

Pitfalls and Dangers in Foreign Teachers  
Writing English Language Courses

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This English course for beginners at primary and secondary schools in Belgium consists of 5 books of approximately 160 - 250 pages each, together with a Teacher's Book I (TBI). The volumes themselves are well got up, with an attractive cover, good paper, and clear print. From this point of view the only criticism would be the pale olive green print at the head of the lessons, which are very difficult to see by artificial light.

That the title Living English, though suitable in itself, is identical with that of a series of English text-books published in Switzerland since 1938 or 1939 (author : Dr. F.L. Sack, publishers: Francke A.G. Bern) is, to say the least, an unfortunate coincidence.

Like the Prefaces in the five volumes of Living English, the Introduction at the beginning of the TBI is written in so "un-English" a style that it is often difficult for an English person to grasp what it is the authors intended to say. It seems highly regrettable that the compilers of this English course did not submit their manuscript to a trained language teacher whose mother-tongue was English before assuming the risk and the expense of having this series of volumes printed and published. It seems almost incredible that this work, first published (it would appear) in 1954, has been able to run into a 6th impression (1965) without its mistakes having been corrected!

The sub-title indicates that the work is "based upon word-frequency, graded sentence-structure and grammar selection" (or "grammatical substitution"), and the Préface says that "it is an active approach to what is called "Standard English" as it is formally spoken among well-educated people", and that the texts are "in conversational style".

It is very unfortunate that foreign teachers of English, however fluently they may speak the language themselves, are rarely able to distinguish between the different "styles", "tones", or "levels" of the foreign language. They tend to write a curious mixture of "elevated literary" and "colloquial familiar" style. This Living English is no exception. For instance, no English children of 7 - 14 would express themselves as do Peter (12 or 14), Lucy (10), and "Little Ernest" (7) Dupont.

No normal English boy of 14 would address his little sister as "my dear" (her mother might, of course), and it is rather unfortunate that the "bickering" tone so often introduced into English courses for foreigners (and the BBC courses are no exception!), which must give the impression that English children (and grown-ups) spend most of their time quarrelling, has also been introduced here, with the frequent use of "silly" as a mode of address. That the contracted (not "shortened") forms, such as didn't, can't, needn't, it's, there's, where's, you're, etc. are introduced is right, but they should be used consistently, and only in conversational style, not in the Introduction, etc. How is a poor foreign pupil to know just when to use the contracted forms if his text-book uses sometimes these forms and sometimes (also in conversational style) the uncontracted forms?

No objection can be taken to such "familiar" words and phrases as job, a lot of, to stick to, a kind of, to get (for become, buy, acquire, fetch, go, etc.) being interspersed in conversational texts, but they, too, definitely do not belong in the "serious" parts of the book (explanations, Preface, Introduction, etc.).

Knowing the effort and energy required for the task of compiling a new grammar-book, the present reviewer is very averse to criticizing too severely a work that must have taken its authors many years of pains-taking work in the elaboration of a new and personal method of language teaching, much of which consists in "drill" and practice with so-called substitution tables. It may very well be that the method embodied in this "Living English" is excellent of its kind, but even the most careful perusal and study of the Introduction to Teacher's Book I does not make it quite clear just what this method is. The implication of such expressions as "drill" and "practice", "action chains" and "minor patterns" are not self-evident, and they do not seem to be explained anywhere. It would not, however, be fair to other teachers of English or to their pupils were the faults of this work (and they are extremely numerous) not discussed. A detailed discussion would be a matter of some hundreds of pages and can obviously not be undertaken within the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that the authors have not had a lucky hand with their texts, and that not one of the reading passages so far examined (Books I and II) is without a number of more or less

bad mistakes or un-colloquial formulations.

