

MORE VARIETIES OF SPOKEN ENGLISH

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Acknowledgement

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Introduction

As in the case of *Varieties of Spoken English* (Dickinson and Mackin, 1969) the aim of the present course is to give the student the opportunity of studying the spoken language as it is used naturally by fluent adult speakers, including one or two non-native speakers who have achieved near-perfection. The full range of contributors is possibly wider than that of the first course. Accents that will be heard are Scottish, Australian, South African, American, Nigerian and English, but have the unity that arises from the cultural background that the speakers have in common. The voices used in the drills, that is, those which are to be taken as models by the learner are, however, English and their accent is that which is generally referred to as 'RP' (Received Pronunciation).

The twelve units that compose the course are closely related in subject-matter to the contents of *A Higher Course of English Study, Book 2* (Mackin and Carver, 1971). In some cases the conversation, lecture or talk on the tape (or cassette) is a discussion or commentary on the corresponding passage in the book. Thus in chapter four of *A Higher Course of English Study, Book 2* there are two passages on the problems posed by high taxation; and the discussion in Unit 4 of *this* course is based on a reading of them, and the speakers refer to them frequently. In chapter 2 of the book the passages deal with the growth of the world's population and the problems that exist and lie ahead in producing enough food for so many people. Unit 2 of this course does not refer to these passages, but pointedly deals with the problems that arise from over-eating. The two sides of the coin are obviously complementary, and should give the student plenty to think and talk about. It will be seen therefore that *More Varieties of Spoken English* is best used, in an integrated manner, with *A Higher Course of English Study, Book 2*. It can, nevertheless, be used independently if necessary, though less effectively.

It will be seen from the title of the spoken 'texts' in the list of contents that, apart perhaps from the two discussions on literary subjects, the topics covered are of interest if not concern to every educated person. But what is more important than the topics themselves is *the way in which educated people talk about matters of general interest*. The topics are really *vehicles for the teaching (or learning) of educated discourse*. For this reason they are presented on the tapes (and in the transcripts in the Key) exactly as they were recorded, except occasionally where a

reduction in their length was necessary. So what the learner is dealing with here is the comprehension of the language as it really *is* spoken, with hesitations, confusions in structure, slips of the tongue, interruptions and so on.

The authors are greatly indebted to all those who kindly gave of their time and knowledge to make the original recordings. They are too numerous to list here, but they are named in the introductory comment to each unit. We must also gratefully acknowledge the expert assistance of Mr Philip King for his meticulous improvements to our notes on the texts and for a large number of the drills included at the end of each unit.

Suggestions for Use

1. *More Varieties of Spoken English* (MVSE) can be used either in a language laboratory or in the classroom with a tape-recorder. When it is taught in the laboratory, the teacher should if possible pre-record the 'texts' (i.e. the discussion or talk) and the Intensive Listening exercises.
2. The relevant passage or passages in *A Higher Course of English Study, Book 2* (HCES 2) should, if they are available, be read or listened to, and discussed before the students begin the corresponding unit in MVSE.
[Note: All the texts in HCES are available on tape from Oxford University Press.]
3. Students should then listen to the text of the MVSE unit, and answer the Intensive Listening questions as instructed in the book. They should be allowed to work at their own speed.
4. This should be followed by a classroom discussion of the Intensive Listening questions. Wrong answers should be considered and discussed.
5. The Extensive Listening questions can be answered in the laboratory during a normal lesson. If, however, facilities exist for the learners to take home the recorded text *only*, then the questions can be answered as homework. While it will be necessary for most users to answer the questions in writing, this does give rise to some stylistic problems; and if arrangements can be made for them to record their spoken replies on tape the teacher will have the opportunity of correcting a freely arrived-at response, as opposed to one which is interrupted before it is complete. Thus one of the great dilemmas of all conversation lessons will be overcome: whether to interrupt and correct, or allow the student to continue trying to communicate despite errors. If the student's answers are recorded, the teacher can correct errors of pronunciation, syntax and vocabulary without interrupting his flow.
6. The point of the drills should be explained before they are tried by the students. There is not the same need to pre-record these as there is for the earlier sections.

