

PLAIN SPEAKING

by Wendy Harris

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Preface

General aims

This book has been designed to supplement the students' course book. It is not intended to stand alone as a course book although it does follow the approved Syllabus for Secondary Schools.

The main objective of the book is to present structural elements of the English language which the students have already met, in natural situations. This approach will hopefully encourage students to use more natural English and help them to understand why and how the language is used in different situations.

Since the objective is natural conversational English, the teacher should aim for maximum student talking time during classes. In large classes this is often difficult simply because of lack of time. The technique of choral drilling can be used to make sure that the whole class is familiar with the main structures, vocabulary items and idiomatic phrases in each unit. It is suggested that as soon as the teacher feels the students can manipulate these essentials, he encourages small group and pair work to give each child the maximum opportunity of speaking. Stronger students can be placed with weaker ones to help out while the teacher can move around monitoring groups and dealing with any difficulties that occur.

Unit breakdown

There are twenty units in this book. Each one is divided into three sections. The first section is called *Dialogue*. This consists of a short *Situation* paragraph together with an illustration to set the scene for the dialogue itself. The *Situation* is followed by short *Questions* to make sure the situation has been fully understood. The *Dialogue* comes next.

The second section in each unit deals with some aspect of pronunciation. This section covers sound production, intonation and stress patterns. Generally speaking, emphasis is put on only one of these three in each unit, but the others should not be completely ignored. If two contrasting vowel sounds are being taught, the teacher should make sure that when the students practise these sounds in the context of words and sentences, their stress and intonation patterns are acceptable.

The last section is called *Language Practice*. It highlights the main structural points which have been presented through the

dialogue and offers further practice of these in different situations. Teachers will notice that the first *Language Practice* exercise in each unit is generally much more controlled than the ones which follow. This is to make sure that the students have adequately consolidated the structures and will be comfortable when they try to manipulate them in freer conversational situations.

Suggestions for presentation and use of each section

1 *Situation* Either as a short reading comprehension or aural comprehension. The illustration can provide the basis for general questions and 'scene setting' before the students read or hear the text. After presenting the text, the teacher can then check that the situation has been fully understood by using the Questions orally round the class. More questions can be added if the teacher feels particular vocabulary items are unfamiliar to the students. If the teacher decides to present the Situation orally, it is suggested that he allow the students to read the text silently after the Questions have been completed. Understanding the Situation is essential for the effective use of the dialogue which follows.

2 *Dialogue* If the dialogue is presented as an aural comprehension exercise on tape, the procedure might be as follows:

- (i) Pre-teach necessary vocabulary items.
- (ii) Teacher plays tape all through while students look at the picture, *not* the text.
- (iii) Teacher asks check questions to make sure the students have the gist of the conversation.
- (iv) Teacher plays tape section by section – perhaps three or four lines at a time, breaking at an appropriate point – and asks more detailed check questions. Students should still *not* see the text.
- (v) Teacher then plays tape line by line or sentence by sentence, and asks the class chorally and/or individually to repeat each section, copying the intonation and pronunciation.
- (vi) Teacher plays tape once more while students follow text in their books.
- (vii) Teacher allows students to read text silently in their own time and ask any questions they need to.

If a tape is *not* used, the teacher may read the dialogue himself or assign two students to read it after having prepared it for a home-work exercise. After the dialogue has been presented and the teacher is sure the students have fully understood it, the class can be divided into groups or pairs to practise by themselves. After a few minutes, the teacher might reproduce a skeleton dialogue on the board using only key words from the text. The students should close their books and try to re-create the dialogue using the skeleton. A final rounding off exercise which is always fun and tends to stick in the students' minds is *acting out*. The teacher may choose one or two couples to re-arrange the furniture at the front of the class and then act out the scene with movements, appropriate gestures and facial expressions. Non-acting students can be involved as stage managers, directors, prompts (usually essential!) etc. This free stage activity is particularly valuable if the students can be encouraged to criticise each other's performances constructively and, needless to say, in English. At lower levels the teacher will have to be instrumental in this criticism by asking simple *yes/no* questions like 'Can you hear him?' 'Is he speaking slowly?' 'Is that right?'.