Since this work is intended for use in secondary schools, it would have been more appropriate if the compilers had used pupils instead of students, with its specific connotation of "university students", and school rather than college (which is applied specifically to the various colleges at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge); a school may, of course, call itself "College", but it is nevertheless only a school, and the pupils go "to school". Moreover, at school, subjects are taught rather than branches, as the compilers write. We should also say to be in class or in the classroom, but not in the class and in the classes, as employed in this work. A pupil may, of course, be in a certain class, but this does not refer to the room he is in.

Another point is that, if this work is intended for use in non-Catholic countries it should be made a principle to omit all mention of Catholic practices - the respective teacher may always introduce the Hail Mary (why not the Lord's Prayer?) during a lesson, if he wishes to do so. But such bald statement as "Mary is the mother of God", and the frequent mention of crucifixes, prayers, grace before meals, etc. are hardly tactful, ecumenical, or suitable in a work of this kind. Or is the course intended only for Catholic schools?

To turn to details:

In the very first sentence in the Introduction (TBI) we find: "Numerous handbooks for beginners have been published in Belgium and in Holland since the end of the second world war, so much so, that a new one seems almost superfluous." Further examples of curious formulations would be: p.8. As there is nothing in a grammar rule which can possibly help the student to form a language habit, Palmer proposed grammar, visualized in a set of sentences to be drilled. p. 11. In our handbook we have presented a great series of substitution tables, which number is not exhaustive:.... p.11. ...every teacher should be able to make his own tables: at any moment he may need them. p. 13. ...in that case the direct association would make all translation, being very bad at the beginning stage, superfluous. p. 15. --But the result generally is: a mere reading lesson, no sufficient conversation drill, no training of constantly returning (recurring?) sentence-patterns. p.15. ...the first being that conventional matters cannot interest students (conventional = common

situation?). p.15. ...the second (objection), that the English language by having lost nearly all its flexions would not be able to develop the mental faculties of the students. p.19. ...: a language that loses its flexions gets a definite place of the words in the sentences. p.19. The vertical lines in double and more intricate tables will clearly indicate the flexions....., which will be taught gradually and occasionally. (Surely lines cannot indicate anything?)p.19. Our grammar selection can be called "essential grammar". p.20. The students should also write them (i.e. contracted forms) supposing they are consistent when using them. (Which the authors themselves were not!) p.40. ...they will be interested in knowing the words. p.52. Out of table VII you can teach the 's form of plural words in s (the Duponts', the parents', the boys', etc.) (i.e. From the tables... the-s' form.....).

A glimpse of the obvious, we should say, is the statement (TB1) p.15: A grammar, still modelled on the scheme of a Latin grammar, would be a very bad one (a couple of superfluous commas again!), and also on p.6. "... we start from the simplest patterns possible (and probably the most frequent) and proceed to the more difficult ones (but not therefore less frequent)." Surely this is what any language-teaching book would do?

Things that might have been better expressed are also: ... but there are always two kinds of columns; those that are fixed and those that are variable. Fixed columns have to be drilled, variable columns have to be practised. p.9. As the dynamic function of a substitution table is the more important, we shall describe it in a more elaborate way (in greater detail?) p.9. ...the table contains 45 sentences...., which number can be multiplied by as many times as we put an additional verb in the second column (not additional, surely, but a "different" verb). p.9. ...or they can memorize the table, shut their eyes and say as many sentences they can remember (is the omission of the second "as" a misprint?). p.12. The teacher needn't be afraid of useful complications. p.16. These are the basic conversational units to start from with each sentence to be taught. p.16. ...we think it is quite wrong to translate it for we can use these tags (i.e. is it, isn't it) a lot more in English than in Dutch, French or German; due to the fact that they vary according to the verbs used in the principal clause. p.20.

"written to be spoken language" (an unfortunate phrase!). p.20. The teacher's mouth is a magic mirror.

