OF ARMS AND THE MAN:

The relative importance of ARMS - Authentic Resource Materials (i.e., undoctored or "genuine" text) and authentic tasks and activities for the fostering of the necessary communicative skills for ESP "practitioners" - i.e., those involved in ESP teaching, course design and research; discussion of the shifting focus from linguistic to educational responsibility which has been the pattern in the development of ESP didactic theory; the superficiality of an approach which persists in viewing history of ESP as a series of attacks on the inadequacy of previous methodologies; the new technical developments, the explorations of the articulation of discourse, the latest methodological techniques in ESP: what a feast of task-oriented Authentic Resource Materials this book offers the future ESP teacher (or EST - or, indeed LSP teacher, for the book is purposefully rather than narrowly, selectively rather than idiosyncratically, conceived.) ARMS, because the 15 "Episodes" consist of fifteen actual items from the ESP literature - eleven articles, four extracts from text books, linked in a historical perspective, selected, liberally and meaningfully annotated, by John Swales, currently Director of the English Language Institute and Professor of Linguistics at the University of Michigan, formerly of Aston, Birmingham.

Swales allows his chosen texts to speak for themselves in that they are not abridged, paraphrased or otherwise manhandled, but, as he admits on p. 208, "I am conscious of how personal the selection of Episodes has been ...-items which I personally have found, and still find imaginative, significant and exciting." Swales' personal approach to ESP is essentially pragmatic; he owns to an innate distrust of seductive theories that only work out on paper, and these considerations have influenced his selection - and, inevitably, find reflection in his evaluative context-review, the "Setting" which precedes each "Episode" ;in the
lively, often critical, but generally apt footnotes; and in the nature and slant of the "Activities" and "Evaluations", ostensibly open-ended, offered in the third and fourth sections of each "Episode". It is fortunate that Swales is a fair-minded, as well as a widely-read, well-informed, reflective and pragmatic guide: for his presence is pervasive, persuasive, persistent, even where the reader finds himself also in other distinguished company of "Episode" authors such as the "Heavies" (in respect of clout, not ponderousness) Widdowson, Barber, Trimble, Tarone, or of the (once) Young Turks such as Selinker.

The authors, although all English native-speakers, a fact Swales belatedly deplores, produced their contributions against a background of practical work in nine different countries and represent, it is claimed, a wide cross-section of professional activity; the selection suggests that the successful ESP practitioner is not necessarily the academic; the breadth and essential practicalness of this approach is very much Swales' own.

"Episodes" addresses itself first and foremost to teacher trainers and trainees, teachers studying for TEFL examinations, and students of applied linguistics. It aims to provide an initiation into the occasionally baffling world of ESP, fostering the development of the critical faculty, yet retaining and fanning that spark of enthusiastic curiosity (or curious enthusiasm?) which led the student to explore the mysteries of ESP in the first place.

Swales is, obviously, perfectly well aware that other colleagues who have, in his somewhat fanciful phrase, "spent years charting the coastlines of the mysterious and fascinating world of ESP" might have, probably would have, made alternative selections and assessments, and reached other conclusions.

"Only time will tell whether I have persuaded (sic) the ESP profession that their judgments might accord with mine." (p.xiii).

Given the degree of persuasiveness manifested by even, as here, a determinedly and uncharacteristically low-profile Swales, "Episodes" may be predicted to reveal its true colours as an influential milestone in the fullness of time, when the next ESP historian comes to sing of these particular ARMS and this particular Man.

I found the book fascinating. As regards motivation and relevance for ESP trainee teachers, it is hard to envisage ARMS of greater immediate appeal or potential impact.

EPISODES IN ESP is built up as follows:

Contents:

Introduction (Swales)  C. L. Barber, "Some Measurable Characteristics of Modern Scientific Prose"
Episode One 1962  A. J. Herbert, The Structure of Technical English
Episode Two 1965
Episodes 1967-1981

John J. Higgins, "Hard Facts (Notes on Teaching English to Science Students)"

John Swales, Writing Scientific English

J. R. Ewer and E. Hughes-Davies, "Further Notes on Developing an English Programme for Students of Science and Technology"

John E. Lackstrom, Larry Selinker and Louis P. Trimble, "Grammar and Technical English"

J. P. B. Allen and H. G. Widdowson, "Teaching the Communicative Use of English"

Martin Bates and Tony Dudley-Evans, Nucleus General Science

M. K. Phillips and C. C. Shattlesworth, "How to Arm Your Students: A Consideration of Two Approaches to Providing Materials for ESP"

Karl Drobnic, James Herbolich, Paul Fanning and Phil Skeldon, "Teaching and Learning Materials"

James B. Herbolich, "Box Kites"

T. F. Johns and A. Dudley-Evans, "An Experiment in Team-teaching of Overseas Postgraduate Students of Transportation and Plant Biology"

John Moore et al. Reading and Thinking in English - Discourse in Action

Tom Hutchinson and Alan Waters, "ESP at the Crossroads"

Elaine Tarone, Sharon Dwyer, Susan Gillette and Vincent Icke, "On the Use of the Passive in Two Astrophysics Journal Papers"