

different expressions (e.g. *a woman, the woman, she*) used to talk about the same person. This first chapter has also been designed to exemplify the general type and sequence of topics that will be presented in the chapters that follow.

Basic forms

At the beginning of each chapter, there is a description of the basic forms being analyzed. In those descriptions, a general familiarity is assumed with many traditional terms for grammatical concepts. That is, terms such as SENTENCE (S), VERB (V), and NOUN (N), will be illustrated and used without technical discussion. There are, however, some terms that may need an introduction.

On terminology

A distinction is drawn between a NOUN (N) and a NOUN PHRASE (NP). Essentially, the term noun is reserved for single words. The forms shown in [1] are all nouns.

- [1] book, example, man, tradition, woman

In speaking or writing English, however, we rarely use nouns by themselves. We use them in phrases. When we add an ARTICLE (e.g. *a* or *the*) to the noun, we create a noun phrase. When ADJECTIVES (e.g. *good, old*) are included, we also have noun phrases. The forms in [2] are all noun phrases.

- [2] the book, some good examples, an old man, that tradition,
a woman

Given this distinction, we can then see that a PRONOUN (e.g. *it, he, her, them*) is not a form that normally substitutes for a noun. We don't typically use the expressions in [3b] to refer to the same things in [3a].

- [3] a. In *the book*, there was *an old man* and *a woman*.
b. *At the start of *the it, the old he* was helping *the her*.
c. At the start of *it, he* was helping *her*.

As shown in [3c], we use the pronouns by themselves in place of the whole noun phrase. A pronoun in English is used in the same way as a noun phrase. Relative pronouns such as *who* and *which*, as we will see in Chapter 9, are also used as noun phrases. In discussing other important terms, such as subject and agent, we will be talking about the use of noun phrases rather than just nouns.

On being ungrammatical

The star symbol, or asterisk (*), which is placed in front of the sentence in [3b], is a conventional way of marking forms as UNGRAMMATICAL. (Such forms are sometimes described as 'starred'.) This symbol will be used in the following

chapters to indicate that we are treating a form or structure, as used in that context, as not grammatically acceptable. In other contexts, these seemingly ungrammatical forms may be used in a meaningful way. The star symbol will only be used here to mean ‘ungrammatical in the context indicated’. In this approach, a noun phrase such as **a her* is basically treated as an ungrammatical form in most contexts (such as [3b]) where the reference is equivalent to *a woman*, even though it is possible to hear someone say *When I heard the name Charlie, I was expecting a him and not a her* in one particular context.

To take another example, the basic form of the sentence presented in [4] would normally be treated as ungrammatical.

[4] **She is in stay.*

If asked to explain why [4] is ungrammatical, we might say that, in terms of basic forms, *stay* is a verb, and here it has been put in a slot that is mostly reserved for nouns or noun phrases. That is, in the grammar of English, we normally have nouns, not verbs, in phrases after PREPOSITIONS (e.g. *in, on, at*). Putting a verb in a slot that is reserved for a noun or noun phrase will usually create an ungrammatical structure. The explanation, in terms of grammatical form, is relatively simple.

However, I have heard someone use the sentence shown in [4] and it sounded quite appropriate and meaningful in the context. My friend has a dog that is very well trained and, when told to *stay* in one place, the dog (*she*) will not move from that place. My friend can then say [4] to explain why her dog is sitting quietly. So, there is a state called *stay* that this dog can be *in*. We often represent states by using nouns after prepositions (e.g. *She is in love*) and that seems to be what one speaker is doing when using [4] to talk about her dog. We will have more to say about being *in love* in Chapter 6.

Notice that it is the function of the form (i.e. whether it is being used as a verb or as a noun) that determines whether the structure in [4] seems grammatical or ungrammatical. If one form is generally used as a verb (as in the case of *stay*), we will naturally think that it is ungrammatical when used as a noun. Thus, ‘being ungrammatical’ is using forms and structures in ways that they are not generally used, and for which no special context of use can be imagined. For many people, however, any discussion of what is grammatical or ungrammatical seems to lead to the issue of whether a structure is really ‘good English’ or not.

On good English

The issue of what is, and is not, ‘good English’ is rarely addressed in this book. There will be observations on what sounds more typical (in a context), what is more formal, more stuffy, more casual, or more frequent, but we will avoid the issue of what is better (or even **more better*). In language use, the concept of

'better' really depends on values unrelated to an understanding of grammatical structures. Consider the following common example where one version of a structure is sometimes claimed to be better than another.