The above phrases are samples of what may be found throughout the book. Apart from this uncertainty in matters of style and the formulation of rules, etc., the whole work is bristling with more or less serious mistakes:

1) wrong prepositions, e.g. p.3. ...we can always conclude to a rule. p.15. The patterns taught in this way will be indelibly stamped into the students' minds. p.16. Some handbooks give the Dutch "nietwaar" as the equivalent to "isn't it?" and "is it?";... p.33. ... the difference for a WHAT-question asked in the native language lesson and a foreign language lesson. p.37. Then they may come to the blackboard and ask their questions to their friends who try to answer them (an important comma is also missing here!). p.58. Another student changes the infinitives in (=into) ing-forms.

p.60. Is Peter washing with cold water? (in is more common). p.77. ...they are an attempt to more freedom.

2) Mistakes in the use of tenses, esp. the preterite and the present perfect, which is not surprising, since the rule given in the book is not correct, just as the application of the rule is often wrong in the text of the Introduction, etc. The use of the present perfect with just is not due to the action taking place in a "near past"; it is the word just itself that may (not must) take the present perfect form of the verb. The truth is that the preterite is used for a past action if a definite past time is mentioned or understood, when no emotional or other connection is felt by the speaker to exist between the past action and the present moment. The present perfect is used when the time of the action is indefinite, neither mentioned nor understood, and when some connection is felt between the past action and the present moment. In fact, the action expressed in the preterite may actually have taken place more recently than one expressed in the present perfect, e.g. I wrote a letter this morning (perhaps only an hour or two ago), and I have seen your brother several times this month (the last time may have been over a week ago!)

Similarly the pluperfect is wrongly employed in: "... it enables the student to learn the foreign language by the same method he had learned his own." (p.8.) The so-called present continuous is frequently used in the texts where it is quite impossible in normal English, e.g. after then and when referring to the "next step" in a series of actions (see especially Book I, p.38) "Those monkeys are the cleverest in the world. I've got a photograph of them. Look! They are sitting round a table on chairs: they are making tea, pouring it out in cups, they are putting sugar and milk in their tea, then they are drinking it", (these activities cannot all be shown on a photograph simultaneously!). Similarly, p.19. "... (the pupils) should get the explanation of all the structures they are coming across." p.57. "What are these forms ending in?" p. 60 ex.79 "Before coming downstairs he's putting away his towel." Also, "... after washing my face I'm dressing. I'm dressing after washing my face." p.67. "Before putting away the towel and the soap he is cleaning his teeth." Then the lights are fading, the iron curtain is rising."

3) The texts are full of phrases that are not "colloquial" or idiomatic (now both friends are riding down the street for now the two friends are riding...., and this mistake is frequent, (i.e. both for the two). Now they are talking together (for with each other). p.72. Are they (the wolves) going to educate the baby? (for rear, bring up). I'm going to visit the Zoo in the summer holidays (I'm going to the Zoo....) I am fond of playing basket-ball. They are not fond of putting on blue shoes. I am fond of it (i.e. eggs and bacon). Is the church in front of the station? (for opposite). p.56. As the students know the verb "to be" they will catch the conversation system easily (grasp or understand, or perhaps the idiomatic to catch on to...?) Ernest hasn't got a room to himself, has he? (= of his own). That same evening the Duponts are going to the pictures indeed.

Sometimes there is a truly idiomatic phrase, but it occurs where it does not belong, e.g. Right you are!

Bk II, p.25. Don't you remember Lucy's birthday-party?

Right you are! But I quite forgot about....

or the following, on p.18. John: This afternoon you have kicked over the ball at least four times.

Mother: Don't make such a terrible noise! You are quarrelling, aren't you? Here's a cup of tea for both of you. It's going to do you good after this... bad luck. ...Well, cheers!

John: Cheerio, Mrs Dupont!

Peter: Cheers, Mum. ....Mother passes a slip of paper.

Un-English word order is frequent, e.g. p.12. ...a central idea should be always behind it. p.13. ---but it still should be fluent English. p.13.; they read it now (for they now read it). p.15. ...the result generally is: a mere reading lesson.... p.21. but he also should have learned how to correct the positions of his pupils' mouths, etc.

