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The Practical Study of Language: Sweet

The Principles of Language Study: H. E. Palmer

Linguistics and Style: Enkvist, Spencer and Gregory

Modern English: Osman

The Tongues of Men and Speech: Firth

The Teaching of English: Smith and Quirk

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS are to be complimented on the publication of the first six titles in their new series of paper-backs, LANGUAGE AND LANGUAGE LEARNING. Only one of these six titles is new, the others being welcome reprints of works that have, of late, been difficult, especially for students, to come by.

One is apt to overlook, in these days of glittering machinery and shiny woodwork, the importance of sound linguistic pedagogy so forcefully yet simply advocated by such giants as Sweet and Palmer. The remarkable thing is that language laboratory techniques and methods were being suggested seventy years ago by Sweet (whom Shaw regarded as "the best of them all at his job") in his *The Practical Study of Language*. One need not go the whole hog with Sweet in his fiat that a knowledge of phonetics is indispensable to the foreign language learner, but the general recommendations and suggestions for successful language learning contained in this book are beyond dispute.

The clarity of style and sweet reasonableness of Harold Palmer's *The Principles of Language Study*, also appearing after many years of inaccessibility, are in strong contrast to the tortuous maze of the two monographs brought together under the title of *Linguistics and Style*. Palmer's work, like that of Sweet, adumbrated much of what is now common teaching practice, and equally demands recognition by all those concerned in applied linguistics, especially in English second-language teaching. Some of Palmer's views on the psychology of language learning may strike one as rather out-of-date, but they do not invalidate the strength and authority of the greater part of the book.

Linguistics and Style is a curious attempt on the part of Nils Enkvist and co-authors Spencer and Gregory to re-establish contact between literary scholars and professional linguists, who find themselves "on different sides of a mountain-like barrier, with philologists struggling for a precarious foothold on one slope or the other". To read Enkvist's contribution to this volume demands a feat of mountaineering—one has to negotiate the gullies and crevices of the numerous footnotes and references, the misty explanations and elaborations of his thesis and the dense undergrowth of the quotations. In fact, when the reader has reached the pinnacle, he might well wonder whether he is any nearer to his objective and whether the climb was really worth it.

Modern English by Osman is unique in this series in that it is a course book, and was designed for Australian immigrants who have an elementary knowledge of English and wish "to improve it with the help of clearly and simply written 'Situational' texts and exercises". The material is imaginatively arranged and organised, with frequent use of substitution tables. The illustrations are strictly functional—a pleasant change from course books that contain drawings that are mere embellishments.

The Tonges of Men and *Speech* are two works by Firth, in the tradition of Sweet and Palmer, which made an important contribution to the development of British linguistic science, just as Bloomfield's work contributed to the development of the American tradition.

The Teaching of English edited by Quirk and Smith is a collection of six papers presented at the Communication Research Centre, University College, London. One has come to regard Quirk, with his *The Use of English*, and to a lesser extent with this volume, as the leader in the "new approach" to the teaching of English as a home language. Any English teacher who is feeling in the groove or in need of refreshment should read this volume, which contains suggestions for a more realistic approach to the teaching of English in the mid-twentieth century. This work should be on the prescribed book list for all training college students.

This reviewer, for one, is looking forward to the appearance of the next volume or volumes in this new series, with the hope that representatives of the non-British tradition, such as Bloomfield, de Saussure and Jespersen, will not be overlooked.

The price of these books puts them within easy reach of the most impecunious student.

[BWR]