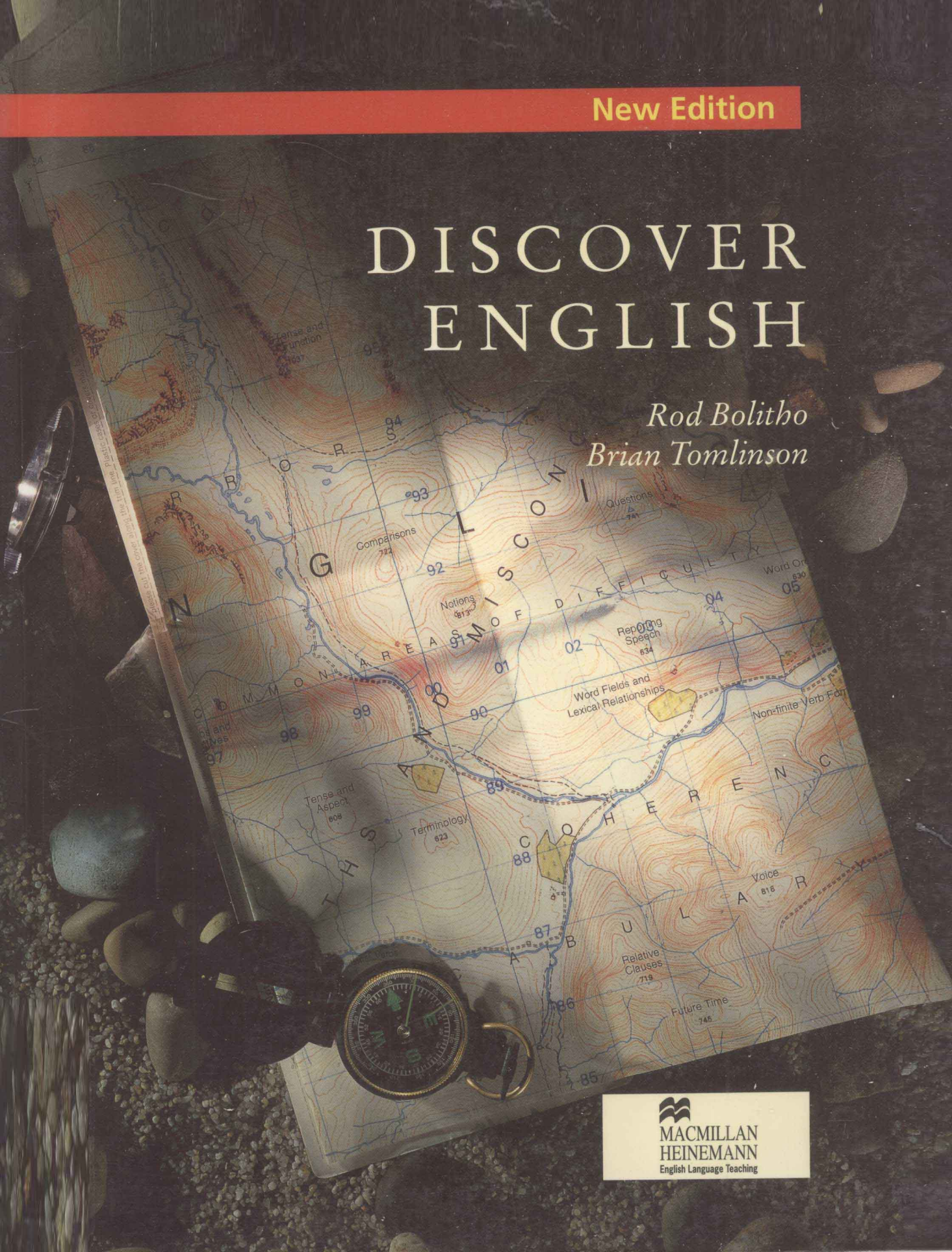


New Edition

DISCOVER ENGLISH

Rod Bolitho
Brian Tomlinson




MACMILLAN
HEINEMANN
English Language Teaching

Discover English

A language awareness workbook

New edition

Rod Bolitho
Brian Tomlinson

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Introduction

The purpose and scope of the book

THIS BOOK consists of a collection of exercises written for pre-service and in-service courses for teachers of English. The purpose of the exercises is to sensitize teachers to the language they are teaching, whether they are native speakers taking their first analytical look at their own language, or non-native speakers seeking to clarify areas of uncertainty. In our experience, teachers all too often master classroom techniques, only to fall down on their ability to help students to learn language in a clearly thought-out way. This is why many of the exercise sequences end with an examination of the implications for the teaching of insights about language.

Many of the exercises have also been used successfully with advanced students who enjoy, and benefit from, *talking about* English, though it is neither a language practice book in the conventional sense, nor an attempt at systematic coverage of all points of difficulty in the language. The intention is to highlight and explore selected areas of the grammatical and lexical systems and learning priorities. The phonological system is not treated systematically but users of the book will certainly see ways in which segmental and supra-segmental features can be dealt with through an awareness-raising approach.

There is no particular significance about the order in which the exercises are presented and they do not constitute a graded course. However, Unit 1 provides an obvious 'way in' to language awareness work, and exercises within each section sometimes depend on, and refer to, each other.

Language awareness

We have found, consistently, that traditional, analytical approaches to language work on teachers' courses often intimidate participants, and leave them without a clear view of the pedagogic implications of the conclusions they are led to. Teachers of English need to develop their own understanding of the language, and to feel confident when assessing textbooks, planning lessons and dealing with learners' questions.

