



TARTU STATE UNIVERSITY

Some  
Typical Mistakes  
Occurring in Our  
Students' Written  
Papers

by  
L. Hone

I

TARTU 1973

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Chair of English

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Second revised edition

Tartu 1973

Kinnitatud Ajaloo-Keeleteaduskonna  
nõukogu 28. detsember, 1972.

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## P R E F A C E

When correcting student papers one is liable to come across all sorts of mistakes. Some of them are mere slips due to carelessness. Such things are avoidable and should be avoided. Every student should take care to read his paper through before handing it in. Unfortunately we are sometimes left with the impression that this has not been done.

In addition to the mistakes which are caused by carelessness there are others which are caused by the student's insufficient knowledge of English. Almost all of the latter are due to the influence of the student's native language. Amongst them there are many which occur time and time again in quite a number of papers, and which we may therefore call 'typical mistakes'. It is with these that we are here primarily concerned.

Perhaps it should be made clear from the outset that the following remarks have been drawn from first-hand experience. They may contain nothing new and, indeed, as the reader will see for himself, most of them are covered by the secondary-school grammars and text-books. But all of the mistakes dealt with have been made not by a few individual students, but by very many students, including the **students of the senior courses**. That is why they are treated as typical mistakes. Perhaps the reader himself may be innocent of many of them, but the fact remains that if every student took pains to correct them a round half of the mistakes contained in their written papers would be eliminated at one stroke, and the corresponding level of their work

would be appreciably higher.

If a student really wishes to get rid of his mistakes he must do more than just glance through the corrections made by the teacher and rewrite the phrases and words that have been underlined. It is essential that he should understand in each concrete case exactly why his sentence is wrong and what the correct variant would be. Wherever possible he should check up the rule to make sure that he will not fall into the same trap in the future. In view of all this the teacher has to devote considerable time to the discussion of mistakes when handing back the students' papers. If each mistake needed to be explained only once, the time sacrificed to this discussion might be regarded as profitably spent. Unfortunately experience shows that many students do not seem to remember half the things they are told, in spite of the fact that most of them carefully make notes of everything the teacher says. As a result they make the same mistakes over and over again and the teacher has to waste hours of valuable time explaining things that ought to be clear to everybody in the first place. This is like carrying water in a sieve.

As a provisional way out it has appeared expedient to collect some of our students' 'favourite mistakes' and publish them in the form of a booklet together with the necessary explanations. Considerations of space made it impossible to give anything like a complete survey and a number of important and interesting points have been reluctantly left to future treatment. The present selection, therefore, covers only a part of the more representative errors and misunderstandings, and does not claim to be exhaustive.

To make the book easier to handle and to bring the materials into some sort of order, they have been grouped under different heads and the separate items have been numbered off, the numbers being given in the index at the back of the book.

Thus the aim of the present booklet is to serve as an

aid to the teacher of English and to relieve him of some of the inevitable explanations by simply referring to the paragraph in question, which may be studied at leisure. On the whole we feel that every student who is interested in improving his English should make a point of assimilating the materials offered here. This applies particularly to extramural students, who enjoy less facilities of consultation. But it also applies to every prospective teacher, who may be advised to go carefully over the points discussed, remembering that these are the very mistakes their future pupils may be expected to make.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

### 1. The headings of written papers.

The first thing to which we should like to call attention is the choice of a suitable title or heading for our written papers. Very often we come across such headings as "Control-Work No. 2" or "Control-Works". That is incorrect. In the first place, the English for 'teadmisi kontrollima' is 'to test' or 'check up'. It is impossible to use the word 'control' in this sense. In the second place, the word 'work' in the meaning of the Estonian 'töö' is uncountable and so cannot be used in the plural. We may refer to the students' papers as their 'written work' in a general sense, but this is not the best word for use as a heading. On the whole, it would be preferable to stick to the terms 'test', 'test-paper', or simply 'paper'. So "Test No. 2", "Test-papers", etc. 'Home-work', which is the general term used at school, can hardly be applied to study on a university level. But other, less objectionable, expressions are 'tasks' or 'assignments for independent study', or 'practical language exercises', etc.

### 2. The sources of mistakes.

Experience shows that by far the greatest number of mistakes occur in translation exercises, free compositions and book reports. The translation exercises that are to be found in the standard grammars and text-books are comparatively easy since they are primarily meant to illustrate certain grammar rules or the use of certain lexical

materials. As a result they do not offer overmuch difficulty to any student who has a satisfactory grasp of the problem in hand. Translations of newspaper articles, on the other hand, are the most difficult type of exercise. Here we should remember that we should never translate from Estonian into English word for word. This applies to the vocabulary no less than to the grammar. As each extramural student is free to choose his own text, he should, in making his choice, take into consideration first and foremost his own abilities, and refrain from undertaking the translation of an article which teems with idiomatic Estonian constructions and words the English equivalents of which he does not know. Yet this is unfortunately very often the case. Dictionaries are of little help here, since the words we find there may turn out to be inappropriate in the context; and even if they are lexically correct, there is always the danger that they may find their way into an unidiomatic construction. So the students of the junior courses, especially, ought to take care to choose simpler texts for translation.

### 3. Style

One shortcoming which is characteristic of a great many compositions and book reports is the use of very long and complicated sentences. Indeed, the language of some students is so involved that the meaning is well-nigh impossible to extricate, and when asked to explain what they wanted to say they themselves are often at a loss. We should remember that if our sentences do not make sense in Estonian, they cannot do so in English either. We know that great masters of style usually write in a comparatively simple language. This does not mean that we should only use simple sentences, or a very limited vocabulary. Simple does not mean primitive. But sentences containing four or five subordinate clauses are by no means a virtue in themselves. They only serve to make the style cumbersome.

Other students are fond of using all sorts of rare words. Instead of saying a simple thing in the ordinary, normal way they feel impelled to display their knowledge of all the possible synonyms and circumlocutions, however strained and far-fetched they may be. This makes their language stilted, artificial or simply ridiculous, and often gives rise to downright mistakes. We must bear in mind that each synonym has its own individual shade of meaning and that in most cases one certain word, and that word only, is called for, and not just any word out of a whole group of synonyms. So our recommendation is: first make up your mind about what you want to say and then say it as simply as you can, trying to confine yourself to the most ordinary and expedient vocabulary and the simplest grammatical constructions. A style that is too wordy betrays the foreigner and makes our language awkward and unidiomatic.

#### 4. Quotations.

Another characteristic feature of some students' papers is a too lavish use of quotations. Of course, there can be no objection to an appropriate quotation once in a while. But with some students this has developed into a system. For example, in a paper on some political subject we may read: "The new party programme sets us the following tasks:" Then follows a quotation covering a whole page or even more, very often borrowed from the "Moscow News" or the "New Times". In the same way, in several of the book reports, we may see the familiar words "The author characterises his hero as follows". And then, instead of finding a portrait of the given hero in the student's own words, we shall be treated to a long quotation from the novel under review. Surely there should be no need to remind our students that we teachers can read all the quotations we need by looking them up at first-hand in the original texts. What we are interested in when we are looking through a student's paper is to see how he expresses

his ideas in English. Unfortunately quotations do not help us in this respect. They only show that the student has succeeded in making things all too easy for himself by fall-back on the author's words, instead of using his own.

5. The repetition of a certain word.

A stylistic mistake, of comparatively frequent occurrence, is the repetition of one and the same noun or verb in a number of successive sentences. This is especially true of proper names, e.g. "My brother's name is Tom. Tom goes in for football. So do Tom's friends", etc. The foregoing example may seem particularly drastic, because the sentences are so short and simple. But in longer sentences the same mistake will be found to occur occasionally in the papers of even the best students. In order to avoid the resultant monotony we should have recourse to pronouns or some kind of synonymous expressions. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that in English this rule holds good for political language as well, whereas in Estonian and Russian newspapers it is not observed.

