
UNIT 5

Structure

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5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we shall give you practice in listening comprehension by presenting short recordings from news bulletins and setting questions on comprehension. We shall also ask you to study a dialogue between a bicycle dealer and a customer and write a similar dialogue of your own.

In the section on pronunciation we shall point out the lack of correspondence between letters and sounds and introduce you to word stress, an important feature of English pronunciation.

After completing the unit you should be able to

- understand news broadcasts better;
- take part in a conversation with a shopkeeper;
- guard against spelling pronunciation in English; and
- say English words with correct stress patterns.

Cassette Recording

A cassette recording accompanies this unit and is available on payment. You can listen to it at home, if you have a cassette player, or at the nearest study centre set up by the university.

5.1 LISTENING COMPREHENSION

You should listen carefully to radio and television news broadcasts, talks, lectures, and discussions, whenever you get a chance. Try to get the main points of the talks and lectures and take down notes.

Exercise 1

We are giving you an extract from a news bulletin, which has been recorded on a cassette. You may listen to it at home or at one of the study centres. If this is not possible, ask a good speaker of English in your area to read it out to you from the script given at the end of the unit. While you listen to the news bulletin, try to take down notes that will help you recall the main points afterwards. After you have listened to the news item, try to answer the questions given below. Do not read the script yourself before answering the questions. When you have completed the exercise, you should check your answers with those given by us at the end of the unit.

1 What change is the Constitution Fifty-second Amendment Act going to bring about?

.....
.....

2 What are the three conditions under which a member will be disqualified under the new law?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3 Can a member who is disqualified appeal to the court?

.....

Exercise 2

Now listen to another extract from a news bulletin and answer the questions given below:

1 What is the main reason for Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's grave concern at the continuance of the Iran-Iraq war?

.....
.....
.....

2 Who was responsible for the bomb explosion at Tehran University?

.....

3 Fill the blank spaces in the following:

The explosion took place (a)
.....
and (b) were killed.

5.2 CONVERSATION

Before you actually practise conversations, you should know what to say in a particular situation. We shall, therefore, start by asking you to read and listen to conversations and write dialogues of your own.

Here is a specimen dialogue between a bicycle dealer and a customer. It has been recorded for you on the cassette. Read the dialogue first and then listen to it on the cassette. After that you can practise reading it aloud from the text.

- A (bicycle dealer) : Hello, sir.
What can I do for you?
- B (customer) : I'm looking for a good bicycle.
- A We have a number of new models, sir. Have a look. These two are quite popular these days.
- B Which one do you think will give a smooth run?
- A Oh both, really; but you might find this one more comfortable to ride.
- B How much will it cost?
- A It's only five hundred rupees.
- B Can I take it now?
- A We shall assemble another one for you and check it. It'll take only about two hours.
- B All right, then. I'll come back in the evening and take it. Will you accept a cheque?
- A A local cheque payable to 'bearer' will be all right.
- B See you in the evening, then.
- A Thank you, sir.

Exercise 3

Write a short dialogue of about 150 words between a customer and a shopkeeper selling books and magazines.

(Suggestions: You can tell the shopkeeper about the subject you are interested in, the kind of books you wish to buy, and for what course or examination. You should also indicate what magazines you are interested in.

5.3 PRONUNCIATION

To speak English well, you have to learn its correct pronunciation.

5.3.1 Letters and Sounds

One of the difficulties about English pronunciation is that there is no perfect correspondence between letters and sounds, as we have in Indian languages.

Look at the following words:

even, these, green, read, field, seize, machine, key, people. The spellings **e**, **e..e**, **ee**, **ea**, **ie**, **ei**, **i**, **ey**, **eo** in these words represent the same vowel sound, which also occurs in the unusually spelt word *suite* (meaning a connected series of rooms to be used together, and pronounced exactly like *sweet*).

Now look at the following words, which have similar spellings:

bough (meaning a branch of a tree), **cough**, **though**, **rough** and **through**. These words are all spelt with **-ough**, but this spelling gives a number of different pronunciations: **bough** has the same vowel sound as in **cow**; **cough** has the same vowel sound as in **cot** and has the sound /f/ at the end (We shall use symbols to represent sounds and place them between slant bars to distinguish them from the letters of the English alphabet.); **though** has the same vowel sound as in **go**; **rough** has the same vowel sound as in **rush**; and **through** has the same vowel sound as in **too**. In **bough**, **though** and **through**, the letters **gh** are silent, but in **cough** and **rough** they are pronounced /f/.

Exercise 4

List 5 words each (with, as far as possible, different spellings for the vowel sound) having

- i) the same vowel sound as in *see*,
(Examples: extreme, priest, receive, seat, police)

- ii) the same vowel sound as in *sit*,
-

- iii) the same vowel sound as in *late*,
.....
- iv) the same vowel sound as in *set*,
.....
- v) the same vowel sound as in *sat*,
.....
- vi) the same vowel sound as in *shut*,
.....
- vii) the same vowel sound as in *cart*,
.....
- viii) the same vowel sound as in *hot*,
.....
- ix) the same vowel sound as in *shoot*,
.....
- x) the same vowel sound as in *note*.
.....

