

Discover English

(A Language Awareness Workbook)

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and

BRIAN TOMLINSON



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HEINEMANN EDUCATIONAL BOOKS
London

Heinemann Educational Books Ltd
22 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HH
LONDON EDINBURGH MELBOURNE AUCKLAND
HONG KONG SINGAPORE KUALA LUMPUR
NEW DELHI IBADAN NAIROBI JOHANNESBURG
EXETER (NH) KINGSTON PORT OF SPAIN

© Rod Bolitho and Brian Tomlinson
First published 1980
Reprinted with corrections 1983

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Bolitho, Rod

Discover English

1. English language – Study and teaching
– Foreign students

I. Title II. Tomlinson, Brian

428'.2'407

PE1128.A2

80-40773

ISBN 0 435 28991 8

Typeset in 10 on 11 point Times by V & M Graphics Ltd,
Aylesbury, Bucks
Printed in Great Britain by
Biddles Ltd, Guildford, Surrey

This book provides exercises on problem areas in English, for individual study or for group discussion. It will be found useful by teachers of English, and also by advanced learners who will benefit from open discussion of language difficulties.

Teachers will find, in *Discover English*, a unique pedagogical approach to learners' difficulties, such as can never be found in a descriptive grammar reference book. It is a source book which teachers will want to refer back to time and again when preparing lessons, long after their initial training.

'An original learners' book Ideal for group work and discussion.'

(English Language Teaching Journal 36/1)

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Ann Campbell for her detailed comments, to Pauline Lea, Dany Donelan and Carole Green for their help in typing the manuscript, to three generations of students on Cambridge RSA Cert T.E.F.L. courses, and to various overseas teachers' groups at Bell College, Saffron Walden with whom we tried the material out and whose comments and reactions helped us greatly.

Contents

Introduction

page 1

EXERCISES

Unit One Some Misconceptions About English

3

Unit Two Common Areas of Difficulty

Section One

Two

6

Three

8

Four

9

Five

10

Six

12

Seven

14

Eight

16

Nine

17

Ten

19

Eleven

21

Twelve

21

Thirteen

24

Fourteen

26

Fifteen

28

Sixteen

30

Seventeen

32

Eighteen

35

Nineteen

36

Twenty

37

Twenty-One

39

Twenty-Two

40

Unit Three Vocabulary

42

Section One

Two

44

Unit Four Cohesion

53

Unit Five Coherence

55

Unit Six Errors

62

66

COMMENTARIES

	<i>page</i>	70
<i>Unit One</i>		70
<i>Unit Two</i>		77
<i>Section One</i>		77
Two		79
Three		81
Four		82
Five		85
Six		86
Seven		90
Eight		91
Nine		93
Ten		95
Eleven		96
Twelve		99
Thirteen		102
Fourteen		104
Fifteen		107
Sixteen		108
Seventeen		113
Eighteen		115
Nineteen		118
Twenty		120
Twenty-One		122
Twenty-Two		124
<i>Unit Three</i>		127
<i>Section One</i>		127
Two		137
<i>Unit Four</i>		140
<i>Unit Five</i>		148
<i>Unit Six</i>		153
<i>Index</i>		163

Introduction

General

This book consists of a collection of exercises written for teachers' pre-service and in-service courses. The purpose of the exercises is to sensitize teachers of English to the language they are teaching, whether they are native teachers taking their first analytical look at their own language or non-native teachers seeking to clarify areas of confusion. It is *not* a language practice book in the conventional sense, though many of the exercises may be found useful by advanced students. Nor is it an attempt at systematic coverage of all points of grammar. It concentrates on exercises on areas which we have identified as problematical for teachers. Too often, teachers master classroom techniques only to fall down on their ability to present language in a correct and clearly thought-out way. This is why many of the exercises examine implications for teaching of discovered facts about language.

There is no particular significance in the order in which the exercises are presented, and they do not constitute a graded course. However, exercises within each unit sometimes depend on each other and a later exercise may refer back to an earlier one.

To the teacher trainer

We have found that teachers need to discover language for themselves, and that 'force-feeding' is an ineffective training technique. This is why none of the exercises has a heading. The index provides a 'way into' the exercises for the teacher trainer, who may like to set exercises as groupwork tasks on his courses; they were written with groupwork in mind and have been tried out in this way. Indeed, most of the exercises are best tackled orally, or answered in note form if set for homework. The commentaries are offered to the teacher trainer as an aid, no more. We have not set out to be prescriptive in the commentaries, and recognise fully that there may be other equally valid versions of many of them. We would expect most experienced native-speaker teacher trainers to dispense completely with the commentaries and simply

regard the exercises as source material to be drawn on and used as they see fit. Many of the exercise types used in this book can serve as models for teacher trainers to produce their own exercises on other language problems.