6. Noun and pronoun referring to the same person.

In using pronouns and nouns, however, we must remember that we should always use the noun first, and then substitute the pronoun for it, not vice versa. Otherwise we should often distort the meaning of the sentence. E.g. "I told him that we should be glad if John joined our sports club". Here we clearly understand in English that 'him' and 'John' do not refer to the same person, although very often it is precisely the reverse of what the author has in mind, and the idea he wishes to express is: "I told John that we should be glad if he joined our sports club". This may sound incredible, because in Estonian the use corresponds, or should correspond, to English usage. But such blunders are by no means rare.

## 7. Omission of conjunctions.

We all know that in colloquial style the conjunction 'that' is usually omitted. But we are prone to forget that in writing it is often advisable to keep it for the sake of clarity (quoted direct speech is an obvious exception). In one or two cases the preservation of 'that' is even obligatory, as, e.g., when it precedes a clause of condition introduced by the conjunction 'if'. For instance: "He said that if the thief came again he would regret it" (ta ütles, et kui varas tuleb uuesti ...). "He said if the thief came again" would not be clear, since 'if' is also used to introduce object clauses where it has the same meaning as 'whether'.

## S P E L L I N G A N D O R T H O G R A P H Y

### 8. British and American spelling.

We know that there are certain differences between British and American spelling. Thus the British spelling of 'centre' is re, whereas the Americans prefer er, the word 'parlour' is spelt our in England, while the Americans use or, the British double the l before suffixes, as e.g. in 'traveller' and 'travelling', but the Americans do not, etc., etc. Both spellings may be regarded as correct English. Only we have to remember to be consistent in using them. We should not use British and American spellings indiscriminately in one and the same paper. Of course, exceptions may be made in the case of quotations, which have to be reproduced word for word and letter for letter.

### 9. Contracted forms.

Another problem of a more or less general nature is

the mistaken use of contracted forms in writing. In colloquial speech the normal thing is to use the contracted forms, e.g. 'don't' for 'do not', 'it's' for 'it is', etc. In writing, however, the uncontracted forms are normally preserved. Of course, the contracted forms are of frequent occurrence in letter writing and may often be introduced into papers written on some everyday topic in a very informal style, while in direct speech, which is given in quotation marks, they are perfectly in order. But in all other cases the full forms should be used, especially in writing course papers, or articles of a scientific or political nature, where the contracted forms are nearly always quite out of place.

#### 10. 'Its' and 'it's'.

A curious mistake, which is of surprisingly frequent occurrence, is the confusion of the possessive pronoun 'its' and the contracted form 'it's', which means 'it is' or 'it has'. Many students use the apostrophe in the case of the possessive pronoun, probably on the analogy of the possessive case of the noun, as e.g. 'Mary's', 'mother's' etc. However, it should be remembered that in such phrases as "The dog wagged its tail" no apostrophe is needed.

#### 11. Titles and forms of address.

We all know that the words 'Mr', 'Mrs' and 'Miss' are spelt with capitals because they are used as titles before a person's name. However, many students seem to forget that this is also true of the word 'comrade' and a number of words indicating profession or rank. Thus 'Cde Tamm', 'Dr Page', 'Professor Smith', 'Captain Cook', 'Major Brown', 'Colonel Bromwell' etc. are all spelt with capitals. Such phrases as 'Aunt Emma' and 'Uncle Henry' also belong to this category.

## 12. Compound adjectives

Mistakes often occur in the use of the hyphen in compound adjectives made up of an adverb and a past participle. The rule here is very simple: when used as attributes they are hyphenated, but in the function of predicatives they are written as two words:

We were shown into a dimly-lighted room.

but: The room was but dimly lighted.

Aadu Hint is a well-known writer.

but: Aadu Hint is well known to the Estonian reader.

## 13. Numerals in a context

A large number of students seem to prefer figures to express numerals rather than spell them out in any kind of context. Thus it is pretty common to find in their papers sentences like "My little sister is 4 years old" or "I bought 2 new books yesterday." We should remember, however, that as a rule figures are used in scientific or political writings to express various statistical data, percentages and other numerical values. Even here the numerals may be spelt in letters if they are few and far between or, especially, if they happen to stand at the head of a sentence. In careful writing the author will avoid sentences in which the first word is a numeral. If this cannot be helped it is preferable to write it out in full rather than use a number. On the other hand, in non-scientific contexts such as fiction, student papers on different subjects, letters, etc. it is customary to spell the numerals out as words, especially the small numbers under twelve. Thus we should write: "My little sister is four years old" and "I bought two new books yesterday". Usually this is also the case with larger numbers, e.g.: "There are eighty-six students in our department", "Helen graduated from the institute at the age of twenty-three".

#### 14. Hyphens in double numerals

For some odd reason many students have a tendency to omit the hyphen in double numerals, such as 'twenty-five', 'fifty-two' etc. On the whole we should do well to remember that we are not entitled to introduce reforms in spelling on our own account.

#### 15. Fractions

When fractions are spelt out, in English a hyphen is used (two-thirds, one-fifth), whereas in Estonian they are written as two words (kaks kolmandikku, üks viiendik).

In decimal fractions English usage requires a point (1.5; 3.49; 0.2), whereas in Estonian a comma is used (1,5; 3,49; 0,2).

#### 16. Commas in numerals

In large numbers Estonian usage separates the millions, thousands and hundreds from each other by blank space (327 523 471; 25 341; 4 062), whereas in English they are set off by commas (327,523,471; 25,341; 4,062). This difference often leads to confusion with decimal fractions (see § 15).

#### 17. Division into syllables

Another common source of error is the problem of division into syllables. Here, again, there are important differences between English and Estonian. In Estonian we have hard and fast rules, whereas in English unfortunately there are several different systems none of which corresponds to Estonian practice. Students who forget this elementary fact are liable to make a whole series of unnecessary mistakes. A few general rules for dividing words into syllables may be found in certain grammar books, but these are seldom detailed enough to be of much help. Perhaps the best rule of all is not to divide words at all. Monosyllables can never

be broken, however many letters they contain; and it is customary to avoid splitting words of two syllables, or lopping off the ending of the past tense in -ed. Longer words should be divided only when it is absolutely unavoidable, and in all such cases some sort of reference book should be consulted, e.g. "The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English" by Hornby, Gatenby and Wakefield, where division into syllables is marked.

## PUNCTUATION

### 18. The use of the comma

As is well known the rules governing the use of commas in English are somewhat different from those which apply in Estonian. But this is sometimes forgotten. In English the rules are not so strict, on the whole, as they are in Estonian, and the commas need not be so many as in Estonian. There is a golden rule: "When in doubt, leave it out". On the other hand, some students tend to apply this rule indiscriminately and use next to no commas at all. Of course, we should not do away with commas altogether, although there are certainly a few cases where we must leave them out. Of these perhaps the following may be mentioned:

### 19. with the conjunction 'that'.

No comma should be used before the conjunction 'that'. In Estonian, however, it is just the other way round and it is obligatory to place a comma before the conjunction 'et'. Thus:

He told me that he was a student (Ta ütles mulle, et ta on üliõpilane).

20. with 'if', 'whether' and the conjunctive adverbs.

In English there is no comma before the conjunctions 'if' and 'whether' and the conjunctive adverbs 'when', 'where', 'why', etc.:

He asked me where I lived.

I don't know whether I shall be ready by tomorrow.

21. with attributive clauses.