For one English speaker (let's call him Bert), it may be extremely important that an example such as [5a] should be treated as the only acceptable form and that a version such as [5b] should be unacceptable as good English.

- [5] a. Mary can run faster than I.
b. Mary can run faster than me.

The issue here is the correct form of the pronoun (*I* or *me*). Bert may insist that what is expressed in [5] is a version of *Mary can run faster than I can run*. This full version shows that the pronoun (*I*) is the subject of *can run* and that *me* would not be grammatical in the structure (i.e. **me can run*). Therefore, says Bert, [5b] is ungrammatical and bad English.

Another speaker (let's call him Ernie) might respond that *me* sounds just fine in [5b] and seems to be the form that most people use in this structure. Bert is presenting a **PRESCRIPTIVE** argument (i.e. how it should be used) and Ernie is offering a **DESCRIPTIVE** argument (i.e. how it generally seems to be used). This type of discussion may be what is often associated with the topic of English grammar, but there will be very little of it in this book. In a case like this, we will be more concerned with explaining how both structures can be used in English.

In the particular case of example [5], it is possible to provide a reasonable explanation for both structures. To do so, we should consider a related structure that English speakers use, as shown in [6].

- [6] Mary can run faster than ten miles per hour.

Looking at example [6], we can see that the basis of Bert's explanation (i.e. **Mary can run faster than ten miles per hour can run*) is not appropriate here. The expression *ten miles per hour* is not the subject of *can run*, but an object following *than*. The word *than* seems to be used in [6], and also in [5b], as a preposition. After prepositions, English tends to have object pronouns (*me*, *him*) rather than subject pronouns (*I*, *he*). For Ernie, preferring [5b], the word *than* can be used as a preposition. However, for Bert, preferring [5a], the word *than* is being used as a **CONJUNCTION**, that is, a form that connects two clauses, and the pronoun *I* is the subject of the second clause. From this perspective, both Ernie and Bert are right. Grammatically speaking, neither form is better English than the other.

In the preceding discussion, we introduced another two technical terms, **SUBJECT** and **OBJECT**, that will be used in some of the following chapters. English pronouns provide the clearest distinction between subject forms (*he*,

she, we, they) and object forms (*him, her, us, them*). In the most typical cases, the subject (e.g. *the woman, she*) comes before the verb, and the object (e.g. *the books, them*) comes after the verb, as shown in [7].

- [7] a. The woman wanted the books.
b. She took them.

We will have more to say on the role of subjects and objects in the discussion of indirect objects in Chapter 7 and relative clauses in Chapter 9. This initial description only deals with the forms and positions of subjects and objects in English sentences. That is, we have only considered what they look like and where they go in sentences. To describe these categories further, we have to move on, as we will do in every chapter, to talk about meaning as well as form.

Basic meanings

When we try to explain the meaning of grammatical structures, we tend to use different concepts from those found in the description of basic forms. We talk about the situations or events described by sentences. Instead of verbs, we consider the types of actions or states represented by the verbs. We are also interested in the kinds of entities and concepts represented by nouns and noun phrases. We try to describe the roles of the entities as participants in the actions performed within those events.

In this way, we move from a purely STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION of basic forms as sentences, nouns, and verbs, to a MORE FUNCTIONAL DESCRIPTION of what a speaker or writer is doing with those forms, as in referring to events, participants, and actions. In a structural description, we are basically concerned with listing all the forms in a language and being able to say whether a particular form is correct or incorrect. In a functional description, we are more concerned with what meaning distinction is conveyed by the use of one form rather than another. For example, instead of just talking about the sentence, noun, and verb in [8], we can interpret the utterance as representing a specific type of event.

- [8] Someone stole my bag.

In this event, there is a central action (*stole*), plus one role involving the ‘doer of the action’, or the AGENT (*someone*), and another role involving the ‘thing affected by the action’, or the THEME (*my bag*). We will talk about agents and actions more specifically in connection with aspect in Chapter 3, modals in Chapter 4, infinitives in Chapter 8, and relative pronouns in Chapter 9.

We can also note that the most typical events we describe involve a human agent performing a physical action that affects a non-human theme (as in [8]). That is, the distinction between HUMAN and NON-HUMAN also becomes

relevant. We can go further and distinguish between ANIMATE non-human entities (e.g. animals) and NON-ANIMATE non-human entities (e.g. objects, ideas). These meaning categories can be useful in explaining a number of grammatical features of English, including indirect objects in Chapter 7 and relative clauses in Chapter 9.

