

WORLD ENGLISH: INTRO BY MARTIN MILNER

Milner, M. (2010). *World English: Intro*. Boston, MA: Heinle. List price: \$37.95.

Reviewed by Caroline Vang

World English-Intro is the first book in a series of four and is aimed at low-beginning level students. It is a full-colored textbook whose cover features a picturesque *National Geographic* photograph of a pagoda villa against the backdrop of blue mountains. The subtitle reads: "Real People, Real Places, Real Language." The back cover of the textbook promises that it will "connect English language learners to the world" through "motivating themes and topics." Even before opening the book, one can anticipate being able to learn English from a broader international perspective than your average America-centric ESL textbook.

The table of contents includes a chart that displays goals and summarizes the language features that are covered in each unit: grammar, vocabulary, listening, speaking and pronunciation, and reading and writing. At first glance, the content for the lessons of this textbook is rather standard, catering to pre-academic English learners. It begins with proper American introductions and moves through units on careers, housing, daily routines, directions, and shopping. However, one soon realizes that each unit features a vast array of places from across the globe, gender roles (women as engineers), and local practices in featured international cities and villages.

The CD-ROM is a valuable feature of this textbook. Not only does it contain the *National Geographic* videos, it also provides additional short quizzes and correct answers, which are revealed after the "submit" button is clicked. In addition, the pronunciation practice gives the sound bite for American English pronunciation, as well as a Wimba feature that records and replays the learner's voice for comparison. The level of difficulty and complexity steadily increases for these CD-ROM exercises with each chapter.

The strength of this textbook is that it covers almost every aspect of the English language within the twelve units. The CD-ROM has authentic media that have the potential to increase motivation for reading and writing. The content is diverse in its exercises and it strives to highlight global cultures and people.

However, because the textbook attempts to cover so many aspects of ESL learning, the grammar explanations are sometimes incomplete. For example, in Unit 12, the grammar point is using "do" to produce the simple past tense through negative statements, wh-questions, and yes/no questions. Although it has a section on irregular verbs right beneath these examples, it does not mention how the "do" carries the tense instead of the verb. There is also an exercise in Unit 8 on the usage of the modals "can" and "could." The book does not explain the degree of formality and politeness between "can" and "could." Many of the grammar points are inferred through the examples, and ESL teachers would need to notice these inferences to teach grammar points that are not made explicit.

From its photographs to its language lessons, *World English: Intro* successfully introduces diversity. English is no longer a language that is taught exclusively in American contexts. From the towers of Vanuatu villages to the seaports of Iceland, English is spoken and can be used everywhere. Despite some minor drawbacks, *World English: Intro* places English in authentic contexts with a contemporary twist and practical learning goals.

REVIEWER

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