Commas are not used to isolate a limiting attributive clause, as they are in Estonian, although a descriptive attributive clause is separated from its antecedent by a comma. E.g. "My brother, | \_who lives in Tallinn, is a student". Here 'who lives in Tallinn' is a descriptive attributive clause furnishing additional information about my brother. It may be left out without affecting the basic meaning of the sentence. In Estonian we might say: "Mu vend, kes muide elab Tallinnas, on üliõpilane". Such a clause is separated off by commas.

But in the sentence "My brother who lives in Tallinn, is a student" 'who lives in Tallinn' is a limiting attribute, which is essential to the meaning of the sentence. Taken in conjunction with the subject it means 'my Tallinn brother' or 'That one of my brothers who lives in Tallinn' (see minu vend, kes elab Tallinnas). Such an attributive clause cannot be omitted without changing the fundamental meaning of the sentence (that particular brother) and here we never make use of commas.

This distinction is one which is very often overlooked by students with the result that the meaning of the sentence is occasionally distorted. Perhaps it should be added, to make things clear, that the intonation of these two types of sentence is also different. In the first case we have three sense-groups, whereas the second contains only two sense-groups.

22. with 'who', 'which' and 'that'.

Another point that should be made in connection with attributive clauses is that descriptive clauses are invariably introduced by 'who' or 'which', never 'that'. 'That', on the other hand, is only used in limiting clauses. Consequently there is no comma before 'that', whereas 'who' and 'which' can be used either with or without a comma.

23. with 'etc'.

Contrary to Estonian usage a comma often stands before 'etc.'

24. before direct speech.

Before direct speech in English a comma is much more common than a colon:

He opened the window and said, "What fine weather we're having!"

W O R D O R D E R

25. Strict word order.

It might be expected that the strict rules governing word order in English should make things easy for the student. But nevertheless mistakes of this kind are not infrequent. Of course, for the sake of emphasis, we can sometimes change the position of a part of the sentence. But this must be done consciously, and must be accompanied by other necessary changes. In the vast majority of cases, however, wrong word order is due purely and simply to the influence of the student's native language. In other words, the root of the evil is our natural tendency to think in Estonian while we write in English.

26. Object and adverbial modifier of place.

It is not normal in English to begin a sentence with an object or adverbial modifier of place. Yet this mistake is very common in answers to questions, and it also occurs

in purely descriptive contexts. E.g. the answer to the question "Where did you buy these books?" is often "These books I bought in Riga" or in answer to "What subject do you study at the university?" we get "At the university I study English". The correct answers are, of course, "I bought these books in Riga" and "I study English at the university". In the first question we are asking for information about the place where the books in question were bought, and in the second we are primarily interested in the object: what our friend studies at the university. But in the first answer "These books I bought in Riga" special stress is laid on the object 'these books'; and in the second answer it is the adverbial modifier of place 'at the university' which is singled out for emphasis. Such mistakes actually distort the meaning of the sentence and are very baffling to the reader.

## 27. Adverbs of indefinite time and frequency.

Another popular mistake in word order is the wrong position of adverbs of indefinite time and frequency (such as 'often', 'now', 'always', 'sometimes', 'ever', 'never', 'already', 'seldom', etc.). Their normal position in simple tenses is before the verb:

We often go to the pictures nowadays.

The same rule applies to the verb 'to have' when used  
1) as a full notional verb (i.e. in the meaning of 'possess' or 'cause'):

Tourists seldom have enough time to see everything they would like to.

2) in its modal force as an equivalent for 'must':

I sometimes had to go to the shops.

3) as a component part of a group-verb (e.g. 'to have a smoke', 'to have a swim', etc.):

Father always had a smoke after dinner.

In compound tenses these adverbs stand after the first auxiliary:

If it had not been for the joint efforts of the entire people, Socialism would never have been built in such a short time.

On the other hand they follow modal verbs and the simple tenses of the verb 'to be':

One must always do one's duty.

The visitors are already here.

It is only for the sake of emphasis that the position of these adverbs can be shifted. And perhaps we should add that the adverb 'already' is no exception, although for some reason difficult to understand many students prefer to leave it till the end, e.g. "I have seen him already" instead of "I have already seen him". This final use of 'already' is justified only when strong emphasis is required. In all other cases the normal word order should be preserved.

## 28. 'also', 'all', 'both'

The adverb 'also' and the pronouns 'all' and 'both' are governed by the same rule:

They are all here.

We both study English.

He has also worked as a teacher.

For some inexplicable reason, 'also' is another word which our students like to shift to the end of the sentence. Thus it is not uncommon to find in their papers such sentences as:

The girl liked him also.

My mother came to meet me also.

That is not exactly wrong, but at the same time it is not the best idiomatic English. In final position we should prefer 'too' or 'as well'. Thus:

The girl liked him too;

or:       The girl liked him as well.  
          My mother came to meet me too;  
or:       My mother came to meet me as well.

When we wish to lay special stress on the subject of the sentence, the word 'too', separated off by commas, may be placed immediately after it:

          The girl, too, liked him.  
          My mother, too, came to meet me.

If 'also' precedes the subject, it carries the sense of 'moreover' or 'in addition':

Also the girl liked him.  
          Also my mother came to meet me.

### 29. 'Together'

Another word which is often wrongly placed is the adverb 'together'. In Estonian the word 'koos' usually immediately follows the verb:

          Me läksime koos kinno.  
          Me laulsime koos mõned laulud.

In English 'together' comes after the object or adverbial modifier of place:

          We went to the cinema together.  
          We sang some songs together.

### 30. Sentences introduced by an adverbial modifier of time

In Estonian we often have inverted word order in sentences introduced by an adverbial modifier of time:

Homme lähen ma kooli kell üheksa.  
          Järgmisel sügisel astub Tom ülikooli.

When the same construction is used in English the direct word order is preserved:

Tomorrow I shall go to school at nine.  
          Next autumn Tom will enter the university.

### 31. 'Only' at the head of the sentence

However, there is an important exception which also gives a great deal of trouble. When we have an adverbial modifier of time emphasised by the addition of 'only' inversion is obligatory. Moreover, it is partial inversion that we use here:

Only years later did I learn the real reason for his departure.

Only then did we notice how tired we were.

### 32. Position of the negation

Another typical stumbling-block is the position of the negation in certain negative object clauses. In Estonian the negation may either occur in the main clause (e.g. Ma ei usu, et ta meid ära tunneb) or in the subordinate clause (e.g. Ma arvan, ta ei teadnud, et me prantsuse keelest aru saame). In English the negation invariably occurs in the main clause whenever we are merely expressing an opinion:

I don't think he will recognise us.

I don't believe he knew we could understand French.

He didn't seem to like the idea.

But: I know he doesn't like the idea.

### 33. The order of two objects

Another point concerning word order crops up in connection with sentences containing two objects, one of which is direct and the other indirect. It is not always easy to decide which of them should come first. Perhaps the general rule here is that the shorter one should come first and the longer one fall to the rear. This is always the case when one of them is qualified by an attributive clause or phrase. Otherwise the rhythm of the sentence would be destroyed:

He gave me the book I had asked him to let me  
have (the indirect object is placed first).

I gave the book to the student who had asked for  
it (the direct object is placed first).

At the same time it should never be forgotten that when the indirect object occupies second place it is always preceded by the preposition 'to'.

#### 34. Adverbial modifier of manner

In much the same way, the position of the adverbial modifier of manner sometimes causes hesitation. As a general rule, this should stand near the word it modifies, i.e. near the verb. For example:

The children danced gracefully.

However, there is another rule which forbids us to place any part of the sentence between the verb and its object. For this reason we place the adverbial modifier after the object, provided it is a short one:

She looked at them curiously.