Returning to the roles of entities, we can describe actions by non-humans that affect humans, as in [9b], but there is simply an observed general pattern in which events are mostly described with human agents acting as the source or cause of actions, as in [9a].

- [9] a. The girl threw the ball.
b. It hit the runner.

This connection between the agent as the source entity and the theme as the affected entity may provide a useful basis for explaining one distinction that seems difficult for many learners of English.

'I am more interesting in English grammar'

There is a distinction in English between pairs of adjectives such as *boring / bored*, *exciting / excited*, and *shocking / shocked*. These forms are normally used as in examples [10a, b, and c], but many learners produce versions of the type shown in [10d and e].

- [10] a. The lesson was interesting.
b. The teacher was amusing.
c. The students were interested and amused.
d. I didn't like the lesson. I was boring.
e. I am more interesting in English grammar.

In examples such as [10d and e], learners may use the *-ing* form of the adjective (*boring, interesting*) when they actually mean the *-ed* form (*bored, interested*). But why, they may ask, can't they say, *I am boring today*? The answer is, of course, that they certainly can say that (it's grammatically correct), but is it what they mean? The meaning distinction is not too difficult to explain.

These adjectives are derived from verbs that express emotions or feelings. When we talk about an emotion, we can focus on the SOURCE (i.e. who or what causes it) or on the EXPERIENCER (i.e. who or what is affected by it). When you are talking about the source, you use the *-ing* form. If a book (or a lesson or a person) causes the emotion, then it is *boring, interesting, or exciting*. When you are talking about the experiencer, you use the *-ed* form. If people experience the emotion, then they are *bored, interested, or excited*. The cause is *boring*, the experiencer is *bored*.

As we will do throughout this book, we can take these observations and summarize them, as shown in Box 1.1. We can also use this opportunity to

include a list (as a teaching resource) of several adjectives that have this meaning distinction.

Summary Box 1.1 Adjectives like boring and bored

Source or cause is <i>-ing</i>	Experiencer or affected is <i>-ed</i>
Things or people are:	People (mostly) are:
<i>amazing, amusing, annoying,</i>	<i>amazed, amused, annoyed,</i>
<i>astonishing, bewildering,</i>	<i>astonished, bewildered,</i>
<i>boring, confusing, depressing,</i>	<i>bored, confused, depressed,</i>
<i>disappointing, disgusting,</i>	<i>disappointed, disgusted,</i>
<i>embarrassing, exciting,</i>	<i>embarrassed, excited,</i>
<i>exhausting, fascinating,</i>	<i>exhausted, fascinated,</i>
<i>frightening, horrifying,</i>	<i>frightened, horrified,</i>
<i>interesting, intriguing,</i>	<i>interested, intrigued,</i>
<i>irritating, puzzling, satisfying,</i>	<i>irritated, puzzled, satisfied,</i>
<i>shocking, surprising,</i>	<i>shocked, surprised,</i>
<i>terrifying, tiring, worrying</i>	<i>terrified, tired, worried</i>

When learners make mistakes in trying to use the forms in Box 1.1, they tend to do so by overusing the *-ing* form. That is, we mostly don't have to devote energy to helping them learn how to say that things are *boring*. Given an opportunity to teach or focus learners' attention on these forms, the teacher might be able to give greater emphasis to the *-ed* forms, providing or inviting examples in contexts where participants are affected (emotionally) by events. In this way, our learners might become more accurate when they decide to tell us how *bored* (or *interested*) they are in our classes.

As will often happen throughout the following chapters, an exercise will be offered, typically following a Summary Box, as exemplified in Exercise 1.A. Suggested answers for all these exercises are provided at the end of the book.

In many of these exercises, as well as in illustrative examples within the main discussion, the sentences or texts have been created specifically to focus attention on a particular grammatical feature. Most of the examples are actually recalled or slightly modified versions of sentences and texts that were heard or read in the process of analyzing natural discourse. In some cases, particularly in the discussion topics, the texts are presented in a way that is very

close to their original form in print or as transcribed from recorded speech. It is hoped that the added difficulty sometimes experienced in dealing with genuine texts will be balanced by the benefits of becoming more familiar with actual examples of grammatical constructions as they are used in contemporary English.



