outdated, a common problem with copyrighted material. Also, rather than design language practice and vocabulary around material with copyright permission, the authors were able to create language objectives first and then develop practice exercises and text together. The result is a wealth of useful language.

The Teacher's Book is a complete guide to teaching with the text and well worth purchasing. It lists all the key vocabulary from the chapter and includes objectives and skills/vocabulary foci and detailed lesson plans. An activity bank has excellent supplemental resources. Use the *Teacher's Book* in lesson planning, add your own creativity and imagination, and the result will be an excellent lesson.

This is a well-planned, well-organized text with well-written content sure to interest both students and teachers. Academic business ESL teachers will find the book particularly useful, but so will any business English teacher of high intermediate-level students. The *Teacher's Book* is full of useful ideas including answers, extra resources, teaching suggestions, and strategies: it is sure to please both experienced and novice teachers.

The Reviewer

Ellen Pilon has taught all levels of ESL and EAP full time for eight years. She is an active member in TESL NS and TESL Canada. A former librarian and would-be coursebook writer, she has made a career of assessing business and academic coursebooks.

English for Academic Study: Listening

Colin Campbell and Jonathan Smith

Reading, UK: Garnet Education, 2007, 75 pages

English for Academic Study: Speaking

Joan McCormack and Sebastian Watkins

Reading, UK: Garnet Education, 2007, 134 pages

Reviewed by: *Jacqueline Foster*

English for Academic Study: Listening is designed for upper-level English-language learners. The aim of this coursebook is to provide students with practice listening to and taking notes from authentic lectures. Most of the recordings on the two CDs that accompany the textbook were made from transcripts of lectures presented at the University of Reading, United Kingdom. Although the range of lectures is varied and includes academic disciplines from business to the social sciences, the authors “have chosen extracts that should be accessible to a general audience of students” (p. 5).

The coursebook begins with an introduction to the overall organization and its eight units: Listening and Lectures, Introductions to Lectures, Identifying Key Ideas in Lectures, Note-taking: Part One, Note-taking: Part Two, Introducing New Terminology, What Lecturers Do in Lectures, and Digressions. The transcripts for the recordings are included at the end of the textbook.

This is a skill-based textbook that focuses on both macro- and micro-skills. Some examples of macro-skills include notetaking, lecture organization, and key ideas; some micro-skills included in the textbook are sentence stress and word families. The lecture segments highlight these skills for the students to practice. Each unit includes macro- and micro-skills presented through three to five learning tasks. For example, in Unit 2 the first learning task begins with two questions, which act as a warmer, and then the students listen to the beginning of a lecture in order to practice identifying the lecture topic. Near the end of the unit the fourth learning task has students practice identifying word stress.

The authors have also integrated vocabulary throughout these units. Instructors and students will find terminology that is relevant to specific disciplines and words that are common in the university classroom.

Some possible drawbacks to using this coursebook include the fact that the recordings are lecture extracts; this may cause concern that the lecture segments may result in skills being practiced in isolation. In addition, the lecture segments have been rerecorded, which some instructors may perceive as affecting the degree of genuineness. Finally, the British English of the lectures causes some minor language differences.

Overall, *EAS: Listening* provides opportunities for students to listen to authentic lectures at the university level. The authors have attempted to make the lectures more accessible by highlighting discrete skills for practice in recordings of lecture segments. In addition, a DVD is available for purchase, which would provide a visual complement to the coursebook. This textbook would be most applicable to courses where a skill-based approach is considered appropriate.

English for Academic Study: Speaking is also aimed at upper-level English language-learners. This is a topic-based coursebook that develops speaking skills for the university classroom. The purpose is to provide students with the skills necessary for participating in seminar discussions and delivering academic presentations. The textbook includes a CD to accompany the listening tasks.

The coursebook begins with an introduction to the overall organization and its 10 units. Some unit topics include Being a Successful Student, Learning Online, and The Influence of the Media. Transcripts are provided before the appendixes. Following every two units is a review, and the appendixes have additional support materials such as a list of topics for seminars and language expressions for seminars and presentations.

The first five units develop specific skills for participating in seminar discussions and giving academic presentations. The sixth unit, Consolidation Unit, allows for the independent practice of these skills through seminar assignments. The subsequent units, seven to ten, provide additional practice with these skills.

The units begin with a warmer and then consist of about five to seven learning tasks, which are composed of subtasks. In addition, both skills and language structures are included throughout each unit. Some of the skills include presenting information from a text and using a text to support one's ideas. A few examples of the language structures include summarizing the outcomes of a discussion and expressions for chairing a discussion. The coursebook also incorporates a Learner Diary at the end of each unit for students to reflect on how they are progressing through the tasks. Listening tasks are integrated throughout, and the authors include reading material at the end of the units.

Overall, *EAS: Speaking* is a much longer coursebook than *EAS: Listening* and provides students with numerous opportunities for practicing the speaking skills necessary for participating in seminars and delivering presentations at the university level. Instructors will find the selected topics of interest to many English-language learners, and having the additional listening and reading material creates a more integrated coursebook. This would be a textbook worth considering for courses where students need to develop academic speaking skills.