The following are a few of the mistakes to be found scattered through the work: afterwards for later, succession of table, for order of tables, right (which is colloquial for correct), as in right pronunciation, right intonation, a right sum, a wrong sum (correct and incorrect must be used in this context), do as if you don't understand (pretend), boresome (obviously a hybrid between boring and tiresome!), the too-frequent use of nice (especially where some other word would have been appropriate, e.g. pleasant, pretty, interesting, tidy, etc.). Admittedly, the word is constantly used in spoken English to express little more than approval or liking, but it should not be taught to the exclusion of the more suitable adjectives! There is no such thing as an easy desk - only an easy chair (in this sense of comfortable). Let is almost consistently and exclusively used instead of make (e.g. let the students make up sentences, which implies permission, whereas make (or the American have) is the better word here, and on occasion it is actually used. We do not say "the rules of plural building" but the rules for the formation of the plural; nor do we warn the teacher "mind the right intonation" (cp. mind your head! or mind the step!), but we should say "be careful that the intonation is correct". One does not finish up a lesson, one merely finishes it in 3 hours. We say before a vowel, not in front of a vowel. "By means of this poem...the students contact the names of the colours" does not sound English; perhaps "This poem will teach the pupils (or: bring them into contact with) the names of the colours" would be an improvement. In English we count up to 100, not till 100 (p.48). When we are asked "Who is this lady", our correct answer would be: "She's (not It's) Mrs. Dupont, (cp. Who's that talking,

i.e. on the telephone, we might answer It's Mrs. Dupont).

Equally un-English is the statement: to make a good table he (i.e. the teacher) should take care of correct grammar (be careful to use?); to teach the vocabulary in little sentences (short?); the grammatical elucidation (explanation of grammatical points?); Inflexions, or inflexions, would be better today than flexions in grammar. The word occasionally is frequently misused in the texts.

It should be noted that plenty of is not a synonym for a lot of, a good deal of, much and many; plenty of means sufficient, and cannot therefore be used as it is so often in the texts, e.g. plenty of people are watching the accident, plenty of people are going into the cinema, etc.

The texts are said to be in "colloquial style". If so, such words as enter (for go in), rise (get up in the morning), etc. are as out of place as are the sentences in which a negative particle or adverb is placed in head-position and followed by inversion, e.g. (two friends, schoolboys, are talking) "Never do they lose it (a match) when John is the goal-keeper!"; "No longer do I want to stop the balls..."; "No longer do they quarrel. Just as unlikely in the chatter of schoolboys of about 14 years of age would be: How bad a keeper you've been! They generally don't lose it though, or the answer "No, I never have" for "No, I haven't". "Cheers" and "Cheerio" are not used at tea-time between a mother and two schoolboys! And to the question "Who hasn't done any homework since last week?", the answer is not "I have"! Whitsun and Whit Sunday are correct, but not Whitsunday. In the Vocabulary at the end of the book, to go shopping is given as einen Bummel machen (Besorgungen machen, Einkäufe machen?), and "Would you mind....?" is given as "Möchten Sie", whereas it is more often "würden Sie bitte". To switch on the light etc. is einschalten. The formulation of the rules; Adverbs having a form of their own, e.g. again, alone, etc., and: Adverbs having the same form as the adjective, e.g. early, friendly, lovely, etc. would be better expressed with a relative clause, e.g. Adverbs that have the same form.....

The choice of words is often either wrong or unfortunate, e.g. the ubiquitous nice, the expression "Lucy is a lovely girl,"

which no English person would normally say of a 10-year old girl; alternating for alternative, conversed for converted, solution of exercises for answers to, and many others.