Exercise 1.A

Read through the following text, underlining all the adjectives expressing emotions. Then, try to identify the 'sources' or the 'experiencers' for each adjective in the spaces provided.

Yesterday was a school holiday. Of course, it rained all day, so my kids were really bored. I wanted to do some work at home, but they interrupted me every five minutes and just became too annoying. I am amazed and

astonished that their teachers are not constantly exhausted. I was irritated after only one morning with them and was really worried about the afternoon. So, I gave up my work and asked the little monsters if they would be interested in a movie. They were thrilled. Unfortunately, we chose to go to a really boring film. After about twenty minutes, they stopped being excited and fell asleep. I wasn't disappointed at all.

e.g. (bored) kids

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____
- 11 _____

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*Why can I say 'I shot the sheriff', but not *'I smiled the sheriff'?*

In the discussion so far, we have concentrated on the central elements of structure (subject, verb, object), typically representing the main components of events (agent, action, theme). By focusing on these CORE elements, we can identify aspects of the grammar that indicate what happened, who or what caused it, and who or what was affected by it. There are, however, other elements that have a MORE PERIPHERAL role in the description of events. In English, these elements are typically found in preposition phrases.

Within a structure that is formed by a preposition plus a noun phrase, the entity represented by the noun phrase will have the form of an object (e.g. *with him, near them*), but that entity will not be directly affected by the action of the

verb. In many cases, the preposition phrase will provide information about the circumstances of an event, such as when (*at five o'clock, on Saturday*), where (*in the room, beside the window*), or how (*with a ruler, by bus*).

In other cases, the use of a preposition will clearly mark that a participant was not directly affected by the action of the event. For example, there is a distinct contrast in meaning between the (i) and (ii) sentences presented in [11].

- [11] a. (i) She kicked the dog. (ii) She kicked at the dog.
 b. (i) I shot the sheriff. (ii) I shot at the sheriff.
 c. (i) *We looked the report. (ii) We looked at the report.
 d. (i) *He smiled the boy. (ii) He smiled at the boy.

If it is grammatical to both *kick something* and *kick at something*, why can't we **look something* as well as *look at something*? The answer may be found by thinking about the differences in meaning between *kick* and *kick at*. When you *kick* something, there is a direct impact of the verb action on the affected object (ouch!). When you *kick at* something, there is the same physical action (*kick*), but there is no impact on the object (missed!). We normally interpret *kick at* or *shoot at* as meaning that the object didn't get hit. The preposition *at*, in these examples, indicates that the object is not directly affected by the action of the verb. In English, the actions represented by *look*, or *smile*, are clearly not considered to have any direct physical impact on the object. That is, you can *look at something*, because the something is not directly affected, but you can't **look something*, because it would imply that there was a direct impact of your look on the object.

Generally speaking, objects of prepositions are interpreted as not being directly affected by the verb action, as illustrated with other prepositions in [12].

- [12] a. (i) Mark flew the plane. (ii) Mark flew in the plane.
 b. (i) Mika rode a horse. (ii) Mika rode on a horse.

In [12], we interpret the subjects (*Mark, Mika*) as having much more control over the objects (*plane, horse*) in the (i) examples.

These observations on the meaning of objects with and without prepositions are summarized in Box 1.2. It should be emphasized that the interpretations presented here, as throughout this book, are not being offered as the only or the complete analysis of the possible meanings of the forms under investigation. It is a common experience in the study of grammatical meaning that, as we find a way to explain one aspect of the relationship between form

and meaning, we often discover other aspects that require further investigation. There are more detailed discussions of the role of prepositions in Chapters 6, 7, and 9, with the ‘not directly affected’ concept being explored more fully in connection with indirect objects in Chapter 7.

Summary Box 1.2 **Objects after *kick* and *kick at***

Structure: Subject + verb (= physical action) + object

Meaning: Object is directly affected by action of verb

Examples: *The man kicked the box.*
**He looked the money.*

Structure: Subject + verb (= physical action) + preposition + object

Meaning: Object of preposition is not directly affected by action of verb

Examples: *The man kicked at the box.*
He looked at the money.

Linguistic distance

As will be noted on several occasions in the following chapters, there is a frequent relationship in English between LINGUISTIC DISTANCE and CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE. Linguistic distance can simply be measured by the amount of language (number of words or syllables) between one element and another. There is more linguistic distance between *shot* and *sheriff* in the sentence *I shot at the sheriff* than in the sentence *I shot the sheriff*. The word *at* creates more linguistic distance. It also creates more conceptual distance in the sense that the action of the verb *shot* is more separated from (i.e. has less impact on) the object *sheriff*.

