

Over to you

Teacher's Book

Roy Boardman



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Oral/aural skills
for advanced students of English

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Introduction

Over to you aims to help foreign learners who have reached an advanced stage to become active participants in conversation and discussion in English. It assumes that the student has reached a level roughly equivalent to the Cambridge First Certificate Examination and that he has quite a sound knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, but that he needs guidance and practice in interacting with other speakers. The materials, the methodological considerations which determine their content and order, and the theory of language-learning which underlies them, are all directed towards this end. More specifically, the book is designed to increase *fluency* rather than *accuracy*, *appropriateness* of utterance to context rather than absolute *correctness* of grammatical forms.

Students for whom the material is suitable

The book will help the large number of students of English who have difficulties of the following kinds.

- a) They have difficulty in understanding English spoken at normal speed, and therefore in participating in conversation, because they are not aware of *speech features* which either contribute to meaning, obscure meaning, interfere with the smooth stream of speech, or which, for the English native speaker, constitute a means of interacting effectively with other speakers. Some examples of such features which are included in this book are: incomplete sentences, hesitation, special stress, fillers, deviations from 'standard English', neologisms, elision and assimilation.
- b) Although the students may have a good knowledge of the grammatical forms of English, and the ability to apply this knowledge to conventional textbook exercises and various test and examination situations, nevertheless they often have difficulty in using this knowledge successfully in real life. Sentence, intonation and stress patterns have to be reorganised in order to satisfy communicative aims; everything that is produced in a language has a specific function to fulfil and

students of the type described find it difficult to use a wide range of *communicative functions* appropriately.

- c) They have difficulty in interpreting and using the subtleties of stress and intonation patterns, and with the attitudinal tones, all of which enable a speaker to convey a personal dimension of meaning. This is largely because such features are closely related to that communicative value of utterances which is given by proper use of the functions mentioned above.
- d) They will either have reached a plateau and seem not to be making any further progress in spite of exposure to advanced-level texts, or they are rapidly building up receptive vocabulary and reading skills in English on a wide range of topics, but excluding productive skills from their abilities. If oral/aural skills are to be developed, the students must work with materials which provide a new oral/aural challenge.

The student's and teacher's materials

The Student's Book consists of twenty units, each based on a topic providing the general subject content of the unit: Coincidences, Surprises, Work, Television, and so on. Each topic runs throughout the unit, providing the lexical and conceptual area on which all the student activities are based. The recorded dialogues illustrate *speech features* which cause particular listening difficulties. They also contextualise *language functions* which students then practise by working through a series of 'communication drills' and role-playing exercises. Finally, the students are encouraged to talk more freely, firstly with the help of a topic-linked photograph, then by discussing personal experiences and reactions to other people's opinions and attitudes.

This sequence of activities is divided up as follows:

- Stage 1: Listening
- Stage 2: Comprehension A: Speech feature
Comprehension B: Content
- Stage 3: Communication drill
- Stage 4: Role-playing
- Stage 5: Talk

Stage 1: Listening

The recorded dialogues simulate authentic speech and aim at enabling the student to follow real-life English conversation by making him aware of the obstacles in his path. The majority are

much longer than conventional 'presentation' dialogues due to their multi-purpose nature: to introduce the unit topic, illustrate speech features, and contextualise communicative functions.

The teacher's notes give detailed guidance on the handling of each listening text, as both a global and an intensive listening exercise. All units include a preliminary stage during which the teacher encourages students to talk about the topic and relate it to personal experience. This serves as a means of eliciting and presenting vocabulary and concepts which will be of help to the students in following the listening text with understanding. The pre-unit drawings and facsimiles are a means of provoking the talk, and of guiding it so that relevant language is brought into focus. In some units, this visual material is also used at a later stage: in Unit 1, for example, to assist students during the global listening and as a guide in re-telling a story; in Units 8 and 15, as a set of cues for the communication drill and role-playing stages.

Listening procedures

Guidance is given in each unit of the Teacher's Book on the listening procedures to adopt. Various techniques are included depending on the character of the listening text and the degree of difficulty that students will have in coming to grips with it. The techniques are often exemplified by teacher-student dialogues which indicate the general pattern of classroom interaction. Such dialogues are headed *Teacher-student interaction model* and are, of course, meant only as a guide: in practice, they will differ considerably from class to class, teacher to teacher. Here is an example from Unit 1, in which students are required to match written sentences with their spoken equivalent.

Teacher-student interaction model

- Teacher: Look at sentence (a).
(Pause for students to read the sentence: 'Jimmy wonders whether Mike managed to get home the night before because they were both rather drunk when Mike left.')
Now tell me to stop the tape when you hear Jimmy say that.
(Plays the tape)
- Student A: (On hearing 'Did you get home all right last night? We had a few.')
Stop. That's it.
- Teacher: Right. (To student B) What were the exact words?
- Student B: 'Did you get home all right last night? We had a few.'