Furthermore, the punctuation leaves much to be desired, especially the use and omission of commas. In many cases a comma would help the reader to understand the meaning of the sentence, in other cases there are commas before temporal and that-clauses, and often also before defining relative clauses, which frequently changes the sense of the sentence altogether. Colons, too, are used much more than they are normally in English, and on some pages of the Introduction they seem to break out like a rash!

Another flaw in the whole series of books is the inconsistent use of hyphens (consultation of a good dictionary is advised!) e.g. schooldesk, schoolbuilding, and schoolday would be better with a hyphen; business-man alternates with businessman, tomato-soup and tomatousoup are both found, and alarmclock would be better with a hyphen, or even as two separate words. An exhaustive list of such cases cannot be given here.

That the authors have often made an unfortunate choice of words, phrases and grammatical constructions has already been mentioned.

Many mistakes cannot be put down to ignorance of colloquial English, but to sheer carelessness. For instance, the inconsistency in the use of capital and small letters: mum and Mum, dad and Dad (in both cases Mummy and Daddy would have been a better?), Teacher and teacher, catholic and Catholic, Mother and mother, Father and father (always in the same context); then there are various cases of incorrect divisions of words at the end of a line, e.g. the-re, demonstra-ting, chor-us, etc. Spelling mistakes also occur, e.g. wellicome, compell, collegues, indutive, buth (for both), etc. There are fewer misprints, but like for bike (bicycle might have been a better choice in some cases!) twice on one page seems rather remarkable. Inconsistencies and carelessness in the diagrams are comparatively frequent: p. 17. I'm but you are in the same diagram, and in the second diagram on that page (TB1), under Verb stands To be (a plus sign is missing), while below

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form

this we find: Notion- , a most enigmatic statement!

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Verbs

Inconsistencies in the use of who's and who is, that is and that's, there's and there is, etc. are found in both the reading texts and the grammatical explanations. No doubt the use of the plural form of the verb with a singular subject must also be put down to carelessness: "The verbal column....present the fixed elements.....", as may also be the use of the singular each with the plural data. The frequent use of difficulties (i.e. the plural) where an English speaker would use the singular form may be due to the fact that the foreigner finds this distinction difficult to grasp. That bathroom and bedroom are sometimes also written with a hyphen and sometimes without seems rather strange (they should be without, of course), whereas sentence pattern, substitution tables, reading texts, well equipped (in the attributive position), Dutch speaking students, etc. might better be written with a hyphen.

Contrary to English usage, the Roman numeral is followed by -st, -nd, -rd, -th, e.g. IIIth, VIIth, etc.

The abbreviation of holidays to hols might be allowed in a dialogue between schoolboys, but is not really suitable in the title of a reading text. Similarly, the title, or heading, of one of the reading texts is To School. Going to School would have been a more suitable title.

The use of collocations and phrases throughout the book seems rather odd. What is meant here by collocations? Perhaps colloquialisms? (Latin locare and loquare.) Similarly, the use of the word structure for construction is unfortunate, since the difference between the two may be compared with the difference between policy and politics.

Space will not allow an enumeration of the many careless mistakes in the setting of the TB1, but Lucy' for Lucy's may be given as a sample.

More serious are the words that are wrongly applied, e.g. notion for word, the frequent use of unity for unit, a stern logical way (for strictly), to figure for to reflect or represent or mirror (?), and faulty constructions, such as: "...subjective selections like Ber-

litz's, how great their interest may have been..." (however), "We have applied the translation method when we wanted to...." (whenever).

Very serious is the frequent use of incorrect prepositions, e.g. to boast upon ..., ---all-important in language teaching purposes, ---to draw the attention of the linguists on the structural elements...; to avoid the common objections made...against direct-method handbooks; Each of these sentences should be drilled into language habits (drilled into the pupils' heads until they become language habits?); ... we can always conclude to a rule of syntax; The patterns taught in this way will be indelibly stamped into the students' minds; as the equivalent to "isn't it?" and "is it?"; ...the substitution of an idiomatic answer to the drill answer; ...the difference for a WHAT-question asked in the native language lesson and a foreign language lesson; ...they may...ask their questions to their friends...; Another student changes the infinitives in ing-forms; Is Peter washing with cold water?... they are an attempt to more freedom...; etc.