If the object is long, the adverbial modifier of manner usually stands before the verb:

The children gracefully danced a pretty folk dance.

#### 35. Word order determined by rhythm

In many other cases, too, word order may be adapted for considerations of rhythm. In making up our mind we should take care to avoid placing too wide a gap between words that belong together. For example we can say "She put the book aside", but not so naturally "She put the book she was reading aside", because the phrase 'to put aside' expresses a single basic idea. So in the latter case we should rather say "She put aside the book she was

reading".

36. 'Enough'

Sometimes mistakes are made in the position of the word 'enough'. Here the rule is that it comes after the adjective or adverb which it modifies:

The exercise was easy enough.

Robert speaks English fluently enough to get a job as an interpreter.

On the other hand, 'enough' usually stands in front of the noun it modifies:

Most students find enough time to study one or two optional subjects.

But 'enough' may also follow the noun it modifies, in which case it is more emphatic:

Paul ought to help you with the garden. He has time enough.

37. 'Not'

Occasionally mistakes occur in the position of 'not' in negative infinitives and ing-forms. Here it should be remembered that 'not' precedes the 'to' of the infinitive:

Sam tried hard not to betray his feelings, (it would be wrong to say: 'Sam tried hard to not betray his feelings?').

Similarly:

You ought not to have asked such a question ('to have not asked' is wrong).

With gerunds and participles 'not' also occupies first place:

Not having seen the film I could not join in the discussion.

The boy's not being hurt was a great relief.

### 38. 'Still'

Care should be taken with the word 'still', since its meaning depends primarily on its position in the sentence. When it means 'till now' or 'till then' (in Estonian '(ikka) veel') it is an adverb of indefinite time and is placed accordingly.<sup>1</sup> Thus:

She is still alive (ta on veel elus).

She was born at Paide, and still lives there (ja elab ikka veel seal);  
and with special emphasis:

She was born at Paide and lives there still.

But in the meaning of 'yet' or 'nevertheless' (Estonian 'siiski', 'ometi'), it is a conjunction and should stand at the head of the sentence, preceding and introducing the subject:

I hate birthday parties. Still, I shall have to go as they will probably be offended if I don't.

I can't promise to go there so soon as that. Still, I'll do my best.

### 39. Names of hotels

Frequent mistakes in word order are made with the names of hotels. In Estonian the current usage varies:

Me peatusime Park hotellis.

Turistid elavad hotellis "Palace".

But in English the name comes first and the word 'hotel', if used at all, invariably follows. Very often, however, it is simply omitted:

We put up at the Park Hotel.

The tourists are staying at the Palace.

You might try the Metropole.

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<sup>1</sup> See § 23.

## THE VERB

### THE USE OF TENSES

#### 40. Continuous or indefinite tenses?

The continuous tenses are frequently used by students instead of the indefinite tenses when referring to a general fact. E.g. "My father is working at a factory" instead of "My father works at a factory". This is a rule with which everyone is familiar in theory, but it is surprising how often it is broken in practice. Similarly the Past Indefinite and not the Past Continuous should be used to express a past action or state of limited duration, i.e. that began and ended in the past. Thus it is incorrect to say "She was sitting at home from two to six" for "She sat at home from two to six".

#### 41. The Future or Present Indefinite?

Since we have no future tense in Estonian students frequently omit to use it in English, especially in cases where the action is due to begin immediately. For example we should say:

I 'll only close the window, then I shall be ready.

It is quite wrong to say "I only close".

#### 42. Adverbial clauses of time and condition

On the other hand, some of us tend to forget that in adverbial clauses of time and condition it is the Present

Indefinite and not the Future Indefinite that is required.  
Thus we ought to say:

I shall let you know as soon as I am ready (not: as soon as I shall be ready);

or: You will get on all right if you work hard (not: if you will work hard).<sup>1</sup>

#### 43. The future in indirect speech

Mistakes of this kind are still more frequent in indirect speech where the rules for the sequence of tenses have to be observed. Thus the first example would read:

I told him that I should let him know as soon as I was ready.

And the second:

I told you that you would get on all right if you worked hard.

Here, in all such sentences, a moment's thought should suffice to settle the problem of choosing the right tense for the adverbial clause, and mistakes of this kind must be attributed to mere carelessness.

#### 44. The Present Perfect or Future Perfect?

Many students experience similar difficulty in finding the appropriate tense for expressing an action which is regarded as having been completed by a certain moment in the future. Here the Present Perfect, not the Future Perfect, should be used, and the correct form is:

I shall let you know as soon as I have spoken to her (not: as soon as I shall have spoken to her).

Correspondingly in indirect speech the sequence of tenses will give us:

I told him that I should let him know as soon as I had spoken to her (not: as soon as I should have spoken to her).

<sup>1</sup> Here care should be taken not to confuse adverbial clauses of time and condition with object clauses expressing time and condition. In the latter the Future Indefinite is required:

Try to find out when Tom's report will be ready and if he will read it at the meeting of the circle.

#### 45. Conditional sentences

Wrong tenses also abound in sentences expressing condition. In Estonian we use the same tense in both the main clause and the subordinate clause. But this is not the case in English, and a clear distinction should be made between the tenses of the two verbs concerned. Two kinds of mistakes are usually met with here. Firstly, the correct tenses are chosen, but used in the wrong clauses, i.e. the tense that should be used in the main clause is transferred to the subordinate clause and vice versa. Secondly, the same tense is used in both clauses, namely that which should only be used in the principal clause. It hardly ever happens the other way round. So I think the easiest way to get rid of this mistake is to lay it down as a general rule that in an if-clause, i.e. in a subordinate clause of condition, we never use the auxiliaries 'shall', 'will', 'should' or 'would'. In Estonian we have the same three types of conditional sentences as we have in English.

1) The first type refers to the present or future and expresses a real condition, i.e. an action which will take place if the necessary conditions are fulfilled:

If Dick has the time, he will help me to mend my bike.

In English we use the Present Indefinite in the subordinate clause, and the Future Indefinite in the main clause. In Estonian the Present Tense is used in both cases (kui Dickil on aega, ta aitab mul jalgratast parandada).

2) The second type also refers to the present or the future but expresses an unreal condition, i.e. an action **which** cannot be carried out because the necessary conditions are lacking:

If Dick had the time, he would help me to mend my bike.

Here in English the tense sometimes called Present Subjunctive II (which in form coincides with the Past Indefinite) is used in the subordinate clause, and the Present Conditional in the main clause. In Estonian the Present Conditional is used in both cases (kui Dickil oleks aega, ta aitaks mul jalgratast parandada).

3) The third type expresses unreal condition in the past, i.e. an action which could not be carried out for lack of the necessary conditions:

If Dick had had the time, he would have helped me to mend my bike.

Here in English the Past Subjunctive II (which coincides in form with the Past Perfect) is used in the subordinate clause, and the Past Conditional in the main clause. In Estonian the Present Perfect Conditional is used in both cases (kui Dickil oleks olnud aega, ta oleks aidanud mul jalgratast parandada).

Still, there is one case where 'will' and 'would' are correct in a subordinate clause, namely when they are used to express a person's will:

If Dick will help us, we can mend the bike (Kui Dick on nõus meid aitama).

I should be very grateful if you would accompany me on that errand. (Ma oleksin väga tänulik, kui te mind saadaksite (nõustuksite saatma) sellel käigul).

The only case where a subordinate clause may contain the auxiliary 'should' is in sentences of the following type, expressing unlikely supposition or doubtful condition:

If Dick should have (or were to have) the time, he would help me to mend my bike.