The additional linguistic distance between *flew* and *plane* created by the presence of *in* (example [12a]) is interpreted as more conceptual distance (i.e. less control) between the action of the subject and the object. As a general observation, the more linguistic distance there is between any elements in English sentence structure, the more conceptual distance there will be in our interpretation of their relationship. This phenomenon will be discussed again in Chapters 7, 8, and (more briefly) 9. It's time for another exercise.

Exercise I.B

Using the following verb + object combinations, create sentences with and without *at*, and indicate (with *) which forms are ungrammatical.

- e.g. punch / arm
 He punched my arm.
 He punched at my arm.
- 1 drink / milk
 - 2 hit / ball
 - 3 kill / bug
 - 4 point / picture
 - 5 smile / baby
 - 6 swat / fly
 - 7 yell / students
-

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Meanings in context

After looking at basic forms and basic meanings in each chapter, we will also include some observations on how meaning is shaped by context. In particular, we will consider how grammatical forms are used in the INFORMATION STRUCTURE of communicative messages. As language users, we do not simply spend our time trying to create grammatically correct sentences. We are usually trying to organize what we want to say (i.e. information) in a way that is suitable for our listeners or readers. We can assume that our listeners are already familiar with certain information, whereas other information will be new. That is, there is NEW INFORMATION and old, or GIVEN INFORMATION, in what we communicate. Different grammatical forms are associated with these different types of information.

When we noted earlier, in examples [2] and [3], that a noun phrase could consist of a pronoun (*him*) or an article plus noun (*a man*), or an article plus an adjective plus a noun (*the old man*), we said nothing about the preferred uses of one of these forms rather than another. Yet, there are preferences.

In example [13], the speaker is telling a story based on a set of drawings (presented later as Figure 1.1). All the noun phrases are in italics.

- [13] There's *a woman* in *a supermarket*.
She meets *a friend* with *a small child*.

They stop and chat.
Then *the child* takes *a bottle* from *the shelf*
and puts *it* in *the first woman's bag*.

As each entity is introduced for the first time (i.e. new information), the speaker in [13] uses noun phrases with *a*, the INDEFINITE ARTICLE (e.g. *a woman, a supermarket, a friend, a small child, a bottle*). When an entity is mentioned again (i.e. given information), the speaker uses pronouns (e.g. *she, they, it*) or noun phrases with *the*, the DEFINITE ARTICLE (e.g. *the child, the first woman*). We should also note that the speaker can indicate an action without explicitly mentioning the agent, that is, by using a ZERO FORM (represented by \emptyset). In [13], the two verbs *chat* and *puts* have no obvious subjects. Their subjects can be represented by \emptyset as in [14].

- [14] a. They stop and \emptyset chat.
b. the child takes a bottle ... and \emptyset puts it ...

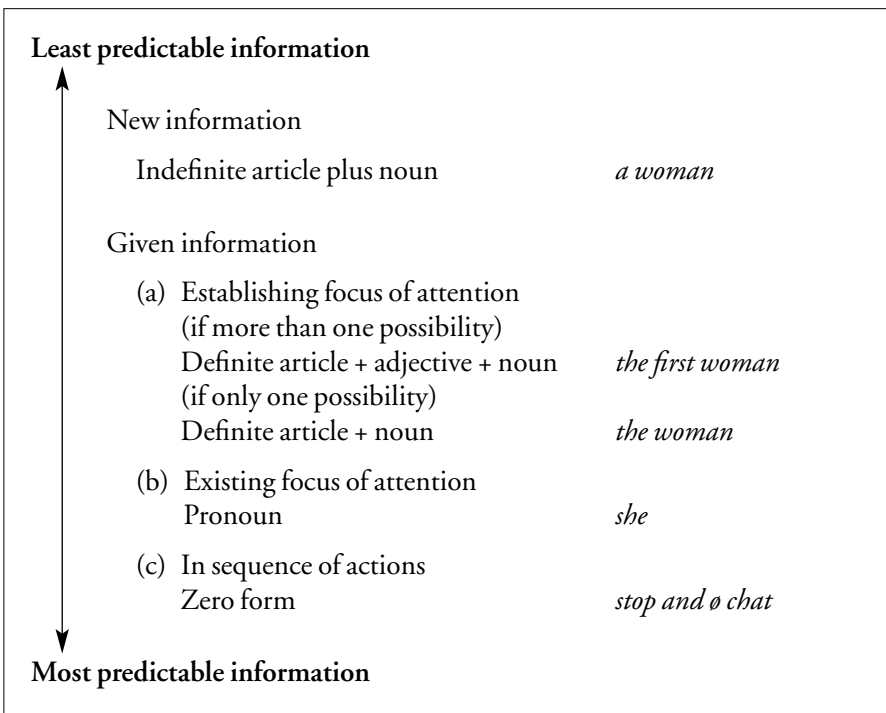
This use of a zero form clearly represents given information, in the sense that the listener is assumed to know the subjects of these verbs. We can note that the zero form seems to be preferred when there are two actions in sequence and the subject is the same for both verbs. The subject of the second verb is assumed to be known. That is, the zero form is used when the referent (who or what we're talking about) is highly predictable.