Teacher: That's right. Will you say that, C.
Student C: 'Did you get home all right last night? We had a few.'
Teacher: Now look at sentence (b).

Stage 2: Comprehension A

This draws the students' attention to speech features which cause particular listening difficulties. Most of the utterances illustrating a speech feature are exploded on the tape for students to listen to in isolation, but occasionally they are not exploded as an understanding of the feature is dependent on contextual considerations. When it is considered useful to include preceding or following utterances, they are present in the exploded version and the centrally relevant utterance is printed in bold type in the Student's Book. As these features are intended only for receptive knowledge, students are not often required to repeat or practise them in any way.

The materials call for a gradual development of student awareness of the characteristics of English speech: from noting differences between written and spoken English in Unit 1, to the relatively sophisticated stage of recognising a wide variety of speech features in Unit 19. Unit 20 goes a step further: students are invited to use their awareness of speech features to describe individual speech styles reflecting the characters of the speakers.

Comprehension B

This is concerned with the students' understanding and retention of the content of the listening texts. At times the teacher is advised to deal with this *before* Comprehension A, whenever the students need guidance in a general understanding of the dialogue before they tackle the speech feature. Exercise types are varied: question and answer, multiple choice, true--false statements, requests for explanations, invitations to give an opinion on certain points, are some of the forms they take. In the last two units, students themselves are asked to prepare the questions for comprehension of content and to ask them of each other.

All the answers are given in the Teacher's Book. When the answer is a matter of opinion, this is stated.

Stage 3: Communication drill

The *language function* which is contextualised by the listening text is made part of the student's productive ability at this stage:

that is, in Unit 2, for example, they learn to express surprise; in Unit 6, to give and react to advice; in Unit 16, to express prohibition.

Each drill consists of three phases. At *Phase 1*, students listen to an exploded version of the utterances in the listening text which are *exponents* of the function to be practised; they note any special features of intonation, stress, and rhythm, and repeat them.

At *Phase 2*, students work in pairs or small groups in order to practise *using* the exponents they have listened to and repeated. They are encouraged to experiment a great deal, to achieve the greatest degree of appropriacy within their capabilities (which at times means finding and using an exponent that was not heard or repeated at Phase 1), and to think about and *around* the mini communication situations they are involved in. Here are some examples of Phase 2 exercises.

Unit 1: Students are required to make the distinction between WH-questions with rising intonation (function: requesting repetition of information) and WH-questions with falling intonation (function: requesting further information). Working in pairs, students are asked to read the first two sentences of a mini-dialogue based on information given in the listening text, and to provide the third utterance. It is having to provide the third utterance that makes the exercise meaningful.

Student A (Constable): I'm a constable in the Metropolitan Police.

Student B (Questioner): *What* did you say your job was?†

Student A (Constable):
(Possible response, given in the Teacher's Book: 'I'm a policeman.')

Student B (Constable): I was stationed in the suburbs.

Student A (Questioner): Where *was* it exactly?‡

Student B (Constable):
(Possible response, given in the Teacher's Book: 'That's of no importance.')

The student has no information on which to base this response and is required to invent.)

Unit 4: Students are required to practise a variety of exponents of the function 'expressing opinions'. The phrases (I think that, In my opinion/view, etc) are given, but one student in each pair has to **express** real opinions. Notice how student A and student B are required to alternate, a pattern which is maintained throughout the materials.

A: What's your opinion of legalised drug-taking?

B: I think that

B: What do you feel about the need for students of English to spend a period of time in Britain?

A: Well my opinion is that

Phase 3 usually represents a further relaxing of control over the student (less guidance is given) and a more challenging exercise. Also, the student interaction pattern is often changed. Here are the Phase 3 instructions in Units 1 and 4.

Unit 1

Work in groups of four or five, each with a group leader.

Group leader: Play the part of the policeman and tell (not read!) the story of the coincidence.

Others: Interrupt the policeman's account with WH-questions of the two types practised.

Unit 4

Work in groups.

All the following statements of opinion are from the conversations between James, Margaret, Mark and Deirdre. Keeping in mind all that you have practised in 4.3 Phase 1 and Phase 2, imagine you are taking part in the conversation and follow each statement with expressions of your own opinions.

The form of the communication drill exercises is dictated by the nature of the language function to be practised and for this reason you will find a wide range of exercise types, some of which are quite new in language-learning materials. They aim at encouraging students to *approximate to native-speaker fluency and appropriateness* by giving practice in the *negotiation of meaning*. In this sense, they facilitate transfer from classroom English to real-life communication.