Such sentences may refer either to the present or to the future, and in Estonian they are rendered by 'peaks' (kui Dickil peaks aega olema). Note that the auxiliaries 'should' and 'were' are usually stressed.

Of course, in types II and III the word 'if' may be omitted in the subordinate clause and inverted word order used instead, but this does not change the tenses. So we

have two further possibilities, though of a rather formal or bookish character:

Had Dick the time, he would help me to mend my bike.

Had Dick had the time, he would have helped me to mend my bike.

And in the same way we can say, theoretically at least:

Should Dick have the time, he would help me to mend my bike.

Or even:

Were Dick to have the time, he would help me to mend my bike.

But these last alternatives are too artificial to be recommended for general use.

A frequent source of misunderstanding lies in the fact that some students attempt to apply mechanically one of the three types given above to every conditional sentence they meet in practice. These three types are singled out because this is the clearest and simplest way of dealing with the subject. But naturally other combinations may occur and mixed types are by no means rare, i.e. sentences in which one clause may express a condition and the other a command, or one clause may refer to the past and the other to the present or future:

If anybody asks for me (or: if anybody should ask for me), tell them to wait.

Here the principal clause is an order, expressed by the imperative mood. Or:

If you had worked systematically, you would know the English language much better.

In this case the subordinate clause refers to the past, but the main clause refers to the present.

Faced with mixed types such as these, we often tend to muddle the tenses. But if we remember that they depend in every case on the meaning we want to express, we cannot go far astray. And since there is also a direct correspondence between English and Estonian usage, a moment's reflection should save us from error.

There is also another danger. Types II and III are being increasingly used in the US in much the same way as we do in Estonian. As a result American texts abound with such sentences as: "If you'd read /ri:d/ it, I'm sure you'd enjoy it", "If he would have been there, he would have heard the whole story". These constructions, which occasionally appear even in the best American writers, are very misleading. But they should not be imitated, as they have a rather slovenly or vulgar appearance which is still distasteful to most educated people.

#### 46. 'Lately'

Another difficulty affecting the choice of tense is raised by the adverb 'lately'. For some odd reason this adverb seems to have become very popular with our students, and occurs in their papers far too often. At all events we would do well to bear in mind that it is mostly used in negative and interrogative sentences, and the only tense that can legitimately accompany it is the Present Perfect. Thus we can say:

I haven't seen him lately.

or: Have you seen him lately?,

whereas in an affirmative sentence some other word or phrase would have to be preferred:

I saw him a short time ago, a few days ago, recently, the other day, etc.

As we see, the tense is also different - the Past Indefinite, since we refer to a certain moment in the past.

If, in indirect speech, or for some other reason, we have to change the tense in a sentence containing the word 'lately', the latter must be replaced by some other adverb:

Robert told me that he had seen Jenny quite recently.

#### 47. The Present Indefinite or Present Perfect?

Another typical mistake is the use of the Present Indefinite instead of the Present Perfect of result in sentences where the corresponding Estonian verb would normally stand in the Present. Thus instead of the correct: "I have

been fond of music since childhood" or "I have known him since the war" we very often find 'I am fond of' and 'I know', simply because in Estonian we are in the habit of saying "Ma armastan muusikat lapsest saadik" and "Ma tunnen teda sõjast saadik".

#### 48. The choice of tenses

An alarmingly large number of our students have the habit of switching from one tense to another for no apparent reason at all. They begin a description or narrative in the Present Tense. Then, without warning they will pass over to the Past Indefinite. A moment later they are back in the Present again, and so on. Sometimes this happens five or six times before the story comes to an end. Such papers are impossible to correct. If we want to preserve any sort of logical sequence in the tenses, at least half the sentences would have to be rewritten. We need scarcely add that we have not forgotten the existence of the Historic Present. But this tense, if used at all, should be used consistently, in its proper place, and in order to achieve a definite stylistic effect. Unfortunately, however, most cases of the indiscriminate use of the tenses seem to be due to the practice of copying out sentences or paragraphs from books or newspapers without taking the trouble to bring the tenses into agreement. This is the kind of slipshod approach for which there is no excuse.

#### 49. The principal forms of verbs

There are many other mistakes which can only be attributed to sheer carelessness. Quite a number of students muddle up the principal forms of certain verbs (e.g. 'to lie' and 'to lay', 'to strike' and 'to stroke' etc.). There is nothing to explain here. We can only suggest that those who do not feel quite sure about the matter should sacrifice five or ten minutes of their spare time and go over the tables to refresh their memories.

VERBS REQUIRING DIFFERENT CONSTRUCTIONS IN  
ENGLISH AND ESTONIAN

50. 'To want' and 'to expect'

It is common for the Estonian verb 'tahtma' to be followed by an object clause introduced by the conjunction 'et':

Toimetaja tahtis, et sa seinalehe jaoks artikli kirjutaksid.

Ema tahab, et ma kohe koju lähen.

The corresponding English construction is that which is called 'the object with the infinitive':

The editor wanted you to write an article for the wallnewspaper.

Mother wants me to go home immediately.

Theoretically it may be possible in English to use here an object clause with the verb in the subjunctive. But no Englishman would ever dream of saying "The editor wanted, that you should write an article for the wall-newspaper".

Much the same holds true for the verb 'to expect', which is frequently mishandled in a similar way. Thus:

The teacher expects the students to remember all the rules.

51. 'To suggest'

Another stumbling-block is the verb 'to suggest', which is misused by most Estonian speakers. In Estonian we say "Ta tegi ettepaneku minna jalutama", but in English the verb 'suggest' cannot be followed by an infinitive.

However, there are three possible ways of turning the sentence:

1. He suggested that we should (or: might) go for a walk (i.e. by using an object clause with the verb in the subjunctive).
2. He suggested going for a walk (i.e. by using a gerund as an object).
3. He suggested a walk (by using a noun as an object).

## 52. 'To demand', 'to require', 'to insist'

A similar stumbling-block to many Estonian students is constituted by the verbs 'to demand', 'to require' and 'to insist'. It should be remembered that these call for the subjunctive mood in the following subordinate clause (nowadays the analytical form) and no other tense form is correct. Thus we should say:

The English master demands that everybody should hand in his composition by the end of the week.

The situation required that we should act as promptly as possible.

Mother found that the weather was windy and insisted that I should put on my hat.

This analytical form is the only one used in colloquial speech. Theoretically speaking, we can also say:

The English master demands that everybody hand in his composition by the end of the week.

The situation required that we act as promptly as possible.

and Mother insisted that I put on my hat.

But this construction sounds far more stilted, and must be very sparingly used. As for the **first** of our three examples, both variants have a slightly formal or academic air about them, and the best solution of all would be to

reject them both in favour of an infinitive construction:

The English master expects everybody to hand in his composition by the end of the week.

In the case of the verb 'to insist' it is also possible to use a gerund governed by the preposition 'on', but unfortunately this possibility is mostly overlooked by Estonian students, as there is no corresponding Estonian construction. Actually it is much simpler than using a subordinate clause, and should be preferred to both of the alternative constructions mentioned above. Thus we should say:

Mother found that the weather was windy and insisted on my putting on my hat.

### 53. 'It is (high) time'

Another case of the use of the subjunctive which offers difficulties to our students arises in connection with the expressions 'it is time' or 'it is high time'. Here the so-called synthetical form is used:

It's high time you settled down to work seriously.

In place of the subjunctive we may sometimes use the infinitive, which incidentally corresponds more closely to the Estonian construction:

It is high time to settle down to work seriously.

(In Estonian: On ülim aeg tõsiselt tööle asuda).

But this variant is by no means so good as the first, and the best plan is to stick to the subjunctive, which is here both colloquial and idiomatic.