Language awareness work seeks to bring to the surface and challenge myths, preconceived ideas and intuitions about language, pulling together the descriptions of linguistics, the needs of teachers and the insights of every language user. In this sense, language awareness uses methodologies which draw on other awareness-raising traditions to empower language teachers to take a more active and conscious part in decisions which are crucial to their lives as professionals and to develop in them a healthy spirit of enquiry which will support their classroom work throughout their careers. Once they have discovered and acknowledged the diversity and complexity of language, teachers will be able to share this with their learners and help them to face the challenge of thinking about language and progressing to be increasingly self-reliant. In the classroom the only views of language that really matter are the ones that teachers and learners have built up in their own heads.

To the teacher trainer

This book is intended as a training resource to be 'dipped into' and used selectively (through the index and contents pages) rather than as a course to be followed sequentially. Our training experience has shown that the exercises work well when used interactively in group discussion with follow-up feedback sessions. Since many of the exercises challenge conventional views of language, trainers should be prepared for resistance and for a variety of views to be shared and aired. Given the open-ended nature of awareness work, the commentaries are offered as an aid, rather than as 'right answers'. We have not set out to be prescriptive in these commentaries, and recognize fully that there may be other, equally valid, versions of many of them. For this reason, occasionally a commentary is *not* offered.

We hope that many of the exercise types used in this book will serve as prototypes for trainers to produce their own exercises on other language problems.

To the teacher, trainee or advanced student using the book independently

Exercises may be selected according to needs, by reference to the index. Answers can be jotted down and then checked against the commentaries. We hope that this procedure will give rise to further thought as well as to discussion and debate with colleagues and fellow students. The commentaries are intended to provide informed views to compare with those of the independent user, but not to be final or authoritative. Conclusions are offered with teaching implications constantly in mind, and generalizations are made in order to aid effective teaching rather than to establish a set of abstract rules.

(In both exercises and commentaries **X** indicates that the following utterance is incorrect.)

References

We found these books useful in writing and revising the material and suggest that those asterisked may prove useful to advanced learners and to trainees preparing to teach English for the first time.