When the referent is less predictable, but certainly given information, pronouns are used. Although they are brief forms, English pronouns remind us that the referent (among those we already know) is female (*she*) or plural (*they*) or neuter (*it*). That is, pronouns carry more grammatical information than zero forms, and tend to be used when an entity has become the main focus of attention.

Noun phrases with *the* (e.g. *the child*) carry even more information and are used to establish a known entity as the focus of attention. That is, after having the woman and her friend (*they*) as the focus of attention, the speaker in line 4 of extract [13] establishes a different focus of attention with *the child*. If there is a possibility of confusion among the known referents, then an adjective is often included, as in *the first woman*. If a referent can be inferred on the basis of assumed knowledge, then a noun phrase with *the*, exemplified by *the shelf* in [13], can be used. For this speaker, having mentioned *a supermarket*, there is no need to announce that 'supermarkets have shelves', as if it is new information. This is treated as inferrable given information, but clearly not so predictable that a pronoun could be used. We shall consider more examples of this phenomenon in Chapter 2, in the discussion of articles. Pronouns, as typically conveying given information, are also relevant to the analysis of certain phrasal verbs in Chapter 6 and relative clauses in Chapter 9.

From this brief description, we can see that speakers and writers organize the information structure of their messages on the basis of predicting how familiar the listener or reader will be, at any point, with what is the focus of attention. It is important to emphasize that this analysis reflects the speaker's or writer's perspective concerning information status and the focus of attention. We will return to the concept of speaker's perspective in the analysis of tense and aspect (Chapter 3), modals (Chapter 4), conditionals (Chapter 5), and reported speech (Chapter 10). Some basic clues to the speaker's perspective, as reflected in the choice of English noun phrases, are offered in Summary Box 1.3.

Summary Box 1.3 *Choosing a woman, the woman, she, or zero (∅): the speaker's perspective*



Although a consideration of information structure was not traditionally part of grammar teaching, it does provide a useful way of thinking about certain features of English that are difficult for some learners. For example, in trying to describe the same drawings as the speaker of [13], one English language learner began his version as shown in [15].

[15] Lady go supermarket meet friend and talk—
boy in cart taking bottle.

This learner clearly knows appropriate vocabulary, but is producing ungrammatical English. He might appreciate some help in recognizing, perhaps via naturally comparable examples such as [13], that markers of information structure are expected in English discourse. A first step might be some attention to the use of articles in English. That will be our topic in Chapter 2.

Exercise I.C

The following description of the scenes in Figure 1.1 (on page 19) is by an adult English language learner from the Philippines. First, read over the description and underline the noun phrases. Then, answer the questions below.

the lady go to a supermarket
 she want to buy something
 she meet—met another lady with a little boy
 they are talking—when they were talking
 the two ladies they were talking
 the little boy a juice maybe I don't know
 the little boy put the bottle
 which took from shelf into the bag of the lady

- 1 List the noun phrases with indefinite articles.
- 2 Would you say that these are appropriate grammatical uses in English? Yes or no?
- 3 Identify a noun phrase with a definite article that would be more appropriate with an indefinite article.
- 4 List the pronouns used to identify people.
- 5 Would you say that these are appropriate grammatical uses in English? Yes or no?
- 6 Find an example of a zero form used as subject of a verb.
- 7 Is this a typical grammatical slot for a zero form in English? Yes or no?
- 8 Find an example of a noun without an article.
- 9 Is this a typical grammatical slot to find a noun without an article in English? Yes or no?
- 10 What change might you suggest in the form of the final noun phrase (to help identify the appropriate referent)?

