

# DEVELOPING FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

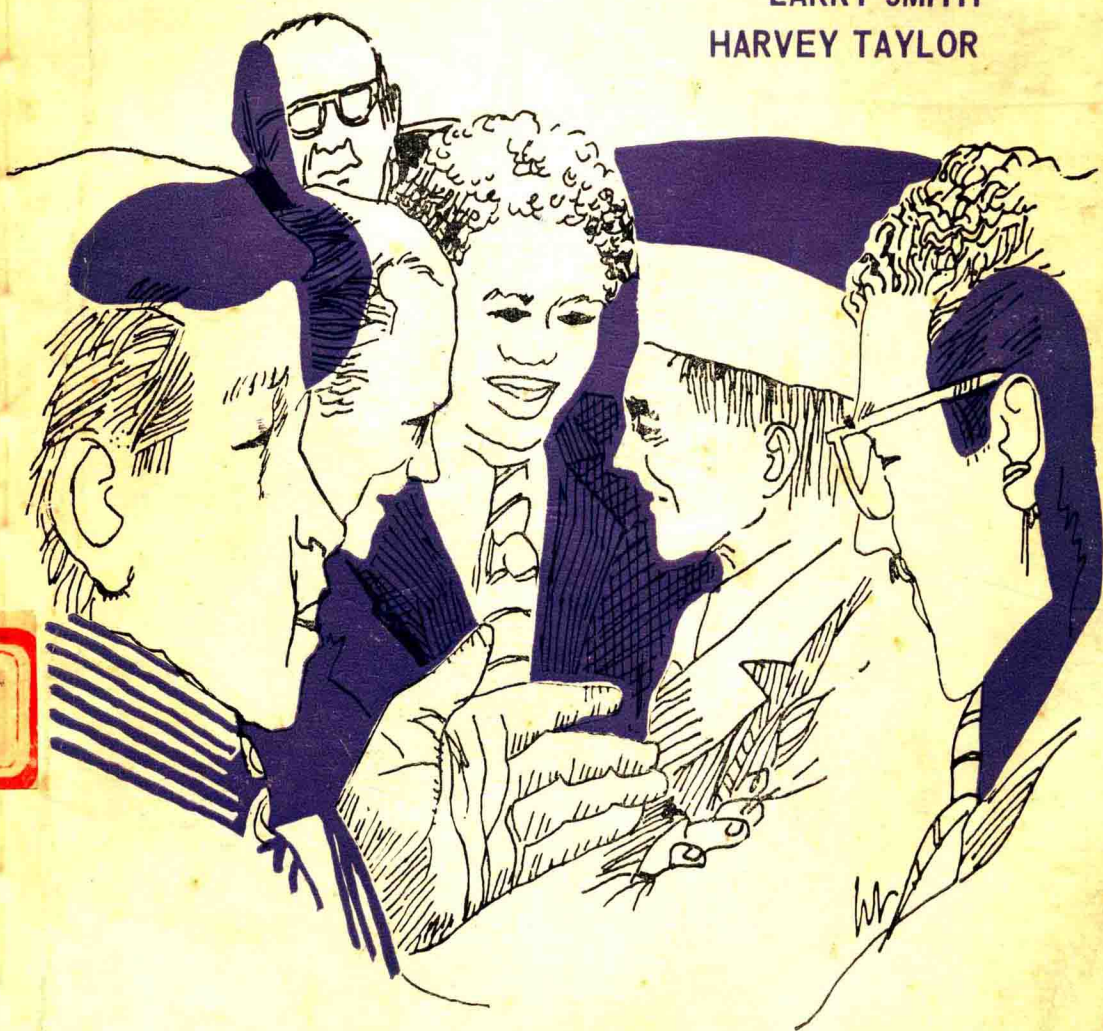
With sentence-combining practice in nominalization

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# DEVELOPING FLUENCY IN ENGLISH

**With Sentence-Combining Practice  
in Nominalization**

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R.C.  
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L.S.  
H.T.

# To the Teacher

This book is designed to help high intermediate and advanced students of English as a second language improve their fluency in English through two avenues: (1) practice in listening and speaking, in informal situations, where emphasis is on *what* is said, and (2) exercises incorporating systematic presentation of one aspect of English sentence embedding, that is, nominalization—exercises which are intended to help the students internalize some of the system of English syntax.