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

Exercises may be selected according to needs, by reference to the index, answers can be jotted down and then checked against the commentaries. These commentaries are intended to provide quick and easy reference. They do not replace a reference grammar. Conclusions are offered with teaching implications constantly in mind, generalisations are made only in order to aid effective teaching and not to establish a set of abstract rules.

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

- * *Meaning and the English verb* G. Leech (Longman)
- * *A University Grammar of English* R. Quirk et al. (Longman)
- A Reference Grammar for Students of English* R. A. Close (Longman)
- A Communicative Grammar of English* G. Leech and J. Svartvik (Longman)
- A Grammar of Contemporary English* R. Quirk et al. (Longman)
- * *A Practical English Grammar* Thompson and Martinet (Oxford University Press)
- * *Practical English Usage* M. Swan (Oxford University Press)

EXERCISES

Unit One

SECTION ONE

A. In the following exercise compare the statement in a) with the evidence in b) and then comment critically on the statement.

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

b) i) *I've tried a long time, and 't'nt got better. But thou'st right; 't might mak fok talk even of thee.*
Hard Times – Charles Dickens

ii) *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 that establishment now.*

Hard Times – Charles Dickens

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

b) 1 2 3 4

swimming	It's hot, isn't it?	He bought it.	Have you got any money?
dining	She's fat, isn't she?	She grew it.	
sinned	You didn't come, did you?	He brought it.	Have you got some money?
lined	I've won, haven't I?	I showed them.	
hatred	She'll come won't she?	He wanted it.	Give me some books.
bailed	He wasn't happy, was he?	I cleaned it.	Give me any books.
getting	The bus is late, isn't it?	I blamed them.	We haven't got any more.
greeting	Mary had finished, hadn't she?	I went there.	We haven't got some more.
		He sold it.	

3 a) 'Learning a language is a question of imitating correct forms.'

EXERCISES: UNIT ONE, SECTION ONE

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

B. What contradictions are involved in each of the following 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 amenuensis the sole bonafide 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.'

C. Comment on the following 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. 'I can understand my teacher very easily but when I talk English to people in the street they speak too quickly.'
3. 'You don't need a teacher to learn a foreign language. All you need is a grammar book and a dictionary.'
4. 'Only speakers of educated, standard southern English should teach English to foreigners. People who speak a dialect teach incorrect English.'
5. 'What's the point of practising the same thing over and over again? I know the conditional tenses.'
6. 'I've been teaching English for thirty years and I know

EXERCISES: UNIT ONE, SECTION ONE

what I'm doing. I teach only what has been judged by time and literature to be correct.'

7. 'I don't think he's a very good teacher. Every time I walk past his classroom the students seem to be sitting in groups making a noise.'
8. '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*.
9. '*Some* is only used in positive statements whereas *any* is used in negative statements and questions.'
10. 'A verb is a doing word.'
11. 'The subject of a sentence is the person or thing that does the action.'
12. 'The past tenses always refer to the past - e.g. *He was going to the match*.'
13. 'Countable nouns refer to things which you can count (e.g. *chairs, books, apples*) whereas uncountable nouns refer to things which you cannot count (e.g. *rice, soap, money*).'
14. 'It's important to insist that learners of a language speak with the same correctness as we would expect when they're writing.'
15. '*will* is never used in clauses which begin with *when, after, before* or *as soon as*.'
16. 'A good English speaker never uses slang so I never allow my students to use English slang.'

EXERCISES

Unit Two

SECTION ONE

A. If you can answer these questions, you can leave out the exercises which follow. If not, you will find the exercises useful.

1. What is a noun? Give an example.
2. What is a pronoun? Give an example.
3. What is a transitive verb? Give an example.
4. What is an intransitive verb? Give an example.
5. What is an infinitive? Give an example.
6. Identify (a) the subject, (b) the main verb and (c) the object or complement in each of these examples.
 - (i) Churchill smoked cigars.
 - (ii) Few women smoke cigars.
 - (iii) Smoking causes health problems.
 - (iv) Cigarettes are bad for you.
7. What is a preposition? Give an example.
8. What is a conjunction? Give an example.
9. What is an adjective? Give an example.
10. What is an adverb? Give an example.
11. Give an example of a verb with both a direct and an indirect object.

B. Use a dictionary to classify these words into nouns, adjectives, adverbs etc. Subclassify the verbs into transitive and intransitive.