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Teachers' resource books which make use of language awareness techniques:

Frank, C. and Rinvoluceri, M. 1991 *Grammar in Action Again!*, 2nd rev. edition (Prentice Hall)

Morgan, J. and Rinvoluceri, M. 1986 *Vocabulary* (Oxford University Press)

Language practice books for learners which make use of language awareness techniques:

Bowers, R.G. *et al.* 1986 *Talking about Grammar* (Longman)

Hall, N. and Shepherd, J. 1991 *The Anti-grammar Grammar Book* (Longman)

Woods, E. and MacLeod, N. 1990 *Using English Grammar* (Prentice Hall)

Note on the second edition

Views of language have developed significantly since *Discover English* was first published in 1980. Descriptions have focused increasingly on meanings above sentence level, and on the primacy of communication. In this new edition, we have taken account of these developments but at the same time have sought to keep teachers' needs uppermost in our minds. Feedback on the first edition continues to confirm our belief that teachers' first experience of discovery tasks is best focused at sentence level and that *Discover English* has been meeting a need in this direction. We hope that users of the new edition will recognize the familiar tradition as well as welcoming the new features which we have incorporated.

Rod Bolitho and Brian Tomlinson

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↗ Exercises

Unit 1 Myths and misconceptions

1 The English language

- A Comment on the opening statement in the light of the extracts 1–3 that follow.

I want my students to speak only the best English so I encourage them to read only the classics of English literature.

1
I've tried a long time, and 't'nt got better. But thou'st right; 't might mak fok talk even of thee.

2
The robbery at the bank had not languished before, and did not cease to occupy a front place in the attention of the Principal of the establishment now.

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

3
If a Struldbrugg happens to marry one of his own kind, the marriage is dissolved of course by the courtesy of the kingdom as soon as the younger of the two comes to be fourscore.

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

- B Comment on these statements:

- 1 I'm an Englishman and I'm proud of our great and ancient language. We must fight against these modern colloquialisms and the corruption of our language by vulgar Americanisms. Let's keep our language pure.
- 2 The use of *hopefully* except with the meaning *in a hopeful way* is unacceptable. So also is the use of *due to* in such public announcements as *Play stopped due to rain* and *Trains delayed, due to ice on the rails*. The phrase should be used only when preceded by a noun or noun plus linking verb, as in *The stoppage was due to rain*.
- 3 *Some* is only used in positive statements whereas *any* is used in negative statements and questions.
- 4 A verb is a doing word.
- 5 The subject of a sentence is the person or thing that does the action.
- 6 The past tenses always refer to the past, eg *He was going to the match*.
- 7 Countable nouns refer to things which you can count (eg *chairs, books, apples*) whereas uncountable nouns refer to things which you cannot count (eg *rice, soap, money*).
- 8 *will* is never used in clauses which begin with *when, after, before* or *as soon as*.
- 9 People who speak such varieties of English as Nigerian English, Jamaican English and Malaysian English should be taught to use Standard English at all times.

- 10 *Kid* is not an acceptable substitute for *child* just as *fag* and *kip* are not acceptable substitutes for *cigarette* and *sleep*.
- 11 I believe in plain English. A house is always a house and never a dwelling. A sentence is always a sentence and never a speech act.
- 12 I can understand my teacher very easily but when I talk English to people in the street they speak too quickly.
- 13 I've been teaching English for thirty years and I know what I'm doing. I teach only what has been judged by time and literature to be correct.
- 14 Only speakers of educated, standard southern English should teach English to foreigners. People who speak a dialect teach incorrect English.
- 15 A good English speaker never uses slang so I never allow my students to use English slang.

2 Learning English

- A** Comment on the statement in the light of the evidence (1–5).

English is a stupid language. It is illogical and irregular and it follows no rules.

- 1 swimming/dining/sinned/lined/hated/baited/getting/greeting
- 2 It's hot, isn't it?/She's fat, isn't she?/You didn't come, did you?/I've won, haven't I?/She'll come, won't she?/He wasn't happy, was he?/The bus is late, isn't it?/Mary had finished, hadn't she?
- 3 He bought it./She grew it./He brought it./I showed them./He wanted it./I cleaned it./I blamed them./He cheated them./I went there./He sold it.
- 4 Have you got any money?/Have you got some money?/Give me some books./Give me any books./We haven't got any more./We haven't got some more.
- 5 Well, they're very different, aren't they ... you know ... one's a sort of personal view and one is statistics ... it's interesting ... the one about the girl whose cousin 'had to get married' in 1960 and the difference when she ... 25 years later had a baby without being married ... I mean ... I think there's been a terrific shift in attitudes in that time ... I don't know if it's true of everywhere in the country ... I think if we live in the South East ... there's a ... a sort of ... belief that people are changing everywhere.*

- B** Comment on the statement in the light of the evidence (1–3).