Discussion topics and projects

At the end of every chapter, there are some topics for discussion, or projects for research, that invite further investigation of the grammatical structures considered. These investigations may involve aspects of second language acquisition or the study of English for specific purposes. In many cases, these projects invite speculation or studies on issues that have no established solutions or answers.

- 1 The topic of grammatical rules, and how they should be stated, is one that continues to challenge almost everyone who tries to teach English grammar. Here is one opinion:

Since there is no way of establishing a ‘best’ rule for any particular set of language phenomena, and our understanding of linguistic structure and of psycholinguistic processes is not such as to influence the formulation of pedagogical rules other than indirectly, there are sound reasons, both practical and theoretical, for learners and teachers to assume a cautious, if not skeptical, attitude towards any pedagogical treatment of language regularities. (Westney 1994: 72–73)

- (a) Is this author suggesting that we should act as if there are no rules? Would you agree or disagree with that idea?
- (b) Why do you think the author used the expression ‘language regularities’? Is there a possible distinction to be made between ‘regularities’ and ‘rules’?
- (c) If possible, read the rest of Paul Westney’s article and try to summarize the main points of this issue, along with your own reaction to the debate.

- 2 We can usually learn a lot about learners’ use of grammatical structures by conducting some simple research projects. Here is one possibility. Ask one English language learner to look at the drawings in Figure 1.1 and then to tell the story of what happened (as an eyewitness), including an ending. Record the student’s spoken version. Then, after chatting with the learner briefly about some other topic, ask him or her to perform a second task. This time ask the student to produce a written version of the same story.

After transcribing the spoken version, compare the use of noun phrases in both versions. What differences are noticeable? Is the learner more grammatical in one version? If possible, try to share your observations with the learner later.

Other options include a comparison between performances of the same task by a lower and a higher proficiency speaker, between the performance of one learner in English and (later) in his or her first language, or between

one learner who gets a chance to prepare before speaking and another who does not. After completing any study of this type, try to think of the implications for our teaching practices.

Teaching ideas

At the end of every chapter, there are some ideas for teachers to help them think of exercises and activities for class. These are simply offered as a way of getting started and should be adapted or revised (or rejected) according to the needs of each local situation.

1 Sandy is now a woman

A traditional exercise for focusing on different forms of noun phrases involves changing the status of the main character(s) in a story. For example, a common change is from male to female in order to focus students' attention on different pronouns. (Students from a number of different first language backgrounds have a lot of trouble with *he* and *she*.) In the following example, the text is first read for comprehension. Then, students can be asked to revise it because Sandy is now known to be a woman.

Police are looking for someone known only as Sandy. On Friday morning a man walked into a New York bank. He was wearing a black jacket and cap. Customers who saw him said he had a thin face and he looked about twenty. The man said he had a gun and demanded money. As he was running out, the alarm went off and surprised him and his cap fell off. Inside his cap, the name 'Sandy' was written.

2 The same old *boring* TV programs

With some groups of students, it will be possible to use an exercise on the *boring/bored* distinction like the one presented on pages 8–9 as Exercise 1.A. In most textbooks, however, this distinction is more typically presented in different kinds of fill-in-the-blank exercises. After a set of possible choices (see Box 1.1 on page 19) has been discussed, students can be asked to complete exercises of the type in (a) or (b).

(a) Choose only six of the following words to complete the text.

boring embarrassing satisfying surprising tiring worrying
bored embarrassed satisfied surprised tired worried

The news was _____. Usually people are _____ with the same old _____ TV programs, but one man got so _____ of them that he threw his TV set out of a window. Obviously, he wasn't very _____ about his downstairs neighbors or even _____ about the loud crash.

(b) In each of the following sentences, use both the *-ing* and *-ed* forms of the word provided.

(i) (*interest*) When the lesson is _____, students will be _____.

(ii) (*bore*) But many students will be _____ if the teacher is _____.

(iii) (*excite*) Some movies are so _____ that kids can get very _____.

(iv) (*exhaust*) We got really _____ because the work was so _____.

(v) (*frighten*) The explosion was _____. People were very _____.

Note. After an exercise like this, it is helpful to focus students' attention back on the meaning distinction, with questions that essentially ask 'Who (or what) is the cause?' and 'Who (or what) is the experiencer?' for each example.