Thus, the first avenue is practice in performance, in actually using English. The second avenue is development of competence in English nominalizing processes. And although the performance emphasized in this book is speaking and listening, competence in nominalization underlies reading and writing as well. So the knowledge that the student gains, both intuitively and explicitly, about the nominalizing process in English through doing these exercises should provide him with a resource for developing fluency in either the oral or written mode. By *fluency* is meant the ability to understand and produce sentences—either spoken or written—which contain embedded sentences; it is the ability to compress a number of ideas into a single sentence and to understand sentences which contain ideas so compressed.

The main features of this book are as follows:

1. The text is divided into two parts: Part I "Performing in English," and Part II "Sentence Study: Developing Competence."
2. Practice in *using* the language is kept separate from *study about* the language, on the assumption that the relationship between the two is indirect. Experimental evidence supporting this assumption can be found in John C. Mellon, *Transformational Sentence Combining, A Method of Enhancing the Development of Syntactic Fluency*, Final Report, Cooperative Research Project No. 5-8418, Office of English Education and Laboratory for Research in Instruction, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967. This study was published by the National Council of Teachers of English at Champaign, Illinois, in 1968. The subjects of Mellon's study were native-speaking seventh-graders, not second-language learners, and they were children whose native

language was still in the process of development, not people who already had mature knowledge of their own language. However, field-testing of *Developing Fluency in English* has indicated that with adult second-language learners, study about the nominalizing processes in English does in fact correlate with an increased comprehension and use of nominalizations.

3. Each of the nine lessons of Part I is built around a set of texts on a topic chosen because it stimulates talk among the students. The nine topics are Proverbs, Folk Medicine, Nonverbal Communication, Intelligence, Propaganda, Words in Context, Forms of Address, The Environment and the Automobile, and Food for Thought (i.e., food fads).
4. Each lesson has a set of four texts:
  - (1) Reading text—either an original or an adaptation
  - (2) Listening text—the information in the reading text presented in oral style
  - (3) Summary—brief presentation of the main ideas of the listening text to be used as a preview at the start of each lesson to provide a mental “set”
  - (4) Discussion text—an unrehearsed, unedited discussion by native speakers related to the topic of the lesson.

Texts (2), (3), and (4) are on tape, and a transcription of each tape is provided in the lessons. There is no grammatical structuring of the language of these texts, though the language of the listening texts is in general structurally simpler than that of the reading texts. The aim is for the students to use the ideas in the texts as a take-off for speaking activities, not to understand in detail everything that is in them.

5. Each lesson provides suggestions for several speaking activities that will engage the students in real communication with each other, on the assumption that students learn a second language more effectively through their attempts at real communication than through drills which simulate communication.
6. Each lesson has vocabulary exercises built around words occurring in the texts, showing their meanings in the texts and also in other contexts.
7. The purpose of the sentence study exercises (Part II) is to give students insight into ways that sentences are embedded in other sentences, especially through nominalization transforms. The grammatical material in these exercises is based on the analysis of nominals by Zeno Vendler in *Adjectives and Nominalizations* (Papers on Formal Linguistics, No. 5, The Hague, Mouton, 1968) and by Paul Kiparsky and Carol Kiparsky in “Fact,” in *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, Danny Steinberg and Leon Jakobovits, eds. (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1971). There are, however, many theoretical problems in the analysis of

nominals, and so these sources have been used in a pragmatic way and certain adaptations have been made to meet pedagogical needs.

8. The vocabulary and sentence study exercises are designed for self-study and self-checking and have built-in allowances for students of varying abilities.
9. The vocabulary and sentence study exercises are designed to encourage the student to think about the *meanings* of the sentences as he works with them.
10. The lessons can be taken up in any order. No lesson is dependent on any other lesson.
11. The teaching time for each lesson is about 5 hours, but the materials provided are ample for up to 10 hours of work, depending upon both the number of speaking activities used and the amount of class time spent in discussing the homework. In the beginning, the average student will probably need to spend two hours on the homework for each lesson. Later on students will be able to do the work faster.

Each of the nine lessons in Part I has six parts: Preview, Reading Text, Listening Text, Discussion Text, Speaking Activities, and Vocabulary Study. The Sentence Study (Part II of the text) may be studied along with the lessons after each lesson is completed. Answers to the Vocabulary Study and Sentence Study are provided for the student following each set of exercises.

Each of these parts is described below, with suggested procedures for teaching:

## Preview

*What it is.* The preview consists of (1) a listing of key vocabulary items, (2) a transcription of the taped summary, and (3) questions on the taped summary of the listening text.