The Reviewer

Jacqueline Foster is the interim Faculty Chair and an instructor in the School of International Education in Vancouver Island University. Her research interests are contrastive rhetoric and teacher feedback in second-language writing.

The Hockey Sweater: An Interactive CD-ROM

*Donna Mydlarski, Penthes Verena Rubrecht, Dana M. Paramskas,
André Bougaïeff, and Larry Katz*

Les Éditions 3D, Calgary, AB (www.editions3d.ca/hockey)

Reviewed by: *Roger Kenner*

The Hockey Sweater: An Interactive CD-ROM by Les Éditions 3D provides learners of English at multiple levels with a rich window onto important aspects of the Canadian experience: the national game, growing up in French Canada during the '40s, and in a wider context, French Canadian culture and Canadian history in general. It provides an excellent tool for introducing ESL learners to the Canadian reality and to both sides of Canadian culture, all the while building their listening, reading, and comprehension skills. The material can be revisited time and time again to integrate new and interesting material with already acquired knowledge. Except for some ESL grammar exercises, most of the cultural content and activities could just as easily be used to enrich the experience and knowledge of students in English first-language programs.

Based primarily on Sheldon Cohen's award-winning NFB treatment of Roch Carrier's story of the same name, the CD also introduces original and pseudo-original supporting materials: "The Hockey Song" by well-known Canadian singer Stompin' Tom Connors; interviews with Roch Carrier and Marcil Dargis, the artist for the film, along with a gallery of his work; theme-related essays and biographies; historical realia such as the old-time Eaton's catalogue and hockey cards from then and now, as well as a vast collection of photographs from the era.

The program is suitable for all learners from about 11 years old up. The CD-ROM software can be installed easily on either a Mac or Windows machine. It does not run autonomously, however; the original CD is always required. The installation of the CD-ROM onto a given computer provides an on-line storage place for learners. Learners have a personal notebook where they can take notes throughout their exploration of the materials.

The contents are divided into five parts. Supporting the hockey theme, the core elements of the presentation are broken into three parts: first, second, and third period. The three levels of interaction are labeled Peewee, Junior, and Pro, which correspond more or less to high-beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. The tasks at each level increase not only in

linguistic complexity, but also in scope so that classes that revisit the same CD-ROM in subsequent exposures will continue to find new and interesting material. The structure of the activities, however—introduced at the Peewee level—remains more or less constant, thus making them familiar the second or third time and reducing the learning burden.

Although the menus provide a suggested order of progression, learners are free to move to any level or activity at will. The program begins in the first period, the listening period, with learners being first introduced to the 10-minute film in its entirety. They will immediately notice the marked French-Canadian accent of the narrator, and some may be initially discouraged. Nevertheless, all the words are clearly enunciated, and the passage is perfectly comprehensible. Given a preliminary task that focuses on catching elements of the story from the visuals, learners' confidence will increase and they soon become comfortable with the accent. (A standard English-Canadian accented narration is available later on.)

The story provides accurate personal recollections of growing up in rural French-Canada roughly 60 years ago. The content has not been sanitized as with many canned presentations to satisfy the widest possible range of personal philosophies. Teachers may need to prepare students for some of the real issues introduced such as the two great Canadian solitudes of English and French, the important role of the Church in the everyday life of the times, and crucifixes in virtually every scene.

The remaining first-period activities are more or less the same for all levels: The key scenes of the film are presented separately in short clips of less than a minute. (Some may want to begin with this activity.) Learners then listen to isolated clips and are invited to match these (by dragging the icon) with images representing the film segments. Finally, there are comprehension questions related to the learners' understanding of the film and increasing in complexity at each level.

In the second period, the reading and listening period, learners reexamine more closely the story and its cultural and historical themes. Viewed again segment by segment, the narration is now shown in written form with links for vocabulary items. A *Coach* button allows for audio-narration with standard pronunciation. Auxiliary cultural notes such as an essay on *Hockey Night in Canada* are offered in written form with images. The *Teacher's Guide*, available separately, provides ideas on exploring each topic and Web links for more information.

A rich ensemble of exercises and activities follow the story in the second period. Matching exercises solidify the vocabulary not only of hockey, but also of home, school, and other elements introduced in the story. A set of higher-level comprehension questions at greater complexity with each level targets the setting of the story, its purpose, and the reason why certain actions take place. Passages from the story are presented in an interesting

cloze-type activity that allows learners to blank out words by function such as all verbs or all nouns. Feedback on their written responses is provided through a sophisticated mark-up system: If a student types *wenters* for *winters*, the result would be *w*nters*. Plot Puzzles present segments of the narration as disjointed phrases that learners must drag and drop into the appropriate order.

