

---

 Book Review

## *The English Connection*

 by Mark James
 

---

**THE ENGLISH CONNECTION: A TEXT FOR SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE.** Gail Fingado, Leslie J. Freeman, Mary Reinbold Jerome, and Catherine Vaden Summers. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, Inc., 1981. pp. 475. \$13.95.

First of all it must be said that the material in this text is neatly packaged. The format and cover are appealing. This sounds superfluous, but grammar is not exactly the most stimulating part of one's ESL program either. To recall an old TV advertisement, "every little bit helps!" The four coauthors of *The English Connection* have produced what many teachers have been waiting for for a long time—a grammar book that's not positively boring. In fact this text could prove rather interesting, as grammar books go, if you feel comfortable teaching the grammatical structures of the English language to intermediate students (for whom it was geared) with the aid of test-tube babies, sperm banks, and UFO's.

There are four characters in this book that are used throughout to introduce new structures through dialogues. These four characters provide somewhat of a theme and continuity to each of the chapters. This is one of the text's advantages over

other grammar texts. These four characters meet, interact and mature throughout the twenty-six primary chapters. Following the dialogues, there is a grammar explanation and examples, which are all thematically related to the whole chapter. According to the authors, each chapter has "a specific grammatical and thematic focus," with the chapters being arranged in order of increasing complexity.

In the grammatical explanations, where there is a difference in style or register, the text emphasizes the conversational form. The more formal or written form, however, is also noted and explained. The material is geared for a multi-skill class but could just as easily be used in a grammar or writing class with the modification of a few of the exercises. The breakdown of the table of contents, which cites not only the grammatical focus, but also the theme of the chapter and dialogue situation, is particularly useful. The practice material in each chapter is plentiful and the index is adequate.

It was the authors' hope that this grammar text would "provide the student of English as a second language with fresh and exciting material as well as clear and concise explanations of the language." To this reviewer, it seems that their hope has been realized.