Many of the above faults are obviously due to the influence of French, as are also such mistakes as "We have remedied the poverty of contents by giving our course riches (Fr. *richesse*?) of structure." "In this handbook we start with a systematic conversation drill..., which gradually develops into idiomatic answers, ... so as to arrive into real conversation."

In the same way, in spite of what is taught in the grammar sections, the position of the adverbs of indefinite time is very frequently wrong. A suspicion that the authors are not too sure of the use of adjective and adverb arises when one finds the rule: "Some adjectives are used as adverbs", and as an example the word lovely; "She sings lovely" for instance? It might have been better to mention fast! Very strange is the deliberate avoidance of adverbial forms in the texts, which makes the language sound un-English, or more like a form of Basic English, e.g. in a slavish way, for slavishly, in an elaborate way, for elaborately, in a slow and distinct way, for slowly and distinctly. However, "to read and write phonetically" is used, though a suspicion is felt that phonetically is not the correct word here (since no phonetic transcriptions are used in the texts) - perhaps "with a correct pronunciation" is meant? The following cases of incorrect adverbial forms may also be pointed out:...

a lot of words that are never pronounced in the same way when used single (alone?) or when used in a sentence. Try to teach the new vocabulary as visual as possible. Do it visual (i.e. teach present perfect form of verb).

Further faults are: the use of both...and... for either...or; ...it proved to be no Standard English any more (p.6);...for these names do not express any more what we really intend. "Illimited" on page 6 is an unusual form, and would be better replaced by unlimited. Incoherent is wrongly used (p.6), in case is used for if (p.7), ... by using (by the use of would be better) substitution tables: alternating is used for alternative; a grammatical display is rather strange; and the word indeed is frequently used in a way that no born Englishman would use it.

On p.6 (TB1) the author states that "no decisive work has yet been published on the structure of English". A.S. Hornby's "A Guide to Patterns and Usage in English" (Oxford University Press, 1954) might be recommended here. Again, the author states: "...it (i.e. the phonetic system) has been invented by Dr. Daniel Jones, when he was a teacher of English as a foreign language." Apart from the fact that the English formulation is faulty here, we would point out that Daniel Jones has long been Professor Daniel Jones.

On p.4 (TB1) we find: ":not only the ears, but also the muscles of the mouth and these (sic) of the eyes and of the hands should be trained from the very beginning." Surely it is not the muscles of the eyes and hands that have to be trained?

A careless mistake is to quote the title of Charles Kingsley's book as "The Waterbabies" - it is "Water Babies". Moreover, when quoting title and date of publication of a book, it is usual to put "first edition (or impression, or published) 1940", not merely "first 1940", etc.

In spite of the statement that pupils of a first year's course must not come into contact with any phonetic symbols (TB1, p.29); a list headed "Pronunciation of Proper Names" is given at the end of Book I, p.143, and here the phonetic symbols are used (unfortunately not Professor Jones's system used elsewhere, in dictionaries, etc.) -