*Aim.* The aim is to provide the student with a mental "set," that is, an expectation about what he is going to learn in the listening (and reading) texts, to help him in comprehending them. The assumption is that if the student has some idea of what the content of the text is going to be he can make educated guesses about what the texts say even when he does not pick up all the language signals. Even a native speaker can have trouble comprehending parts of what he hears or reads unless he has some general idea of what it is all about. In fact, experiments have shown that people sometimes hear what they are told they will hear, even though what they in fact listen to says something quite different from what they have been told to expect. It does not seem reasonable to demand of nonnative speakers



what one does not demand of native speakers; hence the provision for establishing "set" through the discussion of key vocabulary items and the taped (or read) summary.

*Suggested procedures.* First discuss the vocabulary items listed at the beginning of the preview. Talk about the meanings of these items within the context of the lesson. Then go over the questions that the student will be asked to answer after he has listened to or read the summary. Finally present the summary. This can be done in different ways: play the taped summary either before or after the students have seen the summary in print or have the students read the summary either silently or orally. The length of time spent on going over the questions will depend on the teacher's assessment of how much background information the students need before proceeding to the listening text.

### Reading Text

*What it is.* The reading text is sometimes an excerpt from a longer work, sometimes a complete article, and in one case a summary of a longer work. Footnotes indicate the source of each reading text. The reading texts were chosen primarily on the basis of their content—they are the source of the content of all the activities and exercises. They vary in reading difficulty.

*Aim.* A reading text is included in each lesson to make the original source of the listening text available to teachers and students for optional reading. The texts also provide examples of unsimplified English and a source for contrasting written and spoken English, since the listening text is an oral version of the reading text.

*Suggested procedures.* Reading the reading text is not essential to any lesson. The teacher, at his discretion, might assign some of the texts for homework. It is recommended that if a reading text is assigned as homework, no class time be taken for discussion of it. The students should read it on their own for the gist of what it says—for whatever they can get out of it—without worrying about details. Some of the vocabulary study exercises make use of parts of the reading texts, but the student, in these exercises, has only to work with the words and expressions in the context of individual sentences. So, in these exercises, he will be dealing with only parts of the reading text.

### Listening Text

*What it is.* The listening text is a restatement of the main ideas of the reading text by a native speaker. The native speaker has, in each case, thought in advance about what he is going to say. Hence, the language is



premeditated rather than spontaneous. However, the vocabulary and sentence structure are characteristic of spoken, rather than written English. The language is something like the language of a lecture or talk which has been thought out in advance and then presented orally with or without notes.

*Aim.* The purpose of the listening text is to provide listening comprehension practice on a topic that the students have had some acquaintance with (through the preview) and to provide subject matter for the speaking activities and for the sentences in the sentence study exercises.

*Suggested procedures.* The listening text may be presented and discussed in class with or without the accompanying tape (see suggested procedures on page 2). The teacher can have the students listen to the text as many times as seems helpful. After the initial presentation and discussion, the teacher may want to play the tape or present the text himself orally on subsequent days, to provide additional listening practice.

### Discussion Text

*What it is.* The discussion text is an unrehearsed, unpremeditated conversation between native speakers on some aspect of the subject matter of the listening text. It is taped, and a transcription is provided in each lesson.

*Aim.* One aim is to provide practice in listening to spontaneous native-speaker English. Spontaneous speech contains hesitations, false starts, interruptions of one speaker by another, and grammatical tangles. Yet, native speakers understand each other's language (though, of course, they may not always understand each other's ideas). Another aim is to provide practice in obtaining nonlinguistic information about people from the way they talk to each other, that is, information about such things as the age and education, the relationship, and the personalities of the speakers.

*Suggested procedures.* Go over any study helps that are given in the notes preceding the text in each lesson. Also go over the questions about the speakers that the students will be asked to respond to on the basis of cues in the conversation. Then play the tape several times, allowing the students to follow the transcription with their eyes, if this helps them to understand. Then discuss the questions, and, if the students are interested, have them continue the discussion that they have just heard on tape.

### Speaking Activities

*What they are.* In each lesson there are from four to six speaking activities listed. These are open-ended discussion questions on topics related

to the topic of the listening text. The students can discuss most of the questions on the basis of their own experience.

*Aim.* The aim is to give the students an opportunity to communicate with each other in realistic communication situations with primary attention to *what* is said rather than *how* it is said.