For each of Phases 2 and 3, the student-student interaction pattern is indicated in the Teacher's Book. For example: *Student-student interaction: pairwork, or Student-student interaction: groups of four.*

Whenever possible, the Teacher's Book gives possible or suggested student responses. These are a guide for the teacher and should be given to students only after an exercise that they have found particularly demanding.

Selection of exponents of language functions

The exponents of a language function are basically of two kinds: exponents *with explicit indicators* and exponents *without*

explicit indicators. For example, some of the exponents of the function 'giving advice' in Unit 6 are:

I do advise you to make a real effort.

I'd advise you to eat rather less.

I really do recommend that you eat less.

Try to be in less of a hurry.

The first three of these exponents use the explicit indicators 'I do advise you' / 'I'd advise you' / 'I really do recommend', whereas the fourth has no explicit indicator in any lexical form. 'Try to be in less of a hurry', in a *different context*, might be interpreted as an order, in yet another, as a request; it is the situation, the role of the speaker (doctor) and his relationship to the addressee (doctor to patient) that make it an expression of advice. The principles of selecting exponents of language functions for teaching materials, and their interpretation by foreign-language learners, are further complicated by the fact that even an utterance with an explicit indicator apparently denoting its classification as an exponent of a particular function can easily take on quite a different function. The utterance 'I suggest you hurry up', apparently a suggestion, is more likely to function as a command or a threat. It is for these reasons that full contextualisation of language functions is so important.

Stage 4: Role-playing

The book contains a wide range of role-play types. Their purpose is to provide a freer context for practice in using the functions, and to activate knowledge of vocabulary and concepts acquired. The role-plays of Units 1 and 2 are more highly controlled than others as they serve as an introduction to this type of activity: others are very free indeed.

An ideal sequence for role-play activities is as follows.

- 1 Linguistic and information input. In *Over to you* this input is given by stages 1–3.
- 2 Divide the class into groups as indicated by the instructions in the Student's Book.
- 3 Allot roles.
- 4 If necessary, allow students to discuss their roles with each other and with you.
- 5 Role-play. The teacher moves from group to group encouraging, making suggestions, and especially taking note of language problems.
- 6 Adjustment. The teacher comments on the students' perform-

ance, invites them to comment, and gives extra practice where necessary. It is useful, when circumstances allow, to record the performance of selected groups on tape. The recording can then be played back and used as a basis for comment at the adjustment stage.

- 7 Follow-up. It is sometimes useful to get students to repeat part of the role-play. However, stage 5 of the materials provides follow-up in terms of transfer to a more natural communication situation: students say what they wish rather than what is required of them by the structure of the role-play and the communication drills.

Stage 5: Talk

This is divided into:

- a) a photograph and caption related to the unit topic to stimulate discussion;
- b) an aspect of the unit topic for discussion, often presented in the form of a short reading passage.

This stage has two main aims:

- 1 to encourage students to relate the unit topic to personal experience and so to share information and ideas on a personal level;
- 2 to provide opportunities for 'free' use of language so that the students themselves decide *what* to say, *when* and *how* they wish. The teacher should not look for the occurrence of any particular use of language beyond the lexis and concepts related to the topic. He should as far as possible take a back seat, or become simply a member of the group. It is a good idea to get students to study the photograph and especially the reading passage (or other stimulus) in their own time, so that classroom time is not taken up unduly by presentation.

Teaching sequence

The parts of each unit, from *Listening* through to *Talk*, represent a *teaching sequence* with a gradual lessening of teacher control. The sequence can be summarised as follows.

	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Materials</i>
1	Pre-listening communication: teacher—student interaction	Teacher's notes

	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Materials</i>
2	Listening: linguistic and information input	Listening/ Comprehension A and B
3	Controlled communication: student-student interaction. Approximations to appropriacy/negotiation of meaning	Communication drill
4	Simulated communication: student-student interaction	Role-playing
5	Free discussion	Talk (a) and (b)

Each sequence provides enough material for three to four and a half hours' teaching; the sequences should be worked through in the order in which they are presented. This is because:

- The first units introduce language-learning activities that students may not be familiar with in a more controlled, simpler form than later units.
- The success of the final units (especially 19 and 20) depends on the thoroughness with which the first eighteen units have been worked through.
- The language functions on which so much of the material is based are to a certain extent *ordered*. For example, the functions introduced in Unit 1 are fundamental to a great many communication situations. Also, the functions are *cumulative* and *combined* in the activities, so that successful completion of the role-play of Unit 2, for example, requires use of the Unit 1 function (requesting information) as well as that of Unit 2 (expressing surprise).
- The units assume an ever-increasing awareness of the characteristics of language in use, both for receptive and for productive purposes.

Background reading for the teacher

Finally, the teacher who wishes to go further into the theory of language learning and methodological principles which underlie these materials will find the following books informative and stimulating.