3 Pronunciation The elements of pronunciation, stress and intonation which are covered in this section of each unit are all based on problems likely to arise from the dialogue. The pronunciation point may be related to the structure, particular vocabulary items or the way words are linked together in connected speech. Examples are given from the Dialogue and/or Language Practice sections so that the teacher can refer back and give the exercise a meaningful context. Pairs practice is used frequently, both for the production of individual sounds and the formation of intonation patterns. It is suggested that, once the teacher has given two or three examples and drilled them thoroughly with the whole class, he should then divide the students into groups or pairs and let them practise at their own speed. Once the idea of self-help has been established, students will be eager to check their partners and will become much more able to spot mistakes in their own oral production. It is unreasonable to expect perfect pronunciation from anyone but a native speaker so teachers should not set their sights too high. They should insist on clarity and make sure that the students are comprehensible both to the teacher and each other. The Pronunciation section should take the least classroom time of all the sections.

4 Language practice The idea of these sections is to give the

students plenty of manipulation of the structures which occur in the Dialogue. Again choral drilling for one or two examples will give the students a solid base. They can then practise together in groups or pairs, concentrating on accuracy, speed and good pronunciation. During lesson preparation, teachers might find it helpful to collect together some extra material appropriate to the particular unit, such as maps, flashcards, etc. This material can be introduced as an extension of the Language Practice exercises and form the basis for free-stage work once the teacher is sure that the students are able to cope adequately with the structures. The real test comes in free-stage work when students are encouraged to make up their own situations and dialogues. It quickly becomes apparent whether they have grasped the concept of the structure and are able to manipulate it comfortably or not.

Social register and idiom

The English language is not just a collection of words governed by complicated rules. It is a means of communication which also enables its speakers to express emotions and delicate shades of meaning. People decide how to behave towards each other in any social situation not so much by what they say but how they say it. The word 'yes' can express anger, impatience, joy, surprise, horror and many more emotions, simply by a change in the pitch and intonation of the speaker's voice.

Similarly, attitudes towards people, situations and ideas can be made very clear by the use of simple idioms. Without these idioms, the language sounds stilted and 'bookish'. It lacks a natural flow and warmth. Teachers will find idioms in some of the units in this book, phrases like 'I'm not surprised' and 'Poor old Steve'. Students should be made aware that these idioms cannot be translated or understood word by word. They must be taken as a unit, treated, if you like, as one word. They can most effectively be presented to the students through simple situations.

Social register means being able to select the appropriate group of words from a selection of phrases or sentences which all basically mean the same thing. 'Shut the door!' 'I wonder if you'd mind shutting the door, please,' and 'It's rather chilly in here, isn't it?' all mean 'I am cold and I want you to shut the door'. Which one you chose would depend on whom you were talking to and where you were. Social register, like idiom, is another means of establishing

relationships towards people and attitudes towards things. It gives colour, warmth and above all fluency to the language. It is a very necessary part of English, which would sound rather like a talking computer without it.

PHONETIC SYMEOLS USED IN THE TEXT

vowels

/ɪ/	as in	sit
/i/	as in	seat
/ə/	as in	above
/æ/	as in	cat
/ɑ/	as in	part
/ɔ/	as in	work
/ɒ/	as in	door

Consonants

/ð/	as in	this
/f/	as in	fat
/v/	as in	valley
/s/	as in	six
/θ/	as in	thin
/w/	as in	week
/k/	as in	cat
/t/	as in	ten
/d/	as in	dog
/g/	as in	girl
/l/	as in	life
/r/	as in	red
/z/	as in	goat
/h/	as in	hold

LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Present perfect contrasted with past simple • adverbial time clauses with when/before/after

Present perfect simple • either or/neither nor • contact clauses

Present perfect simple and continuous • 'for' and 'since' • although

Emphatic pronouns • same as/different from • like

1st conditional • may/might/perhaps • ought to/ought not to

1st conditional • be able to

Telephone calls – basic patterns • if/when + will

2nd conditional • had better • make and let

2nd conditional • infinitive of purpose • ordering in a restaurant – basic patterns

'Wish' for desire and strong request • 2nd conditional • be able to/could

Past perfect simple • until/by the time

Past perfect simple and continuous • reported speech

3rd conditional

Each and all • adverbs of manner • 3rd conditional

More complex introductions • must/have to/need to

Must/have to/have got to • direct and reported speech

Passive – instrumental + by • non-instrumental

Must have/can't have • passive • So adjective/adverb that ...

How long will it be? • non-defining relative clauses • more greetings

Future perfect simple and continuous

原
书
缺
页

Dialogue

- Jimmy:* I've decided to leave school.
Sally: Oh? When did you decide to do that?
Jimmy: Before breakfast this morning.
Sally: Have you told anybody else yet?
Jimmy: Yes. I've just told Mum and Dad.
Sally: What did they say when you told them?
Jimmy: Mum asked me why and Dad shouted at me.
Sally: Where are you going?
Jimmy: I'm going out.
Sally: Why? It's pouring with rain.
Jimmy: They're arguing with each other and I can't get a word in.