Exercise 5

List 5 words each to show how the following vowel letters can have different sounds in different words:

a, e, i, o, u.

(*Examples:* able, any, bag, basket, village)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

You have seen that in English there is no one to one correspondence between letters and sounds. There are, in fact, more sounds in the language than there are letters in the alphabet. It is, therefore, necessary to learn to produce all the vowel and consonant sounds in English and not to confuse them with the letters of the English alphabet. Each sound is distinct, and the substitution of one of these sounds for another may either bring about a change in meaning or lead to the production of a word that does not sound like an English word at all. In order to avoid this confusion you must be able to distinguish between one sound and another.

For example, you should be able to distinguish between pairs of words like

- i) **peak** and **pick**,
- ii) **date** and **debt**,
- iii) **set** and **sat**,
- iv) **cut** and **cart**,
- v) **heard** and **hard**,
- vi) **cut** and **cot**,
- vii) **last** and **lost**,
- viii) **full** and **fool**,
- ix) **here** and **hair**,
- x) **pull** and **full**,
- xi) **ledger** and **leisure**,
- xii) **seat** and **sheet**.

Thus to speak English well you have to maintain the meaningful distinctions in the language. For the correct pronunciation of words you must learn to refer to the dictionary all the time. In the dictionary symbols are used to represent sounds and one symbol stands for one sound only. It is important to learn these symbols and the sound each symbol stands for. In later units we shall introduce you to the vowel and consonant sounds of English and the symbols used for them in **Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English**, Indian edition, and **Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English**, third edition (revised).

5.3.2 Word Stress

Another thing that you need to learn is what is called word stress in English.

Words are made up of one or more separately pronounced parts, called syllables.

Examples : (All these words have been recorded for you on the cassette.)

One syllable	:	course, part, one, block, two	
Two syllables	:	open	o.pen (syllable division shown by a dot)
		English	En.glish
		unit	u.nit
		listen	lis.ten
		speaking	speak.ing
Three syllables	:	foundation	foun.da.tion
		understand	un.der.stand
		whenever	when.ev.er
Four syllables	:	conversation	con.ver.sa.tion
		television	tel.e.vis.ion
Five syllables	:	pronunciation	pro.nun.ci.a.tion

Exercise 6

How many syllables do the following words have?

i) this ii) section iii) spoken iv) better v) prepare vi) improve vii) broadcast
viii) discussion ix) composition x) before

.....
.....

In English words of two or more syllables, at least one syllable stands out from the rest and we say it has greater stress.

The mark ' is placed before the syllable that carries the main stress of the word.

For example: 'English, 'speaking, im'prove

Some words also have secondary stress (weaker than the main stress) on another syllable.

The mark . is placed before such a syllable. For example:

'under' stand, , 'conver' sation

Here are some more examples taken from the text of this unit. All these words have been recorded for you on the cassette.

Words of two syllables; stress on the first syllable:

'unit	'section
'practice	'letter
'question	'feature
'study	'after
'dealer	'broadcast

Words of two syllables; stress on the second syllable:

pre'sent (verb)	cor'rect	be'low
re'cord (verb)	cas'sette	your'self
be'tween	dis'cuss	
com'plete	re'call	

Word of three syllables; stress on the first syllable:

'bulletin	'radio
'bicycle	'exercise
'customer	'possible
'similar	'afterwards
'carefully	'specimen

Words of three syllables; stress on the second syllable:

ob'jective	com'pleted
re'cording	a'mendment

im 'portant	con'dition
dis'cussion	a'nother
when'ever	con'tinue

Words of three syllables; main stress on the third syllable and secondary stress on the first syllable:

intro 'duce, under'stand, maga'zine

Exercise 7

Say all the words given above with the correct stress pattern.

Exercise 8

Mark the stressed syllables in the following words and say them with the correct stress pattern. You may consult the dictionary, if you like.

1 comprehension	2 conversation
3 pronunciation	4 correspondence
5 shopkeeper	6 accompany
7 available	8 university
9 television	10 constitution

5.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have

- given you practice in listening to news bulletins and understanding them,
- presented a dialogue between a bicycle dealer and a customer and given you practice in writing a similar dialogue,
- shown the lack of correspondence between letters and sounds in English, and
- introduced you to stress patterns in English words.

5.5 KEY WORDS

The stressed syllables have been marked in words of two or more syllables.

a'mendment : a change made in a rule

'broadcast (n.) : something sent out by radio or TV

'bulletin : an official statement of news

'casualty : a person killed or seriously injured in a battle or accident

ci'vilian : a person not serving with the forces

'consonant : a speech sound produced by a complete or partial stoppage of the breath

,consti 'tution : laws and principles according to which a country is governed. India has a written constitution.