- Brown, Gillian, *Listening to Spoken English* (Longman 1977)
 Byrne, Donn, *Teaching Oral English* (Longman 1976)
 Crystal, David and Davy, *Advanced Conversational English*
 (Longman 1976)

- Dakin, Julian, *The Language Laboratory and Language Learning*
(Longman 1973)
- Widdowson, H.G., *Teaching Language for Communication*
(Oxford University Press 1978)
- Wilkins, D.A., *Notional Syllabuses* (Oxford University Press
1976)
- Wilkins, D.A., *Second-Language Learning and Teaching* (Arnold
1974)

1 Coincidences

1.1 Listening

- a) Books shut. Write the theme, 'Coincidences', on the blackboard. Ask the students to think of an example of a coincidence they have experienced or heard about. One example is enough to get them thinking about the theme; they will be asked to pool experiences at the end of this unit. Then tell them that they are going to hear a telephone conversation during which a coincidence is recounted.

Are the students used to hearing English spoken on the telephone? Get them to tell you about any difficulties they have had in understanding people on the phone, in their own language as well as in English. Why exactly is the 'telephone voice' a problem?

- b) Books shut. Play the first three exchanges of the dialogue (up to Jimmy: 'We had a few') and establish the identities of the speakers — Jimmy and Mike.
- c) Books open at the drawings on page 4. Play the recording through for *global listening* with the students following the drawings which tell the anecdote recounted by Mike. Note that students are given more help with this first listening text than with any other in the book. However, they should mask the dialogue and look only at the drawings.
- d) Without going into detail, ask students to tell you what the conversation was about.

1.2 Comprehension A: Differences between spoken and written English

The exercise should be seen as a general introduction to *speech features*. The specific purpose of Comprehension A in this unit is to increase the students' awareness of differences between spoken and written English, as well as to familiarise them with *intensive listening* procedures.

Books open at page 5, Comprehension A. Tell the students to look at one sentence at a time and ask you to stop the tape when they hear its spoken equivalent, as follows.

Teacher—student interaction model

- Teacher: Look at sentence (a).
(Pause for students to read the sentence.)
Now tell me to stop the tape when you hear Jimmy say that.
(Plays the tape)
- Student A: (On hearing 'Did you get home all right last night? We had a few.')
Stop. That's it.
- Teacher: Right. (To Student B) What were the exact words?
- Student B: 'Did you get home all right last night? We had a few.'
- Teacher: That's right. Will you say that, C.
- Student C: 'Did you get home all right last night? We had a few.'
- Teacher: Now look at sentence (b).

Notice that it is important to get students to try to repeat the exact words they hear. If students fail to match written with spoken sentences, rewind the tape and ask them to listen again. It will sometimes be necessary to give explanations, in which case the sentences should be written on the blackboard. For example, the idiom 'We had a few' is almost certain to cause difficulty and should be dealt with in this way. However, in most cases the written sentences themselves provide sufficient explanation. When students repeat sentences from the dialogue, do not be satisfied with the correct words only — insist on acceptable stress, rhythm and intonation.

Answers

- a) Did you get home all right last night? We had a few.
- b) I cut it out when . . . when I read it . . . but can't find the cutting. Anyway . . . I remember it perfectly.
- c) Can you give me the date . . . of the paper I mean?
- d) Wait a bit . . . while I get paper and pencil.
- e) Fire away.
- f) Try to get all the details right . . . They're important.
- g) . . . a Constable in the Metropolitan Police if I remember rightly.
- h) Wait a tick. Did you say the Metropolitan Police?
- i) I didn't. I remember only that it was in the suburbs.
- j) What was the correct number did you say?
- k) Something like . . . er . . . 40116.
- l) I've got that.
- m) Open?

- n) Huh-huh?
- o) Wait for it.
- p) ... the Constable's friend ... the one he met ... asked to speak to *him*.
- q) And the number was er ... What was it? ... 401 ...
- r) That's incredible Mike.
- s) When are you coming over for another session? You and Kathy free tonight?
- t) That's fine for us.
- u) Let's say round about eight then.
- v) All the best.

Comprehension B

The exercise ensures that students understand the factual content of the conversation. Retention of the content is essential for satisfactory completion of the communication drill which follows. Play the tape again and get students to tick the best completion of each sentence as they listen. Allow two minutes for checking after playing the tape, then discuss their answers.

Answers

- a) 2. b) 2. c) 1. d) 3. e) 1 or 2. f) 1. g) 3. h) 1.
i) 2. j) 1.

1.3 Communication drill: Requests for further information and for repetition of information

These two functions are of fundamental importance to the successful completion of many of the oral exercises in this and later units.

Phase 1

Note that the difference between the two functions is expressed in an intonation/stress contrast characteristic of WH-questions. The basic exponents which occur in the dialogue, and which students are required to listen to in this phase, are:

What was the correct number did you say?

What was the *wrong* number he gave?