when are the pupils supposed to have been taught these symbols? Cp. p.26, "The reading text is a basis for a real reading lesson (phonetics)." If they have not learnt them, how can the pupils make use of the symbols in this otherwise useful, and usually correct list. A few mistakes have slipped in, however, e.g. Robinson [Robinson] for [-sən], Walt Disney [wolt] for [wo:lt], [businessmen] for [-man]. The same care has unfortunately not been taken with the Vocabulary (Bk I, P. 146) where a number of th signs are wrong, e.g. than is given as [θan], then as [θen] (cp. [θaŋk] and [θiŋ]), and today is given as [tədeɪ], whereas [tu'deɪ] is much more cultured. In the appendix entitled Collocations and Phrases, many of the French and German translations are incorrect or not good enough, not appropriate to the corresponding reading text, e.g. certainly not: überhaupt nicht (for bestimmt or gewiss nicht), Fr. pas du tout; a piece of furniture is given in German as ein Möbe (misprint?), plenty of is not Fr. beaucoup nor German viel, but Fr. assez de and German genug, genügend, reichlich; as a matter of fact would be better translated by eigentlich than by in der Tat, wirklich, and by d'ailleurs in Fr. rather than en effet; what a nuisance! is hardly quel ennui! in Fr. (rather by c'est idiot!), nor is it Wie unangenehm! in German (rather: wie dumm!); to take notes (a policeman after an accident) is not prendre note de in French (prendre des notes), nor German Notiz nehmen (but Notizen machen); rather slowly is not assez lent, but assez lentement in French, and not träge in German, but ziemlich langsam. Soft is given as doux and zart; preferable would surely be mou and weich, though this must depend upon the context, though unfortunately there is no reference to the lesson in which the word occurs. Straight is given as tout droit and geradeaus, which is correct in some contexts, but what about a straight line, a straight answer? Dad is given as papa in Fr. but as Vater in German. Would not a more affectionate form be possible, e.g. Vati?

The following are a few examples of faulty choice of words and phrases: The doubling of the ending (for final) consonant. The students have already marked (noticed) the phenomenon. Impossible is the use of the idiomatic "That's the idea" in the following context: Peter: Let's take a photograph. John: That's the idea. It can only be That's an idea in this context. If a boy says to his father, "I'm going to work very hard and try for a scholarship next term", his father may answer, "That's

the idea", expressing approval. In Book II of Living English a few of the worse mistakes may be indicated, e.g. It is incorrect in cultured English to address a woman as miss, without a name, as when a pupil is made to say I beg your pardon, miss, or when Peter asks the librarian, ".what is it (a book) about, Miss?" No English person would say of little 7-year old Ernest "he's a very young child"! All the words are right, but the phrase is not idiomatic, it simply would not be used. Nor would anyone say of Minnie the cat "She's an old animal", or of Mac the dog "He's a young animal". Incorrect are also: ...it's a house of two storeys;... (The children are looking at a map of London) "Show me grandfather's place then; he's a Londoner." To any English person Grandfather's place would suggest his mansion or estate, not the part of London in which he lives (it is actually Hampstead), nor could Lucy say, "What's the name again of grandfather's place?" There is a small garage at the house too. Peter is looking for his socks, his shoes and his tie and exclaims, "Well I never, where are they?" What English boy would ever say such a thing! Why the inconsistency in the use of the contracted forms? For instance, we find can I, can't I, may I, may I not? Why not the normal mayn't I? "There is a ring at ten to eight and Peter is opening the door" - again a wrong use of the "present continuous". "John: Hullo, Peter! Am I not very early today?" Any English boy would ask either, "Aren't I early today?" or "I'm early today, aren't I?". Peter says: "We've got only one wardrobe for both of us." We should say "for the two of us". Peter says to his friend John, "Look here! This is my new camera". (Look is quite sufficient!), and John answers, "Oh! I say, it's a real beauty." Without being wrong, this exclamation simply does not sound like the words an English boy would actually use. Text XVII is rather an unfortunate affair, what with its Big-Ben, its monkeys' tea-party, and children riding on an electric (?) elephant. And why should the "monkeys" drinking tea be just like real Englishmen? Do not Englishwomen drink tea much more than men? Once again, the use of the "present continuous" is entirely wrong. If John is showing a photograph of the Chimps' tea-party, the various successive actions cannot be expressed in the continuous form: making tea, pouring it out in cups (pouring it out, or pouring it into cups!), putting sugar and milk in their tea, then drinking it - these are all steps in a process - they cannot all be shown at the same time on one and the same photograph. And if John is telling Peter all about

the actual tea-parties, he would be obliged to use the "present simple", as this tense is called here. On p. 91, ex. 114, the example given is always with "I take my book" - this is incomplete. There must be either "to the table", "out of my desk", "up to the teacher", "from the shelf", of some such phrase. Without this, the sentence is incomplete.