Learning a language is a question of imitating correct forms.

- 1 *Teacher:* We're having a test today.
Pupil: Please sir, can I be excused? I'm having a bad headache.
- 2 *Teacher:* Have you ever been to Manchester?
Pupil: Yes, I've been there last week.
- 3 *Teacher:* When will you do it?
Pupil: I will do it when I will get home tonight.

* Extract from Hopwood, T. and Rushton, R. 1990 *Heinemann Integrated Skills Advanced* (Unit 9, p 86.)

C What contradictions are involved in these statements?

- 1 I will always insist that the pupils who I teach will follow the rules of the language so that they will learn to always speak correctly. I make sure that they always use 'shall' with 'I', that they always use 'whom' when the accusative form is required, that they never split an infinitive and that they never use a preposition to end a sentence with.
- 2 As I inculcated my amanuensis the sole bona fide mode of indoctrinating a language is to imbibe ten exotic words before retiring to somnambulance each evening. If you do not employ exotic words people deem you to be inerudite in the language.

D Comment on the following statements.

- 1 You don't need a teacher to learn a foreign language. All you need is a grammar book and a dictionary.
- 2 You don't need a teacher to learn a foreign language. All you need is to read books written in the language and to listen to native speakers speaking it.
- 3 Constant repetition of correct forms is the key to learning a foreign language because it enables the learner to develop correct habits.
- 4 If you learn the grammar of English you will be able to speak the language well.
- 5 If you learn the grammar well you will automatically transfer listening and reading skills from your first language.
- 6 Listening skills and reading skills are very similar so if you teach learners reading skills they will be able to use them as listening skills too.
- 7 It's important to insist that learners of a language speak with the same correctness as we'd expect when they're writing.
- 8 As the grammar of good spoken English and of good written English are the same you can help learners to improve their spoken English by giving them lots of written grammar practice.
- 9 The teacher should always correct pronunciation errors or else the students will develop bad pronunciation.
- 10 I don't think he's a good teacher. Every time I walk past his classroom the students seem to be sitting in groups making a noise.

3 Terminology

In this book an attempt has been made to minimize the use of linguistic terminology. However, sometimes terms are used which may be useful and which are commonly used in books on language. As a preparation for meeting these terms, do the following exercises and then check the commentary before going on to Unit 2.

It might be a good idea to come back and do the relevant exercises in this section again if when you meet any of these terms you do not understand them. It might also be useful to revise the whole section when you have completed all the units in the book.

A Look at the examples of the use of grammatical terms below and then complete the statements about them.

1 **Form v function**

Examples

The verb in the sentence is in a continuous **form**.

The plural **form** of *knife* is *knives*.

Must never changes its **form**.

One of the **functions** of the present perfect tense is to indicate that an action or event in the past is relevant in the present.

The **function** of *I'm not absolutely sure about that* can be to express polite disagreement.

One of the **functions** of *will* is to promise something.

Statements

The form of a word or structure is the parti..... w..... in which it is repre..... in wri..... or spe..... .

The functions of a word or structure in an utterance are the rol... it pl..... in the utterance, the purp..... it is used to exp..... .

A word or structure can be in a particular even when it is in isolation but it can only have a if it is used in an utterance. For example, *was going* is in the past continuous, but it does not have a unless we use it in an utterance (eg *I was going to Rome but now I've decided to go to Paris instead*).

2 **Time reference v tense**

Examples

In the utterance *I have been to Rome*, *have been* is in the present perfect **tense** but it has past **time reference**.