,corre'spondence : agreement

'customer : a person who buys things

de'fection : falling away from loyalty to a political party

'dialogue : conversation or talk

dis'qualify : make someone unfit

,esca'lation : increase

'feature : a characteristic part

'Legislature : a law-making body. Each State in India has a Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) and (in some cases) a Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council).

letter : a character or sign, of which words in writing are formed. The English alphabet has 26 letters.

maga'zine : a paper-covered periodical with stories, articles, etc. by various writers

'Parliament : the supreme law-making body. In India it has two Houses — Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

pronunci'ation : way in which a language is spoken

'secondary : less important

stress : extra force, used in speaking, on a particular word or syllable

'syllable : a minimum rhythmic unit of spoken language consisting of a vowel often preceded or followed by consonants

'terrorist : one who uses violence for political purposes

'vowel : a speech sound made without stopping of the breath or friction in its passage out through the mouth

word : a sound or combination of sounds (or the written symbols) forming a unit of the grammar or vocabulary of a language

5.6 ANSWERS TO EXERCISES

Exercise 1

- 1 The Constitution Fifty-second Amendment Act bans defection in Parliament and State Legislatures.
- 2 A member will be disqualified, if he
 - a) voluntarily gives up membership of the party on whose behalf he was elected to a House of Legislature, or
 - b) votes contrary to the party's directive, or
 - c) abstains from voting in violation of party instructions.
- 3 No.

Exercise 2

- 1 The main reason for Rajiv Gandhi's grave concern is the attack by the two countries on civilian targets in spite of their agreement not to do so.
- 2 A terrorist who had the bomb attached to his waist.
- 3
 - a) while President Khomeini was addressing a Friday prayer meeting.
 - b) the terrorist and a number of worshippers.

Exercise 4

- i) extreme, priest, receive, seat, police
- ii) baby, beside, cottage, women, practice
- iii) aid, day, grey, eight, radio
- iv) any, bury, dead, friend, cassette
- v) damp, plait, rag, wax, act
- vi) does, blood, rough, won, under
- vii) bar, calm, class, heart, laugh
- viii) cough, knowledge, shone, want, not
- ix) fruit, lose, through, new, shoe,
- x) boat, close, go, low, though

Exercise 5

- a, able, any, bag, basket, village
e, bed, English, extreme, player, concern
i, bird, bite, police, sit, terrible
o, box, come, more, rose, woman
u, busy hurt, much, pull, truth

Exercise 6

- (i) 1 (ii) 2 (iii) 2 (iv) 2 (v) 2 (vi) 2 (vii) 2 (viii) 3 (ix) 4 (x) 2

Exercise 8

1 ,compre'hension 2 ,conver'sation 3 prou'nci'ation 4 ,corre'spondence
5 'shopkeeper 6 ac'company 7 a'vailable 8 ,uni'versity 9 'television (or,tele'vision)
10 consti'tution

Appendix: Passages for Listening Comprehension

Exercise 1

The law banning defections in Parliament and State Legislatures has come into force from today. The Union Law Ministry issued a notification this afternoon bringing the Constitution Fifty-second Amendment Act into force with immediate effect. The Bill on the subject was adopted in the last session of Parliament.

The new law disqualifies a member, if he voluntarily gives up membership of the party on whose behalf he was elected to a House of Legislature, or votes contrary to the party's directive, or abstains from voting in violation of party instructions. Such voting can, however, be condoned by the party within 15 days. Any question about whether a member has become subject to disqualification on the ground of defection will be decided by the presiding officer of the concerned House. No court will have any jurisdiction in this regard. An independent member will be disqualified if he joins any party after his election. There are special provisions in regard to splits in political parties or their mergers.

Exercise 2

India has urged both Iran and Iraq to stop attacking each other's civilian targets, as a first step towards ending their war. This should be followed by other measures of de-escalation, ultimately leading to a complete cessation of hostilities.

In a statement in New Delhi today the Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, expressed grave concern at the sharp escalation in the Iran-Iraq war and the large-scale human suffering in both the countries. He said in spite of an agreement by the two Governments not to attack civilian targets, the latest information indicated that densely populated areas, including the two capital cities, had been attacked.

Mr. Gandhi's statement follows his communications to the Presidents of Iran and Iraq sent on Wednesday last, conveying to them the deep concern of India and the rest of the Non-aligned Movement over the continuing war between the two member nations. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi appealed to them to find a way for ceasing their hostilities. He said India both bilaterally and on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement was prepared to do whatever it could towards this end.

According to information received in New Delhi, there has been no report of any Indian having been affected as a result of the latest spurt in fighting.

Meanwhile, there has been a bomb explosion in Iran at Teheran University resulting in heavy casualties. The explosion took place while President Khomeini was addressing a Friday prayer meeting. The Iranian News Agency said that among the thousands of worshippers was a terrorist with a bomb attached to his waist. The bomb exploded, killing the terrorist and a number of others on the spot.