Although most of the texts would be interesting in themselves, there are too many phrases that make them sound just "off the mark", such as: "to wipe the blackboard", "she has entered the bathroom to have a wash", "she has taken the sheets from the bed" (why not: she has stripped the bed?) "she has covered the bed with the blankets", "she has folded her pyjamas nicely" (what a chance lost to teach the word "tidily"!)" "... perhaps there are pyjamas lying on the floor; perhaps there is a shirt on a chair; or there are stockings under the bed..." (what about the use of may be?) "And there we are: she's made up her mind!" "And now for breakfast! Aren't I hungry! Good heavens! Five to eight already! Good morning Mummy, Daddy and dear brothers!" Nothing badly wrong, but just so un-English! In Lesson XXI we find: "Father wolf is speaking...and all the wolves are listening sharply" (carefully, attentively?) "There is a child of man in the jungle" - is this taken direct from Kipling? In any case, it is not English today! "... and after a while they can hear a baby weep". Babies cry, they do not weep. It is unfortunate that the authors do not teach the -ing-form after to see and to hear, for in many of the cases the infinitive is not the correct form to use. In XXII we find: "The teacher has already started his lesson of maths" (we always say maths lesson, history lesson, geography lesson, etc.); "Peter is bowing his head over his book. And now he can see the blue sky above the school, above the highest trees..." Peter must have eyes at the back of his head! And Peter is bowing his head means that he is moving it up and down. Here it is the verb to bend that is needed, and even then it would be better to say "Peter's head is bent over his book". And here again the wrong use of both: "Now both friends are riding down the street." "Both friends arrive at school just in time." And Peter should not tell a lady to "carry straight on..." to get to the station!

Lesson XXIV contains the following sentences that are not good English "You are waiting for the teacher's final prayer. But

he isn't nervous at all: with cool patience he waits and waits and waits... until all the noises have stopped. Then he's making a very slow sign of the cross. But he may stop in the middle.... Isn't there a hand closing a satchel?...Then he starts praying all over again..." "The rush-hours have just begun..." "They are already passing the place of the accident" (not yet mentioned!). "Plenty of people are looking on". "Peter and John are riding carefully one behind the other now. That's just according to the rules of the road, isn't it? Have you got a high-way code?" etc.

Equally un-English are the sentences: "...without this leading question there is no conversation possible." "We may also utter this verb in the future form." "...the students make as many sentences as possible, therefore they use the table." "They cover the answers and try to find them by means of the corresponding answers" (misprint? otherwise most unclear). When teachers have at their disposal a language-laboratory they can use the...tape-recordings of L.E.I... They can be trained during a 4th T.P. They can also be used in class, when the teachers have at their disposal a well equipped "language class". In the latter case they can combine instruction and practice" - to whom do all these they's refer? "This is an example of what the table might be." (like?)

In conclusion, the present reviewer can only repeat: Unless this work is carefully revised and corrected, it cannot be recommended for use in schools.

A further little booklet by the same authors and with the same title, but prepared by E. Becuwe for the series Audio-Lingual Skills for the Language Laboratory, contains some of the same texts with all the same mistakes and weaknesses as the books discussed above, and cannot be recommended any more than the latter.

This article was originally written as a review of "Living English" by L. Engels, P. Jacobs, and J. Schuerewegen, published by Plantyn, Antwerp. In view of the proportions it assumed, however, this review has been printed as an article. The author wishes to point out that, had she been asked to write an article in the first place, she would have set about the work in a different way and used an entirely different stylistic formulation. The reader is asked to bear this in mind.

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