A verb in the present continuous **tense** can have future **time reference** (eg *She is going to Rio for her holiday*).

Statement

The tense of a verb is the fo..... in which it is wri..... or spo..... whereas the time reference is the per..... of ti..... (ie pa....., pre....., or fut.....) which the verb refers to in the utte..... .

3 **Full v contracted**

Example

In some types of writing you should always use the **full** forms of verbs but in other types you should use **contracted** forms. You should not use **contracted** forms of verbs in an academic essay but you should use them in a letter to a good friend.

Statement

The form is *I have* and the form is *I've*.

4 **Formal v informal**

Examples

I am afraid that I must express some reservations is a very **formal** way of expressing disagreement whereas *you must be joking* is an **informal** way of expressing a similar function.

Full forms of verbs should be used in **formal** writing (eg academic essays, scientific reports, job applications) but contracted forms can be used in **informal** writing (eg letters to friends, notes, invitations to friends).

Statement

..... language is used in situations which are off..... or se..... or which involve communication with supe..... or stra..... whereas language is used in situations which are rel..... or cas..... or which involve communication between people who kn..... each other we.....

5 Acceptable v unacceptable

Examples

Gonna might not be strictly correct but it is certainly **acceptable** in such utterances between good friends as *I'm gonna see him tomorrow*. However most people would find it **unacceptable** in an official speech.

The American spelling of *color* is now **acceptable** to most English people.

Statement

A form of a word or structure which is not normally considered to be cor..... can be acc..... in certain situ..... or to certain peo.....

6 Context v cotext

Examples

The meaning of a word depends on its **context**. For example, *He hasn't started yet* can have many different interpretations depending on the topic and the setting of the conversation and the relationship between the speakers. It could, for example, mean: *Until now he has always started a match as a substitute player, He is still practising, He will do a lot better than this soon, or The lecture has not begun.*

To understand a word you also need to relate it to its **cotext**. You can appreciate the different meanings of *bed* in the following examples even if you do not know anything about the **contexts** in which they were used.

I'm tired. I'm going to bed.

Put the seeds in that bed over there.

Statement

The of a word or utterance consists of the which come be..... and af..... it, whereas the consists of the s..... in which it is used.

B Match the definitions 1–8 to the linguistic terms in **bold** type in (a)–(h).

- 1 It refers to the actual expressions used to communicate particular functions or notions.
- 2 A concept or area of meaning.
- 3 An utterance or series of related utterances used to achieve a specific intended outcome.
- 4 A word or group of words used with specific meaning in a particular context.
- 5 It refers to the ability of one expression to replace another without any loss of meaning or grammaticality.
- 6 Communication between people involving the use of language.
- 7 Relating to the expression of meaning.
- 8 The actual object, idea, emotion, etc referred to by a lexical item.

- (a) It is important that students take part in **interaction** in the language they are learning.
- (b) *How about*, *Would you like to*, *We'd be happy if* and *Why don't you* can all be **exponents** of the function of invitation.
- (c) When Sheila says, 'I'm going. I can't put up with his bad temper any more' *put up with* is an expression consisting of three words but it is only one **lexical item**.
- (d) A notional approach concentrates on teaching learners how to express different aspects of the main concepts represented by the language, such as the **notions** of time, duration, space and quantity.
- (e) *Reach* and *arrive* are very similar in meaning but they are not completely **interchangeable**.
- (f) Her three confident answers to his questions were all part of a **speech act** aiming to persuade him to loan her the money.
- (g) It is important that students can give a **semantic** interpretation of the utterance and not just be able to analyse it grammatically.
- (h) You can show students the **referent** of *table*, *window* or *chair* but it is more difficult to teach them the referents of *respect* or *duty*.

Unit 2 Common areas of difficulty

1 Basic grammatical terms

- A** Classify these words into nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions or prepositions. (If you already know the basic word classes, as found in most dictionaries, leave out the exercise.)