*Suggested procedures.* It is recommended that normally three or four class periods be spent on the speaking activities of each lesson. Teachers and students should not feel under any compulsion to do all the speaking activities. Rather, they should pursue the ones that they are most interested in. It may be that, in some cases, if the subject of a lesson is of particular interest, the class might want to spend extra days talking about it. The teacher might want to show a movie related to the subject or bring in related reading materials. The handling of the speaking activities should be flexible, the main guideline being that the students should carry the burden of the talk, with the teacher in the role of resource person and moderator. Various types of class organization can be used: pairs of students working together and then making presentations to the whole class; small group discussions going on simultaneously; panel discussions; debates. The teacher can exercise his ingenuity in creating situations which require students to speak to and understand each other. The teacher can stand ready to "put words in a student's mouth" when the opportunity arises to do so. In this way, the student will hear a model of English at the time he feels a need for it. But under no circumstances should discussion of grammar and pronunciation interfere with the communication going on. The students should concern themselves with what they want to say, and not be inhibited by concern for correctness in how they are saying it. If a class is working on writing as well as speaking, some of the speaking activities can be used as writing activities, again with the emphasis on what is said—on communicating ideas.

Nine topics are presented in this text, but the number of possible topics is unlimited. Timely articles on pollution, drug abuse, population, and so forth, could easily be discussed using the same format.

### Vocabulary Exercises

*What they are.* Each lesson has some vocabulary exercises over items which occur in the listening and/or reading texts.

*Aim.* These exercises give the student further exposure to words and expressions found in the listening and reading texts. They give practice in using those items both in the meaning they have in the texts and in the meanings they may have in other contexts. A special effort has been made to deal with the form and distribution of the vocabulary items as well as with their lexical meanings.

*Suggested procedures.* It is recommended that the students do these exercises on their own as homework. Answers are provided for self-checking. Each time a new lesson is begun, the teacher can assign the students to start working on the vocabulary (and sentence study) exercises and can set a completion date.

## Sentence Study (Part II)

*What they are.* These exercises give practice in nominalization; that is, they give practice in taking one sentence, changing it into a clause or into a gerund or infinitive phrase, and inserting it into another sentence. The subject matter of the sentences is related to the topic of the lesson (this is the only connection between the sentence study exercises and the reading and listening texts), and each sentence has an exercise which checks the ability of the student to comprehend the meaning of sentences of the type studied.

*Aim.* The aim is to help the student develop competence in the nominalizing processes of English. It is expected that by doing these exercises, the student's competence will develop to the point that he will be better able to comprehend and produce English sentences which contain nominalizations. No attempt is made to relate the work in the sentence study exercises with the communication that goes on in connection with the speaking activities, since language is stimulus-free, and it is therefore not possible to force production of particular types of sentences in a real communication situation. Any effect that the sentence study exercises may have on the student's performance will be indirect.

*Suggested procedures.* The student should do these exercises and check them on his own outside class—the answers are provided for him following each set of exercises. As with the vocabulary exercises, it is suggested that the teacher, when he begins each new lesson, assign the sentence study exercises to be done as homework, to be completed by the time the lesson as a whole is completed. It is recommended that at the completion of each lesson, the teacher devote some class time to going over any questions that the students may have about any of the sentence study exercises. It is also recommended that at the completion of each lesson the teacher give a quiz over the sentence study exercises, consisting of (1) dictation of some of the sentences from the exercises, with the teacher dictating each sentence only once, and (2) portions (or wholes) of the Summary Exercise and the What about Meaning Exercise simply copied out and duplicated for the students to do without reference to their books.

The aim of *Developing Fluency in English* is to give the nonnative English speaker practice in expressing his ideas in English in informal communication situations. The teacher should feel free to organize the material, supplement it or replace it in any way that will best accomplish that aim.

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I. Turning sentences into subjects by using *that*, *ing*, and *for-to*

- II. Starting sentences with *it*
- III. Turning sentences into objects by using *that* and *ing*
- IV. Turning sentences into objects by using *that* and/or *ing*
- V. Summary
- VI. What about meaning?

## Sentence Study 2: Folk Medicine

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Turning sentences into complements: *to*, passives, and split sentences

- I. Turning sentences to complements by using *to* (*urge him to go*, etc.) and the passive paraphrase. Verbs: *urge, ask, order, advise, permit, encourage, persuade, allow, compel, force, help*
- II. Turning sentences into complements by using *to* (*want (him) to go*, etc.) and the split sentence paraphrase. Verbs: *want, prefer, like, wish*
- III. *From + ing* after *prevent, stop, keep* (*prevent him from ---ing*, etc.)
- IV. Summary
- V. What about meaning?