7. When the unit has been completed it should be followed by a classroom discussion on the same or a similar topic. Students should be encouraged to use vocabulary and expressions, where appropriate, that they have learned during the course of the lessons. The classroom discussion can be free, or in the form of a debate, or a short prepared or unprepared talk by individual students, etc.
8. If the course is taught in the classroom with a single tape-recorder, the teacher should ask the students to answer the questions in writing. Then one student can be asked to read his answer, which can be discussed by the class before the correct answer is heard.
9. As in all similar courses, the students should be required to *ask* questions as well as to answer them.

1 The Price of the Space Race

The exploration of space is still a controversial subject. Listen to a discussion of the problem by John Webb, who is English, and Deryck Thomas, who is Australian.

Do not attempt to answer any of the questions printed below yet. Just listen.

Comprehension

Exercise 1: *Intensive Listening*

The discussion is repeated on your tape. However this time there will be pauses in the discussion during which you should stop the tape and try to answer the questions printed below. If you are in a language laboratory, you should record your answer. You can then compare your answer with the correct answer on your tape.

- 1 Complete: 'and seventy per cent of them.'
- 2 'something laid on' here means:
 - A something faked.
 - B something organized.
 - C something provided.
- 3 'a fraud' here means:
 - A a counterfeit.
 - B a deception.
 - C an imposter.
- 4 'negroes who had an axe to grind' here means negroes who:
 - A were simply against the idea.
 - B had some special, unstated, reason for saying that they disbelieved it.
 - C actually disbelieved it.

- 5 In the phrase 'I saw it on television,' who is 'I'?
- 6 Rephrase 'I don't believe none of it' in more formal English.
- 7 Complete: 'the immense amount of that have been voted'
Which word in this phrase does the speaker stress?
- 8 'progress for progress's sake' here means:
A progressing in order to win the space race.
B progressing in order to provide a challenge.
C progressing merely in order not to stand still.
- 9 Complete: 'immediate, effective use poverty, better education, schools,, goodness knows what.'
- 10 'simply because it's so modern.' What does *it* refer to?
- 11 'to be going down the proverbial drain.' *To go down the drain* is an idiomatic expression which means *to be wasted*. What does Deryck mean by using the word 'proverbial'?
- 12 Complete: 'it's part of intellect, part of his, if you like, to explore.'
- 13 Complete: 'individual people mountains, or down, or whatever.'
- 14 Substitute another expression for 'or whatever'.
- 15 Did John say
A 'man is a race' or
B 'man as a race'?
- 16 Complete: 'I wouldn't argue against a lot of money.'
- 17 Complete: 'Couldn't those resources solving more urgent and immediate problems?'
- 18 The last word of John's statement 'I think the money is only a superficial' is barely audible. Suggest a suitable word.

- 19 'to put poverty and space baldly side by side.' *Baldly* here means:
A bluntly.
B obviously.
C barely.
- 20 'a fallacy' is:
A an illogical argument.
B an inconsistency.
C a failure.
- 21 'pays lip-service as a nation.' *To pay lip-service to something* means:
A to feel deeply about it.
B to speak about it.
C to express insincere concern about it.
- 22 'the fellow next-door' here means:
A your neighbours.
B somebody else.
C strangers.
- 23 Does the speaker say:
A 'We have no more poverty in U.S.A.' or
B 'We have no more poverty in the U.S.A.'?
- 24 Complete: 'space space exploration.'
- 25 Complete: 'into the unknown of and discoverable knowledge.'
- 26 'limping' here means:
A not making any progress.
B progressing more and more slowly.
C hampered, unable to progress normally.