3 Don't shout *at* Superhero

As a way of raising students' awareness of the role of *at* in verbs like *look at*, the following exercise may be useful.

Step 1. Begin with some common mistakes such as:

**He is looking us *Don't shout me *She's laughing you*

Some students may be able to volunteer, or the teacher may have to offer, better versions (including *at*) of these forms.

Step 2. Introduce the following short text about Superhero (with a local name perhaps) who is being attacked, as usual, by the bad guys. This text is for comprehension, either in spoken or written form.

It's another tough day for Superhero.
The bad guys shout at him.
One of them kicks at him.
Another stabs at him.
Another punches at him.
But none of them can hit Superhero.

(If the teacher doesn't want to, some students may be willing to demonstrate the meanings of the verbs here. But only the *at* versions!)

Step 3. Discussion point: Is there a mistake in the last line? Didn't they *kick*, *stab*, and *punch* Superhero, but they didn't *hit* him? How can that be? This discussion is directed towards establishing the distinction between *kick* and *kick at*.

Step 4. State (or restate) the distinction between uses of *kick* (= direct effect on object) and *kick at* (= no direct effect on object). Then ask students to decide if *at* is appropriate in any of these sentences:

- (i) He looked ___ the bottle of Pepsi.
- (ii) Then, he drank ___ it.
- (iii) She laughed ___ the funny shape of the cookie.
- (iv) But she ate ___ it anyway.

Perhaps the students can explain their decisions.

Step 5. Ask students to create sentences to describe another day in the life of Superhero using the following verbs: *frown*, *scream*, *smile*, *wave*, *wink*, *yell*.

4 Eyewitness accounts

As noted in this chapter, the use of picture sequences, as shown in Figure 1.1, can help teachers and students identify appropriate grammatical forms for marking given and new information. The first few pictures of other sequences can obviously be used, but one teaching sequence can be illustrated with Figure 1.1.

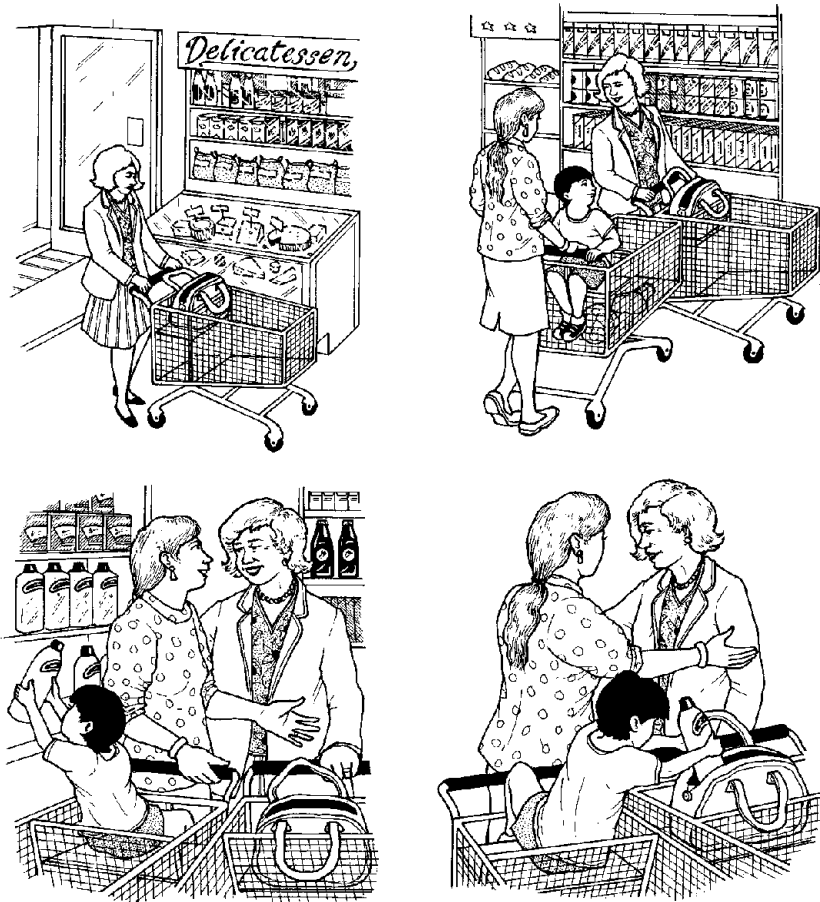


Figure 1.1