1 window	9 strongly	17 because
2 happiness	10 grin	18 gargoyle
3 meander	11 him	19 ennui
4 blue	12 iridescent	20 malinger
5 if	13 avoid	21 although
6 under	14 comatose	22 by
7 our	15 courageously	23 aberration
8 be	16 cogitate	24 they

- B** 1 Divide this list of nouns into three categories, giving a heading to each.
elephant hope September delay Diana humour car marmalade
radio Poland truth telegraph pole mirror oak excitement

- 2 Divide this list of nouns into two groups, giving a heading to each.
raisin cake carton shop nut milk rice spaghetti sugar
money boot pot butter pound teaspoon water

- C** Divide the verbs in these utterances into two categories, stating reasons for your allocation.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 You've finished your tea. | 6 I'm repairing the car. |
| 2 They are eating cake. | 7 Cortez conquered Mexico. |
| 3 They are eating at home. | 8 Many leading politicians have died violently. |
| 4 She wants to watch TV. | 9 I can't think clearly! |
| 5 I'm going to bed. | 10 I hate this exercise! |

- D** 1 Identify the **direct objects** in this passage.

I was hungry after walking a long way and looked round for a restaurant. It took me quite a while to find the only one in town and fortunately it was open. I asked the waitress a few questions about the menu. She gave me some rather hazy replies and so I decided to order something safe – a vegetable casserole. She brought me a beef casserole instead, much to my annoyance. I don't normally eat red meat and so I asked her to take it back.

She came back full of apologies and offered me a cheese salad as there was no vegetable casserole left. An elderly lady at the next table had just demolished the last portion! I was so hungry that I accepted the cheese salad but it wasn't very appetizing. Contrary to my usual custom I didn't leave this waitress a tip!

- 2 Identify the verbs with two objects.
3 Give some more examples of such verbs and explain why not all verbs can have two objects.

E Why are these utterances wrong?

- 1 ✗ He got up early because his work.
- 2 ✗ He gave she a present.
- 3 ✗ They ate a quickly breakfast before going out.
- 4 ✗ During they were eating, the doorbell rang.
- 5 ✗ 'There's something blocking the road.' 'OK, we'll avoid.'
- 6 ✗ He learns very slow.
- 7 ✗ They gives her a lot of help.
- 8 ✗ I want to listen the news at 9 o'clock.

F Why do these nonsense sentences **sound** acceptable?

- 1 He crattled his splot and scrot out a neelying groal.
- 2 They strentered folicky until a magan veened to famble them.

G Look these words up in a dictionary. How does the dictionary deal with them?

sits	was	swore	swam
women	loaves	sung	loafs
spoken	bought	cats	fishes
talked	driven	drew	burnt

H 1 In the following extract, find examples of:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| (a) a ditransitive verb (a verb with two objects) | (e) a proper noun |
| (b) an abstract noun | (f) an intransitive verb |
| (c) an uncountable noun | (g) a conjunction |
| (d) an irregular verb form (past simple or past participle) | (h) an adverb |

If children come to feel that the universe does not make sense, it may be because the language we use to talk about it does not seem to make sense, or at least because there are contradictions between the universe as we experience it and as we talk about it.

One of the main things we try to do in schools is to give children a tool – language – with which to learn, think, and talk about the world they live in. Or rather, we try to help them refine the tool they already have. We act as if we thought this tool of language were perfect, and children had only to learn to use it correctly, ie as we do. In fact, it is in many ways a most imperfect tool. If we were more aware of its imperfections, of the many ways in which it does not fit the universe it attempts to describe, of the paradoxes and contradictions built into it, then we could warn the children, help them see where words and experience did not fit together, and perhaps show them ways of using language that would to some extent rise above its limitations.