Exercise 2: *Extensive Listening*

Now answer the following questions. If necessary, go back to the beginning of the tape and listen to the discussion again, taking notes. If you are in a language laboratory you should record your answers. Otherwise you should write them out. The answers cannot always be given merely by reference to what is said on the tape, but may require some interpretation on your part.

- 1 What did about seventy per cent of the Moroccans interviewed after the first landing on the moon think about the event?
- 2 When John suggests that the space race is 'the ultimate in progress for progress's sake', what does he mean?
- 3 How does he suggest that the money spent on the space race should be used instead?
- 4 What reason does Deryck give for people being overwhelmed by the space race and the money spent on it?
- 5 Deryck suggests that exploration of space is inevitable. Why?
- 6 How does Deryck describe the works of Jules Verne?
- 7 What sometimes happens when people go down pot-holes or climb mountains?
- 8 What things does John mention as having gone into the exploration of space?
- 9 Why does the speaker say 'Kennedy *can* commit the American nation to putting a man on the moon . . .' rather than 'Kennedy *could* . . .'?
- 10 Why is it easier to get money to finance the space race than a movement to abolish poverty?
- 11 What other things does John mention which still remain national problems?
- 12 Why does John think that most people only pay lip-service to the abolition of poverty?
- 13 When John is discussing relative priorities, what term does he use to describe his own view of the exploration of space?

- 14 Does Deryck agree? What does he think?
- 15 John thinks that we cannot really afford space exploration. Does Deryck agree?

Drills

Drill 1

Listen to a short section of the tape again.

Notice that in lists of items, each one is spoken with a low-rising tone until the last item is reached, and this is spoken on a falling tone to signal the end of the list. The example you have heard is an unfinished list; therefore there is no falling tone. Here are a number of similar utterances. Listen to the instructions on the tape.

- 1 ↗1↗2↗3↗4↗5↗6↗7↗8↗9↘10
- 2 ↗A↗B↗C↗D↗E↗F↘G
- 3 the imagin↗ation, the in↗ventiveness, the intellectual re↗sources, the edu↗cation, the ↗training resources . . .
- 4 Finchley↗ Road, Swiss↗ Cottage, St. John's↗ Wood, ↗Baker Street, Regent's↗ Park, Oxford↘ Circus.
- 5 ↗tinker,↗ tailor,↗ soldier,↗ sailor,↗ rich man,↗ poor man, ↗beggarman,↘ thief.
- 6 ↗flour,↗ coffee,↗ salt,↗ lemons, and a pound of↘ butter.

Drill 2

Note 1: 'I didn't actually see the article, but . . .'

There is nothing in the written form of this sentence which indicates the most appropriate way of completing it. When it is spoken, however, there are certain clues which indicate the kind of continuation which is most probable. The most important and most obvious of these clues is the position of the main stress in the sentence. Listen to the examples recorded on your tape.

Example 1: 'I didn't actually see the 'article . . .'

I didn't actually see the 'article, but I read a book about the same subject.

In the first part of the sentence the noun article was stressed most heavily and so in the second part of the sentence another noun, book, contrasts with it.

Example 2: 'I didn't actually 'see the article . . .'

I didn't actually 'see the article, but I heard a radio talk about it.

Because the verb see is stressed in the first part of the sentence, you can expect something in the second part to contrast with it, namely another verb, heard.

Example 3: "I didn't actually see the article . . ."

'I didn't actually see the article, but my wife did.

Because the pronoun I is stressed in the sentence you can expect something in the second part to contrast with it, namely, my wife.

Note 2:

You'll hear this incomplete sentence: 'I didn't actually see the article . . .' One word will be heavily stressed and this is your clue to the most appropriate way of continuing the sentence. Choose one from the list of alternatives printed below and mark the most appropriate one.

Part One:

I didn't actually see the article . . .

- A but my friends saw it.
- B but I heard a radio talk about it.
- C but I saw the author on television.

Part Two:

They think the money is only a superficial thing . . .

- A but I think the whole idea is superficial.
- B but I think the money is important.
- C but they aren't sure.