Comprehension

- 1 What has Jimmy decided to do?
- 2 When did he decide to leave school?
- 3 Did he decide before or after breakfast?
- 4 Who has he told about his decision?
- 5 What did his mother say when he told her?
- 6 What did his father do when he told him?
- 7 Where's Jimmy going now?
- 8 Is it good weather for a walk?
- 9 What are his parents doing?
- 10 Why's he going out?

Pronunciation Practice

Final /t/ and /d/

It's important to make a clear difference between /d/ and /t/ at the end of words. Remember, /d/ is a voiced sound and /t/ is voiceless. Put the tip of your tongue behind your top teeth and practise saying /d/ and /t/ slowly and clearly.

When /t/ or /d/ comes at the end of the last word of a sentence, they are easy to pronounce and easy to hear.

Jimmy's the youngest.
Sally's the eldest.
Mike's in England.

When the word after the one ending in /d/ or /t/ starts with a vowel, the sounds are quite clear too. Practise these sounds and join the final /t/ or /d/ onto the beginning of the next word which starts with a vowel:

Jimmy's the youngest of the three children.
Sally's the eldest of the three children.
Mike's in England at university.

Notice what happens when a word ending in /d/ or /t/ is followed by a word starting with a consonant. Here are some examples from the conversation. Practise them carefully.

I've decided to leave school.
/dɪsaɪdɪtə/

'Decided to' sounds like one word in connected speech.

When did you decide to do that?
/dɪsaɪtə/

'Decide to' sounds like one word.

Before breakfast this morning.
/brekfəstɪs/

The /t/ in 'breakfast' disappears and 'breakfast this' is joined together with /ð/.
/brekfəstɪs/

Language Practice 1

1 CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

Practise the first three lines of the conversation again. Now look at these conversation boxes and make as many three-line dialogues as you can.

I	've 's	decided to	leave school.
She			leave home.
Jimmy			get married.
He			find a new job.
Sally			buy a new motorbike.

When did	you	decide to do that?
	he	
	she	

Before After	breakfast	this morning.
		today. yesterday.

Read the next four lines of the conversation and then use these boxes to make up four-line dialogues. Make up the last line for yourself.

Have Has	you	told anybody else yet?
	he	
she		
Sally		
Jimmy		

Yes, *	I	've 's	just told	Dad and Mum.
	He			my teacher.
	She			the boss.
				the family.
				his best friend.

What did	he	say when	she	told	them?
	she		he		him?
	they		you		her?

Language Practice 2

Do it yourself

When Sally was on the bus this morning, on her way to work, she decided to resign and find another job. She's just told her boss. When she told him, he was very surprised. He offered her a raise, hoping that she would stay on.

Sally's talking to Paula, the office telephonist, about her decision. Act out the conversation with your partner starting like this:

Sally: I've decided to

Paula: Oh? When to do that?

Sally: On the bus

2 FINDING OUT EXACTLY WHEN IT HAPPENED

You used to live in Hong Kong. Ten years ago you left and went to the States. You have just arrived back here and you have noticed a lot of changes. Here are some of the things that have been built while you've been away:

Cross Harbour Road Tunnel 1972
Connaught Centre 1973
Hung Hom Railway Terminus 1975
Ocean Park 1977
Hong Kong Arts Centre 1977
Sha Tin Race Course 1978
Mass Transit Railway 1979

You are talking to a friend about these changes. Make four-line dialogues like this:

You: I can see there have been a lot of changes over the last ten years.

Friend: Yes. The harbour tunnel's been opened, you know. That's made a big difference to cross-harbour traffic.

You: That must have happened while I was away. When exactly was it opened?

Friend: In 19 / years ago.

Language Practice 3

3 DIFFERENT WAYS OF SAYING WHEN IT HAPPENED

Look at these examples carefully:

Have you washed your face?

Yes. I washed it *before I had* breakfast.

Have you done your homework?

Yes. I did it *after I had* my supper.

Have you ever been in hospital?