The third period, the reading and discussion period, takes the learner beyond the film to include elements only touched on in the story: 14 short essays on hockey are presented. Stompin' Tom Connors' well-known song "The Good Old Hockey Game" provides new listening, reading, and grammar material to work with in the same way as the main story. Hockey cards, both vintage and current, provide a wealth of data that can be harnessed for group research, discussion, and writing activities. A short treasure hunt activity called "Who am I?" serves as a simple introduction to get learners to work with the hockey cards. An excerpt from a vintage Eaton's catalogue from the era comes complete with an interactive order form and graded tasks for each level.

The fourth section of the CD-ROM, called *Zone*, allows for more creative use of the material already presented and is designed for cooperative tasks. In the Dream Team activity, learners can assemble their own hockey teams from among those featured on the hockey cards of the third period. This leads into a number of possible writing tasks: explain the reasons behind the player choices, compare two players, or describe why a given player is the star. The Eaton's catalogue is also revisited in the *Zone*, with suggestions in the *Teacher's Guide* for creative activities at each level.

The final section deals with the award-winning film itself and contains interviews with the author and the artist and written biographies of key contributors to the film. Scripts of the interviews are available for study. A collection of art by the artist is presented. All elements come with suggested discussion questions, some only for the Pro level, but most for all levels. Junior examiners of Marcel Dargis' painting *Hockey Bottines*, for example, are invited to discuss what the painting tells them about life in a typical village.

The material contained on this CD-ROM cannot help but leave learners with a wealth of valuable insights into Canadian life and history and set them on the path toward bridging the gap separating our two national solitudes.

The Reviewer

Roger Kenner (Roger@RogerKenner.ca) has been active in computer-assisted language learning since the 1980s. He was affiliated for many years with Concordia University in Montreal, but works privately as a consultant through his company RK-Idées. His current area of expertise is in learning management systems such as Moodle.

Analyzing the Grammar of English (3rd ed.)

Richard V. Teschner and Eston E. Evans

Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007, 232 pages (US \$34.95)

Reviewed by: *Hong Wang*

Some of the criteria I use in deciding whether a textbook is not only useful but also attractive for students to use are: (a) It must provide the information necessary for the student in a readable way. Thus students must be presented with a format that is as uncomplicated and as user-friendly as possible. (b) As much as possible it should be interesting to read. A presentation of facts does not need to be dry or dull, and information presented in an interesting manner is much easier to digest and retain. (c) It must provide a solid information resource without wandering off into esoteric nooks and crannies. Given the rapidly evolving nature of language in general and the English language in particular, it is important to keep an open mind and to bear in mind that even as some rules that were *unbreakable* even 50 years ago have now become rather blurred, so too will some of the rules in force today become obsolete in the future.

I found that *Analyzing the Grammar of English* by Teschner and Evans fulfilled these requirements well. Although not perhaps as in-depth as some other textbooks, I found it straightforward to use and practical in nature. The first of eight chapters covers important parts of speech and introduces cases and morphemes, and most interestingly and usefully, uses colloquial English in some examples with further examples of localized dialects also being used for exercises. This method is employed at several points throughout the book, and I believe it to be useful rather than focusing only on perfectly constructed English. The succeeding chapters cover all the other necessary areas such as verbs/tenses, structures, modals, noun phrases, adjective and relative clauses, adverbs, and compound sentences, and they do so in a logical, well-organized, and concise manner, with obvious care being shown in organization and in building on earlier topics. Each section is comprehensive and includes illustrative figures where they are most useful; also, a new glossary of more than 200 grammatical terms has been added using simple and easy-to-understand language to explain them.

With a focus on skill-building, this edition includes as a key component exercises that test students' knowledge of what has been covered in each chapter. Activities are structured around *Thinking It Through* and *Writing It Out*, with the former testing the understanding of grammar points and the latter exercising acquired skills. Moreover, to help students get started, most exercises are provided with *Examples of How to Proceed*, which make them easy to understand and are intended to lead the student toward imaginative thinking, accomplishing this by using questions that themselves are imagina-

tive and relevant to the everyday world and appear to be the product of a deliberate attempt to avoid dullness.

The book manages to present grammar such that it is as unlikely as possible to make the subject dry, which is an accomplishment when dealing with a subject that I am sure that many of us found in our own educational experiences to be exactly that. The book is designed for users of American English, so some consideration would have to be given to this by teachers working in the rest of the world, but I do not think that this should necessarily rule out its use as an adjunct to curricula that focus on British English.

I would not recommend this text for ESL learners too early in their program of study, as I believe that relatively new ESL students may find it less confusing to focus on the basics rather than being distracted too early by colloquialism. I also believe that this book would be useful for ESL learners who are farther along precisely because it does explore colloquialism to an extent, as it is undeniable that the colloquial constituent is an inescapable fact of using the language.

Overall, I feel that Tescher and Evans have succeeded in their efforts to produce an interesting, readable, and useful addition to the current range of grammar textbooks.

The Reviewer

Hong Wang is an assistant professor in TESL at the Faculty of Education, Mount Saint Vincent University. She has been both a language teacher and a language teacher-educator in Canada, the United States, and China for over 20 years. Her research interests include second-language acquisition, teacher education and professional development, language policies, and curriculum implementation.