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. window | 9. strongly | 17. because |
| 2. happiness | 10. grin | 18. gargoyle |
| 3. meander | 11. drink | 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. fabricate |

EXERCISES: UNIT TWO, SECTION ONE

C. Look at the verbs in these utterances and divide them into two categories, stating reasons for your allocation.

1. 'You've finished your tea.'
2. 'They are eating cake.'
3. 'They are eating at home.'
4. 'She wants to watch T.V.'
5. 'I'm going to bed.'
6. 'I'm repairing the car.'
7. Hillary and Tenzing conquered Everest.
8. Churchill died several years ago.
9. 'I can't think clearly!'
10. 'I hate this exercise!'

D. What is the direct object in each of these sentences?

1. He took his girlfriend to the cinema last night.
2. Afterwards, he took her out for a meal.
3. He bought her champagne.
4. After the meal he drove her home.
5. He kissed her on the doorstep.
6. She asked him in for a nightcap.
7. She closed the curtains and made the coffee.
8. He made an excuse, got up and went home.

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.' 'O.K., we'll avoid.'
6. He learns very slow.
7. They gives her a lot of help.
8. 'I want to lister the news at 9 o'clock.'

F. Why do these nonsense sentences sound acceptable?

1. He crattled his splod and scröt out a neelying groal.
2. They strentered folically until a magan veened to famble them.

EXERCISES: UNIT TWO, SECTION TWO

G. Look these words up in a dictionary.

sits	was	swore	swam
spoken	bought	sung	knocked
talked	driven	drew	burnt.

How does the dictionary deal with them?

SECTION TWO

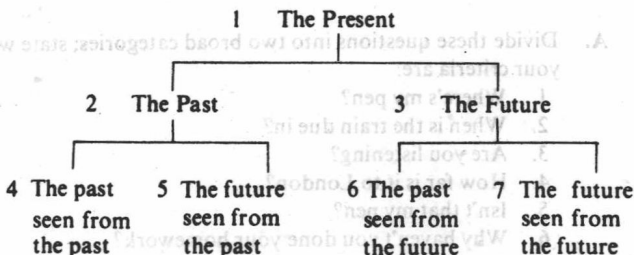
Look at these groups of utterances. What do the utterances in each group have in common? What distinguishes them? If necessary, check in the commentary after doing exercise A to see whether you are on the right track.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | <p>B.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pollution is getting worse. 2. It's raining. 3. I'm going out tonight. 4. He's always dropping ash on the carpet. |
| <p>C.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. | <p>D.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See you! 2. The Queen is due to arrive at 4 p.m. 3. He's about to arrive. 4. The train leaves at 3 p.m. 5. Willy's going to be an engine driver. 6. He's taking his finals in June. 7. I'll be 64 next birthday. |
| <p>E.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If I were you, I'd stay home. 2. It's time you went home. 3. Wish you were here! | <p>F.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

SECTION THREE

A. Look at this diagram representing time.



Allocate the utterances below to numbers on the diagram.

- (i) We're going to live in Liverpool.
- (ii) After we've lived in Liverpool for a few years, we'll move back to Wigan.
- (iii) We live in Wigan.
- (iv) We lived in Bradford for 5 years.
- (v) We were going to move to London in 1973 but my job there fell through.
- (vi) By the time we move to Liverpool, we'll have spent 3 years in Wigan.
- (vii) We lived in Manchester for a while before we moved to Bradford.

Find other ways of expressing the same ideas.

B. Comment on the validity of these statements:

1. Present tenses are always used to express present time.
2. Past tenses are always used to express past time.

3. The English tense system is based on, and can be equated with, the Latin tense system.
4. Different peoples perceive time differently, and these differences are reflected in the tense systems of their languages.
5. Different languages have developed different ways of referring to commonly perceived concepts of time.
6. The verb is the main marker of time in an English sentence.

SECTION FOUR

- A. Divide these questions into two broad categories; state what your criteria are.

1. Where's my pen?
2. When is the train due in?
3. Are you listening?
4. How far is it to London?
5. Isn't that my pen?
6. Why haven't you done your homework?
7. That's not your pen, is it?
8. Would you like coffee or tea?
9. Would like some more wine?
10. What's the time?
11. You've been to Liverpool before, haven't you?
12. How are you?

- B. Divide these questions into categories; state what your criteria are.

1. Is the T.V. still on?
2. Haven't you finished eating yet?
3. Can you lend me £5?
4. That's not Helen, is it?
5. Have you locked the back door?
6. Has someone opened this letter?
7. It isn't raining again, is it?
8. Do you mind if I smoke?
9. Was Mike at the party last night?