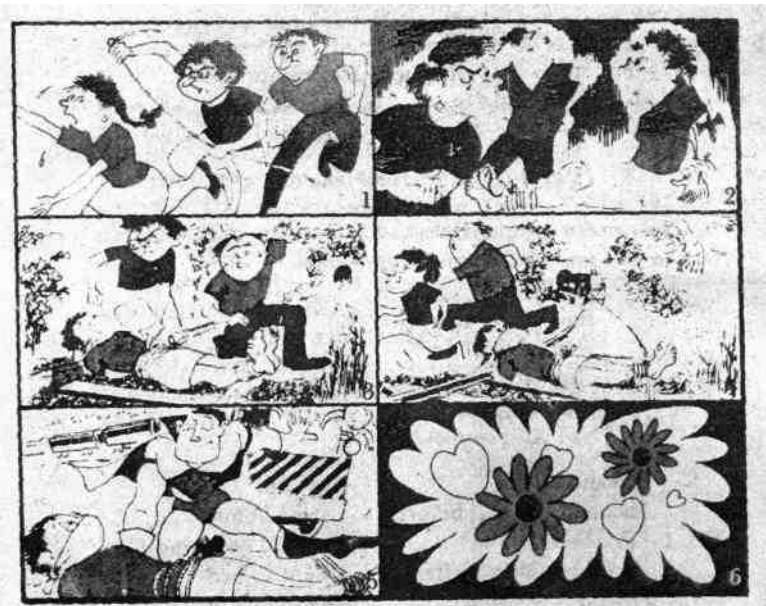
Yes. I *was* in hospital *when I was* thirteen.

Now make up questions and answers with these boxes. Perhaps you can add some questions of your own.

Have you	<div>finished your homework?</div> <div>washed your face?</div> <div>cleaned your shoes?</div> <div>brushed your teeth?</div> <div>had your supper?</div>	
Yes. I	<div>cleaned them</div> <div>washed it</div> <div>finished it</div> <div>brushed them</div> <div>had it</div>	<div>before</div> <div>after</div>
		<div>I</div> <div>got up.</div> <div>came home.</div> <div>started watching TV.</div> <div>went to bed.</div> <div>had breakfast.</div>
Have you ever	<div>been to Macau?</div> <div>been in hospital?</div> <div>had an operation?</div> <div>had a tooth out?</div>	
Yes, I have. I	<div>went there</div> <div>was in hospital</div> <div>had one</div> <div>had one out</div>	<div>when I was</div> <div>in P3.</div> <div>twelve.</div> <div>very small.</div> <div>a baby.</div>

Language Practice 4

Now look at this strip cartoon. Point to each picture and make 'before', 'after' and 'when' questions about them. Make up some good names for the characters.



What happened in the end? Make up the last frame of the story for yourself, then either tell the whole story to your partner or class, or write it out at home.

2 A New Job



Situation

Before Sally actually decided to resign, she started looking at the Situations Vacant column of the newspaper every day to see what sort of jobs were being advertised. She didn't tell anyone she was looking for a new job, she just cut out the advertisements that particularly interested her. She drafted her curriculum vitae, listing all her educational qualifications and details of her working experience, and practised writing letters of application. There was one job advertised which she would have loved. It was for a Chinese tour guide to work in Germany. The main qualifications required were fluency in written and spoken German and the ability to drive a car. Sally can neither speak German nor drive a car so it would have been a waste of time answering that advertisement. She took some of the advertisements she cut out to show Paula at the office.

Questions

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 What/Sally/before/resign? | 6 /letters of application? |
| 2 Why/column/every day? | 7 Which/she have loved? |
| 3 /tell anyone/new job? | 8 /kind of job/it? |
| 4 /advertisements/cut out? | 9 /main qualifications? |
| 5 /curriculum vitae? | 10 /didn't she/that advertise-
ment? |

Dialogue

- Paula:** Have you found another job yet, Sally?
- Sally:** No, I haven't, but I've seen several interesting advertisements in the paper.
- Paula:** What kind of job are you looking for?
- Sally:** Either something in the hotel business or something to do with travel.
- Paula:** You haven't had any experience in either of those fields.
- Sally:** I know. But I'd like to try. Look. Here are some advertisements that I've cut out.
- Paula:** This one looks good.
- Sally:** Which one's that?
- Paula:** The one that offers a fifty per cent discount on air tickets after twelve months' employment. It's a Tsim Sha Tsui travel agency.
- Sally:** The travel agent that my brother used when he went to England was in Tsim Sha Tsui.
- Paula:** Perhaps it's the same one. I suppose you're going to apply for the job?
- Sally:** Oh yes. I've made a photocopy of my curriculum vitae and started drafting a letter already.

Comprehension

- 1 Has Sally found a new job yet?
- 2 What has she seen in the newspaper?
- 3 What kind of job is she looking for?
- 4 Has she had any experience in either of those fields?
- 5 Which advertisement does Paula think looks good?
- 6 Why does she think it looks good?
- 7 Where is the travel agency?
- 8 Where was the travel agency Sally's brother used?
- 9 Is Sally going to apply for the job?
- 10 What has she done so far?