### 54. Verbs expressing emotion

The verbs expressing a certain feeling or emotional state (e.g. to be surprised, astonished, amazed, sad, glad, etc.) should be followed by an infinitive and not a gerund:

He was glad to hear the news.

I was surprised to find him at home at such an hour.

In Estonian we use here the des-gerundiiv (kuuldes, leides) and this is a constant source of mistakes.

### 55. 'To say' and 'to tell'

A source of frequent mistakes is to be found in the erroneous use of the verbs 'to say' and 'to tell', which may occasionally be met with in the papers of even the best students. The vast majority of these mistakes occur in sentences where the direct object takes the form of entire clause. In such cases we should always bear in mind the following points.

1. If no indirect object is expressed, the verb 'to say' must be used:

Fred said that he had passed all his examinations.

"I have passed all my exams," Fred said.

2. On the contrary, the verb 'to tell' can only be used when the indirect object is present. For example, if we want to translate such a sentence as "Ta ütles, et tema tehas täitis plaani ennetähtaegselt", we can use either 'to say' or 'to tell', but in the latter case we must not forget to supply the missing indirect object. Thus the possible alternatives are:

He said that his plant had fulfilled its plan ahead of schedule.

or: He told me (or: He told us) that his plant had fulfilled its plan ahead of schedule.

3. When the verb 'to say' is followed by an indirect object it usually conveys the idea of special emphasis. For example the normal rendering of "Ta ütles, et ta on haige" would be "He told me that he was ill". But "He said to me that he was ill" would have much the same force as the Estonian "Kulle ta ütles, et ta on haige".

4. In inverted word order, where the indirect object precedes the verb, only 'to say' is possible:

He said to me that he was ill, but to the others he said that he felt all right.

56. Verbs requiring an indirect object with 'to'

Another source of trouble is connected with certain verbs which can be followed, if need be, by both a direct object and an indirect object. Whenever such verbs as 'to explain', 'to announce', 'to dictate', 'to shout', 'to lie' (in the meaning 'to tell lies'), 'to admit', 'to confess', 'to say', 'to devote', 'to deliver', 'to indicate', 'to prescribe' etc. are followed by an indirect object, the preposition 'to' cannot be dispensed with. Thus we should say:

The teacher explained to the students how to carry out the experiment. (It would be wrong to say: The teacher explained the students how to carry out the experiment).

The chairman announced to the audience the agenda of the meeting.

The teacher dictated to the pupils the sentences they were to translate for the next time.

The boy shouted to us something that we did not quite catch.

Now Betty understood that Maggie had been lying to her all the time.

Freddie would not admit to us that he was in the wrong.

At last Pat confessed to me that he had known all along.

I simply couldn't say to the child that the doll was not meant for her.

He devoted to the problem more time than he had originally intended.

The visitor delivered to the assembled class an exceptionally interesting speech.

When you reach the crossroads a sign-post will indicate to you the direction you must take

The doctor prescribed to the patient all sorts of medicines.

However, this does not mean that the above-mentioned verbs cannot be used without an indirect object. Most of them can. So it is perfectly correct to say:

The teacher explained how the experiment was to be carried out:

or: The chairman announced the agenda of the meeting, etc.

Only it should be borne in mind that if there is an indirect object, it should always be preceded by the preposition 'to'.

#### 57. Verbs requiring an expressed direct object

On the other hand, there are a number of verbs, such as 'to thank', 'to tell', 'to order', 'to command' 'to ask', 'to say', 'to repeat', 'to give' etc. which cannot be used without an expressed direct object. Since their Estonian equivalents often have no object, some students are tempted to use similar constructions in English, but with disastrous results. When speaking English we should say:

My neighbour offered me his newspaper. I thanked him with a nod. (It would be quite wrong to say: 'I thanked with a nod' although in Estonian there is nothing wrong with: Ma tänasin peanoogutusega).

In the same way in Estonian we can say: "Ema laskis akna kinni panna," but in English some sort of indirect object must be expressed: "Mother told me (her, him etc.) to shut the window." True, there is a colloquial American idiom which affords a close parallel to the Estonian con-

struction: "Mother said to shut the window". But it is not used in England, and even in the United States it has a flavour of illiteracy.

Here are a few examples which the reader may care to think over for himself:

Becky hailed a taxi and ordered the driver to follow the yellow car in front (ja käskis eessõitvale kollasele autole järele sõita).

The teacher instructed the pupils to stand up ("Õpetaja käskis püsti tõusta"; in Estonian the object is felt to be unnecessary because we know who the teacher is, talking to).

When Mr. Brown had finished his dinner he asked the waiter to bring him some coffee (ta palus (endale) kohvi tuua).

His wife asked him for some money, but he wouldn't give her any (Ta naine palus raha, aga tema ei andnud).

I didn't quite catch his name. Would you repeat it once more (palun korra veel kord).

Grandfather didn't hear what you said. Would you mind saying it again. (palun öelge uuesti).

#### 58. Omission of the reflexive pronoun

Finally attention should be drawn to a few verbs which were formerly accompanied by a reciprocal pronoun which is nowadays usually omitted. These are 'to dress', 'to wash', 'to shave', 'to feel' and 'to hide', which are often given unnecessary objects. It is difficult to say whether this is due to Estonian influence (such words are often used with the reciprocal pronouns in Estonian), or to the force of tradition still preserved in some grammars, readers and nineteenth-century novels, but the fact remains that many students obstinately persist in adding the self-pronouns. To do so in such a sentence as "I felt very

embarrassed" would be a bad blunder, and in all the following examples it can be safely omitted:

I washed and dressed and then had breakfast.

Father shaves every morning.

The child hid behind a bush.

#### THE NON-FINITE FORMS OF THE VERB

One of the most difficult problems presented by the English verb is evidently that of choosing between the infinitive and the gerund. All our practical English grammars provide lists of verbs (and also some nouns and adjectives) which require the infinitive or the gerund, or may be used with either of them. Nevertheless numerous mistakes of this kind find their way into our students' papers. There is no need to repeat the lists here, as everybody may look them up for himself.<sup>1</sup> But for the purpose in hand we must confine our remarks to those words which have been found to present difficulties to Estonian students, irrespective of whether they are mentioned or not in the standard grammars.

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E.g. in the 1964 edition of Ganshina and Vasilevskaya they are given on pp. 258 and 272-274, in Kaushanskaya (1959 edition) on pp. 174-179, in the grammar book by Kivimägi, Mutt, Silvet and Vösamäe (published in 1962) on pp. 239-240.

## The infinitive

First a few words about some cases where only the infinitive, but not the gerund, is possible. Here belong, for example:

### 59. 'To afford', 'to attempt'

We should say:

If you want to pass your examination next week, you can't afford to go out dancing every night.

and: A monkey attempted to escape from the zoo but failed.

Besides the infinitive, the verbs 'to afford' and 'to attempt' are occasionally, though not very often, followed by a noun. Thus we might say:

Although she was passionately fond of dancing, she decided reluctantly that she couldn't afford the time.

The sentence "That monkey attempted an escape from its cage last week" is formally correct, but not so idiomatic.

### 60. 'Anxious'

The adjective 'anxious' (in the meaning of strongly wishing to do or get something) also requires the infinitive:

Peter is anxious to acquire a good command of English.

The hostess was anxious to make her guests as comfortable as possible.

### 61. 'Enough', 'too'

The same rule applies to all adjectives and adverbs which are modified by the adverbs of degree 'enough' and 'too':

I am well enough to go back to work again.

Bob is old enough to read such books.

Ann is too young to go to school.

The car was travelling too fast to pull up in time.