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Turning sentences into complements: (*for*) *to* and *that*

- I. Turning sentences into complements by using (*for*) *to—prefer to do, prefer (for) him to do*, etc. Verbs: *prefer, like, want, wish, plan, hope, expect*
- II. Turning sentences into complements by using *to* and sometimes *that—He expected to go; He expected that he would go*, etc. Verbs: *prefer, like, want, wish, plan, hope, expect, promise, decide, resolve, remember, forget*
- III. Summary
- IV. What about meaning?

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Turning sentences into subjects and objects: *that* and *whether or not*

- I. Turning sentences into objects by using *that* and *whether or not*
- II. Saying the same thing with a *that*-expression and an *ing*-expression
- III. Changing sentences with *that*-expression objects into

passives. Changing passives into sentences beginning with *it*

IV. Changing sentences with *that*-expression subjects into sentences beginning with *it*

V. Summary

VI. What about meaning?

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II. Comparing completed actions signalled by the plain verb

III. Using plain verbs after *make* and *let*

IV. Using *ing*-expressions after *by*, *in*, and *at*

V. Summary

VI. What about meaning?

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I. Turning sentences into complements of adjectives; other ways of saying the same thing. Adjectives: *good*(of), *stupid*(of), *thoughtful*(of), etc.; *good*(for), *hard*(for), *difficult*(for), etc.

II. *It is possible* (*for-to*) compared with *it is possible* (*that*)

III. Turning sentences into complements of nouns; other ways of saying the same thing

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II. Turning sentences into complements by using *that* and *to* and the split sentence paraphrase—after *forget*, *remember*, *remind* (*someone*) *about*

III. Using *that*, *ing*, and *to* expressions

IV. Summary

V. What about meaning?

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- II. Reduced WH clauses: *who(m) to see*, *what to do*, *when to go*, etc.
- III. Turning yes-no questions into objects and subjects by using *whether or not*
- IV. The split sentence paraphrase of WH and *whether or not* clauses
- V. Summary
- VI. What about meaning?

## Outline of English Nominalizations 189



## Part I

# PERFORMING IN ENGLISH

I am not a good mimic and I have worked now in many different cultures. I am a very poor speaker of any language, but I always know whose pig is dead, and, when I work in a native society, I know what people are talking about and I treat it seriously and I respect them, and this in itself establishes a great deal more rapport, very often, than the correct accent. I have worked with other field workers who were far, far better linguists than I, and the natives kept on saying they couldn't speak the language, although they said I could! Now, if you had a recording it would be proof positive I couldn't, but nobody knew it! You see, we don't need to teach people to speak like natives, you need to make the other people believe they can, so they can talk to them, and then they learn.

Margaret Mead, from the Discussion Session on Language

Teaching in *Approaches to Semiotics*, ed.

by Thomas A. Sebeok, Alfred S. Hayes, and

Mary Catherine Bateson (The Hague: Mouton  
& Co., 1964), p. 189.

## Organization of the Lessons and Directions

Each of the nine lessons in Part I has five parts: (1) Preview; (2) Reading Text; (3) Listening Text; (4) Discussion; (5) Speaking Activities; and (6) Vocabulary Study. For each lesson there is a tape recording of a summary of the Listening Text (a transcript of the recording is provided in the Preview), the Listening Text itself, and the Discussion.

First, do the *Preview*, following the directions provided. The purpose of the Preview is to introduce you to the main ideas of the Reading and Listening Texts. Doing the Preview will give you a "mental set" which will help you "tune in" to the ideas of the Reading and Listening Texts.

After you do the Preview, your teacher will ask you to do one or more of the following activities one or more times.

1. Read the *Reading Text*.
2. Listen to the *Listening Text* while looking at it.
3. Listen to the *Listening Text* without looking at it.

The purpose of these activities is to give you practice in reading and listening and to give you information about the topic of the lesson.

Next, listen to the *Discussion* and answer the questions which accompany it. The Discussion in each lesson is carried out by native speakers and is recorded and transcribed exactly as it was spoken. Each Discussion is an example of "real" use of language, with false starts, hesitations, and mixed-up syntax.

Then, turn to the *Speaking Activities*. These are suggestions for things to talk about. You don't need to do all of the Speaking Activities. Select the ones that interest you most. Try to talk and get across your ideas without worrying too much about the correctness of your grammar. And don't worry if the talk strays to other topics. The aim here is for you to communicate your ideas to others and to understand the ideas that they are communicating to you.

Finally, do the *Vocabulary Study*. You can do it by yourself or in a small group. The answers are provided, and so you can correct your work yourself.

When you finish a lesson in Part I, turn to the corresponding Sentence Study Lesson in Part II and do it.

The lessons in Part I may be taken up in any order.