Look at adjectives – some are, so to speak, absolute: round, blue, green, square. But many others are relative: long, short; thin, thick; heavy, light; high, low; near, far; easy, hard; loud, soft; hot, cold. None of these have any absolute meaning. Long and short only mean longer and shorter than something else. But we use these words as if they were absolutes. In fact, there must be many times when a child hears a particular thing called long one day and short the next, or hot one day and cold the next. We use words as if they were fixed in meaning, but we keep changing the meanings. The soup that has become cold is still too hot

for the baby. The short pencil today is the long pencil tomorrow. The big kitty's name is Midnight; but don't be rough with him, he's too little. Horses are big animals; see the little horsie (three times the size of the child). How big you've grown; you can't have that, you're too little. Children adjust to this kind of confusion; but is it an intellectually healthy and useful adjustment, or just a kind of production strategy? Would it be useful to talk to first-graders about why we call a certain mountain small and a certain kitten big? Or is this easy stuff for them?

The conventional teaching of grammar adds to the confusion. We talk about, and use, nouns and adjectives as if they were very different, but in fact they are often much alike. A green ball, a green top, a green bicycle, and a green stuffed animal are alike in that they are green (adjective) and that they are toys (noun). When we call them green we mean they are members of a class that have in common the colour green. When we call them toys we mean that they are members of a class that have in common the fact that children play with them. Why should a child be expected to feel that there is something very different about these classes? Why is the green-ness of a ball different from the ball-ness of a ball? I don't feel the difference. They are both ways of saying something about the object. We tell children that the distinction between one part of speech and another is a matter of meaning, when it really has to do with the way we fit them into sentences.

John Holt (1969), *How Children Fail* (Pelican)

- 2 Discuss this 'child's eye' depiction of the illogicalities of grammatical categories and meanings. Do you think that young children will find terms like *conjunction* and *preposition* easier or more difficult to understand than *adjective* and *noun*? How can a teacher help a young child to overcome these difficulties? Do you think a teacher of English as a second or foreign language is likely to face similar difficulties with her learners? Give reasons for your answer.

2 Forms and functions

What do the utterances in each of these groups have in common? What distinguishes the sentences within each group from each other? (If necessary, check in the commentary after doing exercise A to see whether you are on the right track.)

- A
 - 1 Willy smokes.
 - 2 Fred's a slow worker.
 - 3 Aggie used to drink.
 - 4 Joe's in the habit of talking in his sleep.
 - 5 He's always making that mistake.
- B
 - 1 Pollution is getting worse.
 - 2 It's raining.
 - 3 I'm going out tonight.
 - 4 He's always dropping ash on the carpet.
- C
 - 1 Simmer for 15 minutes over a low heat.
 - 2 Come again soon.
 - 3 Halt!
 - 4 Give us this day our daily bread.

- 5 Don't mention it.
- 6 When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

- D**
- 1 See you!
 - 2 The Queen is due to arrive at 4 pm.
 - 3 He's about to arrive.
 - 4 The train leaves at 3 pm.
 - 5 Willy's going to be an engine driver.
 - 6 He's taking his finals in June.
 - 7 I'll be 64 next birthday.
- E**
- 1 If I were you, I'd stay.
 - 2 It's time you went home.
 - 3 Wish you were here!
 - 4 If only he had worked harder!
 - 5 Suppose someone had seen us.
- F**
- 1 I doubt if he'll come.
 - 2 It might rain.
 - 3 There's a 50–50 chance of play today.
 - 4 He's bound to turn up.
 - 5 She's likely to pass her test.

3 Tense and time

- A** 1 These statements were all made by the same person. Put them into chronological order as far as you can.
- (a) We're going to live in Liverpool.
 - (b) After we've lived in Liverpool for a few years, we'll move back to Wigan.
 - (c) We live in Wigan.
 - (d) We lived in Bradford for 5 years.
 - (e) We were going to move to London in 1983 but my job there fell through.
 - (f) By the time we move to Liverpool, we'll have spent 3 years in Wigan.
 - (g) We lived in Manchester for a while before we moved to Bradford.

How were you able to do this? What were the essential clues?

- 2 This diagram represents time in a schematic way. Assuming that the speaker is at point 1 (the present), allocate each of the seven statements (a)–(g) to a number on the diagram.

