



## Materials Review

**Eso Es I.** St. Paul, Minnesota: EMC Corporation, 1973. Complete kit consists of eight half-track cassette or open reel tapes. From four to eight episodes per tape, with a comprehension exercise following each episode. No audible cues. Combination of **Textbook** and **Teacher's Guide** provide tape script. Beginning level, high school or college. Price of kit, \$74. Additional student texts, \$3.25 each; additional exercise books, \$2.50 each. Preview privileges (15 day) available.

**Eso Es I** is offered as a complete Spanish language program which can be used at the beginning level in either high school or college. It is structured to be integrated into an existing program as supplementary material or to be used as a complete course within itself. With short episodes based on travel, daily life, sports, literature, newspaper articles, and many other topics, a wide variety of interests may be set.

The technical quality of the recordings is adequate, although there is audible tape hiss at normal volume level. The Spanish is enunciated well, is not too rapid, and there is a pleasant variety of male and female speakers. The language itself is modern, peninsular Spanish, with a considerable amount of colloquial vocabulary.

The authors maintain that there is a gradual increase in the difficulty level of the vocabulary as one progresses through the episodes. No attempt was made by this reviewer to check the lexical progression, but a sample comprised of every tenth double page (beginning with the first double page of text) was transferred to computer cards. Through computer analysis, the following information was obtained:

1. total number of running words in the sample - 2,545
2. total number of different words in the sample - 754
3. alphabetical listing of all words used
4. sorted listing by frequency of all words used
5. percentage-of-use figure for each word
6. average word length in letters - 4.34407 standard deviation 2.39325
7. number of words of one letter, two letters, etc.
8. total number of sentences in the sample - 462
9. average sentence length in words - 5.51082 standard deviation - 4.23075
10. number of sentences of one word, two words, etc.

With this information, the formula developed by Spaulding (Spaulding, Seth. "A Spanish Readability Formula," **Modern Language Journal**, 40: 433-41, December, 1956) was applied to the sample. New word

## Material Review

density, defined below, was computed at .067, or 6.7% of total number of words. (This figure was obtained by dividing the number of words not appearing on Spaulding's list by the total number of words in the sample.) The formula states:

$$\text{Difficulty} = 1.609 (\text{ASL}) + 331.8 (\text{Density}) + 22.0$$

where ASL = Average Sentence Length

Density = Decimal percentage of words outside the 1,500 most frequent as listed by Spaulding.

Substituting the above data in the formula yields:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Difficulty} &= 1.609 (5.511) + 331.8 (.067) + 22.0 \\ &= 8.867 \quad + 22.155 \\ &= 53.02 \quad + 22.0 \end{aligned}$$

The figure 53.02 falls in the Very Easy range (40-60) of the Spaulding interpretation, substantiating the authors' claim that the material is appropriate for the beginning level.

Other observable features of this program include additional or supplementary material for enrichment of the more accelerated students. This material, incorporated in various episodes, is marked with an asterisk (\*) for identification. The written format includes both dialog and prose within the episodes, in addition to other textual materials, with marginal glossing, which treats economic and geographic topics. The illustrations are ample, though in many respects little more than caricature-type drawings. According to the authors, these illustrations are a "valuable and necessary part of language learning, not only to clarify a situation but also to give reinforcement to vocabulary learning, text presentation, and reviewing." (Teacher's Guide, p. 1.) This reviewer feels that while the illustrations might be considered entertaining, and perhaps serve as stimuli for conversation, they by no means clarify or reinforce in and of themselves. Also in the materials one will find an end vocabulary with page reference to the episode in which the word or phrase is introduced. Likewise, a topical summary provides a clear overview of the content of the material, both grammatically and topically.

The program is complemented by an exercise book which contains various types of exercises such as interviews, dialogs, listening comprehension and summary activities, picture description activities, translation, and substitution drills. The exercise book supplements the taped materials sufficiently for *Eso Es I* to be marketed as a comprehensive program in Spanish.

While this reviewer finds little with which to disagree, there remain several points not noted by the authors. First, effective utilization of the program necessitates more than one copy of each cassette, unless the entire class proceeds *en masse* through the materials. Secondly, the textual materials come only in soft cover, a factor often important since many school districts will not approve purchase of such materials. Also,

the exercise books (currently \$2.50 each) are not reusable. This means that implementation of the program calls for a standing budget item from year to year. Again, administrators might not readily agree to such an expenditure. For these seasons, *Eso Es I* might better serve as one element in a broadly based program that strives to accommodate the needs of the individual learner by providing a variety of approaches, all of which lead to mastery of the material presented. In such a program, *Eso Es I* meets a need that has been present for some time, yet prior to these materials has not been fulfilled.

**CALIFORNIA—HERE WE COME**



**1977  
ACTFL/AATG  
Annual Meeting  
and Workshops  
San Francisco**

**Theme: The Language  
Connection—From The  
Classroom To The World**

**Preconference Workshops  
21-23 November 1977**

**Annual Meeting  
24-26 November 1977**

**Hyatt Regency Hotel  
San Francisco**

**ACTFL/AATG Annual Meeting,  
2 Park Avenue, New York 10016**

**for information write**