Sometimes an adjective modified by 'enough' or 'too' may simply be followed by a noun with the preposition 'for'. In such cases the infinitive is always clearly understood:

Bob is old enough for such books.

Ann is too young for school.

If the doer of the action expressed by the infinitive is not the subject of the sentence the infinitive may have its own subject preceded by the preposition 'for', thus forming an infinitival complex which some grammarians have called a 'for-phrase':

The film was on long enough for everybody to see it.

Our foreign guest spoke too rapidly for the first-year students to understand him.

Such is the case if the subject of the infinitive is essential to the meaning of the sentence. If, however, we are speaking in general terms and the doer of the action expressed by the infinitive is of no particular importance, the latter has no subject of its own and may often appear in the passive voice:

The water is too cold to go for a swim.

The story is short enough to read /or: to be read/ through in a couple of hours.

## The gerund

Next let us consider some of the words that normally require the gerund.

### 62. 'To be interested'

Here we should note the expression 'to be interested', which should be followed by a gerund introduced by the preposition 'in'. Thus in English we say:

Little boys are not usually interested in playing with dolls. They prefer cars and machines.

In Estonian we usually have an infinitive here; "Väikesi poisse tavaliselt ei huvii nukkudega mängida". Hence the temptation to use the infinitive in English too.

### 63. 'It is no use'

In the same way, the English expression 'it is no use' /or no good/ is normally followed by a gerund, whereas the corresponding Estonian idiom requires the infinitive:

It is no use arguing with him. (compare: Kasutu on temaga vaielda).

### 64. 'There is no sense'

It is not common to say 'there is no use arguing with him'. But if we want to preserve the construction 'there is', we have another way out in the noun 'sense', which is also followed by a gerund, though mostly with the preposition 'in':

There is no sense in arguing with him.

### 65. 'To think'

Another example of an English gerund answering to an Estonian infinitive is furnished by the verb 'to think' in the meaning of 'intend':

She never thought of apologising. (ta ei mõelnudki vabandada).

I am thinking of taking up German. (ma kavatsen hakata saksa keelt õppima).

#### 66. 'To spend'

Although the verb 'to spend' in the meaning of 'to pass one's time' should really present no difficulties, as its Estonian equivalent 'aega veetma, mööda saatma' is followed by a construction analogous to the English gerund -- 'the des-gerundiiv, the fact remains that numerous mistakes are made here. The correct English forms are precisely the same as their Estonian equivalents:

Many people spend their evenings looking in.  
(televiisorit vaadates).

I spent Sunday working in the garden. (aias töötades).

#### 67. 'To want'

The verb 'to want' in the sense of 'to stand in need of' is also followed by the gerund only:

Your shoes want repairing.

The door and window-frames want painting.

The Estonian translations of these sentences may vary: Su kingad vajavad parandamist, tahavad parandada, su kingi tuleks parandada, etc. The Estonian infinitives at the back of the speaker's mind in the last two cases are probably responsible for his mistakes in English.

#### 68. A gerund standing for an Estonian subordinate clause

There are cases where a whole subordinate clause in Estonian can be rendered in English by means of a single gerund:

We couldn't help laughing. The story was so funny.  
(Me ei saanud sinna midagi parata, et me naerma  
hakkasime).

I couldn't help overhearing their conversation —  
they spoke at the top of their voices.

The teacher suspected Tom of having copied his ex-  
ercise from his neighbour. (Õpetaja kahtlustas Tomi,  
et ta on harjutuse naabrilt maha kirjutanud).

I don't mind his joining the party. (Mul pole  
midagi selle vastu, kui ta meie grupiga kaasa tuleb).

Here we should note that the same idea can be expressed  
in three other ways, all of which require a gerund:

I don't object to his joining the party.

I've no objection to his joining the party.

I've nothing against his joining the party.

It should be remembered that in all the above-mentioned  
expressions the gerund is the normal thing and any kind  
of subordinate clause introduced by the conjunctions 'that'  
or 'if' are un-English and should be carefully avoided.

### The gerund or a noun

Another type of difficulty arises in connection with  
certain verbs and expressions that can be used with either  
a gerund or a noun. As the two call for different con-  
structions, often involving the use of a different pre-  
position or adverb, students are liable to mix them up,  
and instead of using either one of the correct forms con-  
coct a third variant which contains elements of both, and  
is naturally incorrect.

#### 69. 'To burst out'. 'to burst into'

We can either say:

We burst out laughing;

or We burst into laughter.

The girl burst out crying;

or The girl burst into tears.

But we cannot say:

We burst into laughing.

or The girl burst into crying.

As we see, in case of the phrasal verb 'to burst out' a gerund is used, whereas the simple verb 'to burst' calls for a prepositional object (a noun governed by the preposition 'into').

#### 70. 'To go on'

In the same way we can choose between:

The men went on working.

or The men went on with their work.

The children went on playing.

or The children went on with their game.

Here the phrasal verb 'to go on' can be used with either a gerund or a prepositional object introduced by the preposition 'with'.

#### 71. 'To go'

In a number of cases the verb 'to go' can also be used either with a gerund or with a noun governed by the preposition 'for' (in a few special constructions also 'on'). In such cases the gerund refers to some kind of activity in general, whereas the noun, on the other hand, refers to a specific occasion. We shall grasp the difference at once if we compare the following two sentences:

Jenny likes to go driving in the mountains (i.e. in general),

and Jenny will go for a drive in the mountains tomorrow afternoon.

Or again:

It is pleasant to go swimming when the weather is hot (i.e. in general).

and If the water in the river is warm enough we shall go for a swim (e.g. this afternoon). —

However, when the verb cannot be used as a noun, the construction with the gerund is the only possible one, e.g.: to go shopping, skiing, skating, etc.

### The infinitive or the gerund

Another common source of difficulty springs from the use of pairs of synonyms, synonymous expressions or words derived from the same root, of which one requires the gerund and the other an infinitive.

#### 72. 'To hope' and 'hope', 'to intend' and 'intention'

For instance the verbs 'to hope' and 'to intend' should be followed by an infinitive, while the corresponding nouns 'hope' and 'intention' require the gerund:

I hope to finish my article by next week.

On my way back from the Caucasus I intend to visit the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

But: I have every hope of finishing my article by next week.

I had no intention of visiting the Ukraine on my way back from the Caucasus.

#### 73. 'Difficult' and 'difficulty'

The adjective 'difficult' requires an infinitive, but the noun 'difficulty' calls for a gerund governed by the preposition 'in':

It was difficult to find my friend's house.

But: We had no difficulty in finding my friend's house.

70. 'Impossible' + infinitive or 'there is no' + gerund

The adjective 'impossible', which is followed by the infinitive, has a verbal counterpart which is made up of 'there is no' + the gerund:

Now that you have given your consent, it is impossible to back out.

But: Now that you have given your consent, there is no backing out.

75. 'Accustomed', 'used (to)'

Special attention should be paid to the words 'accustomed' and 'used'. The first of these may be followed either by an infinitive, or by a gerund governed by the preposition 'to', whereas the participle 'used' only expects a gerund governed by the preposition 'to':

Mother is accustomed to getting up early.

Mother is accustomed to get up early.

But: Mother is used to getting up early.

As we see, the participle 'used', which functions as a predicative, takes the gerund, and should be carefully distinguished from the past tense 'used', which fulfils the function of a predicate and is always followed by an infinitive:

Father was used to sitting up late.

But: Father used to sit up late.

It should be noted that there is a slight difference in meaning between the two constructions. 'To be used to doing something' means 'to be accustomed to, to be familiar with the state or action in question' (in Estonian 'millegagi harjunud olema'). On the other hand, 'used to do something' refers to a certain past state, or to a repeat-

ed or habitual action in the past (in Estonian: oli kombeks, tavatseti madagi teha).

It should be borne in mind that the expression 'used to do something' can only be employed with reference to the past. So it would be absolutely wrong to say 'father uses to sit up late'. If we want to refer to the present we can only resort to some synonymous expression:

Father is in the habit of sitting up late.

Or: Father has the habit of sitting up late.

In both variants the noun 'habit' calls for a gerund introduced by the preposition 'of'.

#### 76. 'Able' and 'ability', 'capable' and 'capability'

The adjective 'able', with its corresponding noun 'ability' takes the infinitive; but their synonyms 'capable' and 'capability' are followed by a gerund governed by the preposition 'of':

Elephants are able to lift heavy objects with their trunks.

Elephants are well known for their ability to lift heavy objects with their trunks.

But: Harry is certainly capable of doing that sort of thing.

Harry is notorious for his capability of always getting into some sort of trouble.

#### 77. 'To manage', 'to succeed'

Of the two synonymous verbs 'to manage' and 'to succeed' the former is used with the infinitive, the latter with a gerund governed by the preposition 'in':

He managed to get tickets for the theatre.

He succeeded in getting tickets for the theatre.

## 78. 'To take'

In different contexts the verb 'take' may be followed by either an infinitive or a gerund. So we may say:

It took me half an hour to write the exercise (mul kulus harjutuse kirjutamiseks pool tundi).

But: He took a long time writing the exercise (ta kirjutas harjutust kaua aega).

He took his time writing the exercise (ta kirjutas harjutust kiirustamata).

As we see, the sentences quoted above are also different in meaning, and care should be taken not to confuse them either in sense or in form.

## 79. 'Should like' and 'feel like'

The expression 'to feel like' is followed by the gerund, but its synonym 'should (would) like' takes the infinitive:

I don't feel like eating just now.

I should like to have a snack before doing anything else.

## 80. 'To deserve', 'worth', 'worth one's while'

Again, the simple adjective 'worth' is used with a gerund; but the verb 'to deserve', which serves to express the same idea, and the expression 'worth one's while' require the infinitive:

This book is worth reading.

This book deserves to be read.

It'll be worth your while to read this book.

The short phrase 'worth while' is not normally followed by any extension of any kind:

We thought of going to the pictures, but finally decided that it wasn't worth while.

81. 'Necessary', 'necessity'

The adjective 'necessary' is used with the infinitive, whereas the corresponding noun 'necessity' usually calls for a gerund governed by the preposition 'of' -- at least in British usage:

Is it necessary to copy out all the new expressions?

The American imperialists attempt to justify their aggressive foreign policy by referring to the necessity of protecting their own country against invasion.

82. 'To need', 'need'

Their synonyms, the verb and noun 'need', are both followed by the infinitive:

There's no need to hurry. We have time enough.

You need not translate all the sentences.

Note that when the modal verb 'need' is used in the Present Tense, it is usually treated as a defective and takes the infinitive without 'to'.

The infinitive and the gerund with different meanings

Another stumbling-block for Estonians takes the form of words that can be used with either the infinitive or the gerund, but with a difference in meaning.

83. 'To remember'

For instance, the verb 'to remember' when followed by the infinitive, means 'not to omit to do something' (in Estonian 'meeles pidama, mitte unustama'). But when

it is used in combination with a gerund it means 'not to need to be reminded' (mäletama):

Please remember to post my letter (Palun ärge unustage mu kirja posti panemast).

But: I don't remember saying such a thing (Ma ei mäleta, et ma midagi säärast oleksin öelnud).

#### 84. 'To mean'

In the same way, the verb 'to mean' used with the infinitive, is synonymous with 'to intend' (kavatsema, tahtma), while with the gerund it means 'to signify', 'to have as a consequence' (tähendama):

I'm very sorry. I didn't mean to offend you.

(Ma ei tahtnud, mul polnud kavatsust teid solvata).

Changing your approach to the problem now would mean rewriting the whole of the manuscript. (Probleemi asetust nüüd muuta tähendaks kogu käsikiri ümber kirjutada).

#### 85. 'To try'

The verb 'to try', with an infinitive, means 'to make an attempt to do something to see whether one is capable of doing it or not' (püüdma, katsuma, proovima). But when it is used with a gerund, it means 'to experiment with a new process or a new method' (püüdma, katsetama):

The little boy tried to lift the bag, but it was too heavy for him.

We have tried pleading with him, but all to no purpose.

This is substantival, e.g. answers the question 'What have we tried?'

## 86. 'Afraid'

The adjective 'afraid' followed by an infinitive suggests that one fears the consequences and is therefore unwilling to do something:

I am afraid to let the dog out of the garden. (i.e. it may run away) (ma kardan koera aiast välja lasta).

The children were afraid to go into the woods alone; (i.e. they might not find their way back home).

On the other hand, 'afraid' + a gerund (governed by the preposition 'of') expresses the possibility that something unpleasant may happen:

I can't open the gate, I am afraid of letting the dog out. (ma kardan, et ma võin koera välja lasta).

I couldn't ask him such a question, I was afraid of offending him. (ma kartsin, et ma oleksin võinud teda solvata).

## 87. 'To hate', 'to like', 'to love'

The verbs 'to hate', 'to like' and 'to love' can all be used either with the gerund or the infinitive. In the former case they usually refer to some kind of general notion or inclinations, in the latter to a specific occasion:

I hate having to make remarks to people.

But: I hate to say so, but I'm afraid I don't agree.

Andy likes reading English books, but he won't like to read this one.

**88. 'To be fond of'**

On the other hand 'to be fond of', which is one of the synonyms of 'to like' and 'to love', can only be followed by a gerund;

Andy is fond of reading English books.

**89. 'To bear'**

The verb 'to bear' in the meaning of 'to tolerate, to put up with' can also be used with both the gerund and the infinitive. Here there is little appreciable difference in meaning, but perhaps it would be true to say that the gerund is somewhat more literary in colouring, while the infinitive is more colloquial and consequently more common;

I can't bear seeing people suffer.

I can't bear to see people suffer.

However, when it is used in the meaning of 'to be fit for', 'to bear' is followed by a gerund:

His language won't bear repeating.

**90. 'To start', 'to begin'**

The verbs 'to start' and 'to begin' can also be followed by either the infinitive or the gerund. In a large number of cases there is no great difference in meaning and either construction will serve. Nevertheless, it often happens that one of them is clearly right, and the other wrong. In such cases the essential difference would seem to be something like the following: the infinitive usually serves to express what might be called a point action, i.e. we merely state the fact that a certain process or action has been initiated, but are not concerned with whether it is still in progress or not. The gerund,

on the other hand, seems to involve the idea of duration, i.e. to imply that the action is or was in progress at the given moment or during the period of time in question. In general it should be remembered that the infinitive is actually much more common, and quite a few Estonian students make the mistake of using the gerund far too often.

Let us compare the following examples:

We had to go back because it started to rain (here the mere fact that it started to rain, i.e. that rain had set in, is important);

and: It started raining last night just after we reached home (and is evidently still raining at the moment of speaking).

In commands the gerund is far more frequent than the infinitive, presumably because we are interested in the progress of the action, rather than in the simple fact of its commencement:

Will you start reading, please.

#### 91. 'To continue'

In the same way the verb 'to continue' is followed by the gerund when the idea of duration is present, and by the infinitive when we want to imply persistence in some kind of action in spite of wishes or expectations to the contrary:

How long will you continue working here?

Will you continue retelling the text, please?

And compare:

He continued to live with his parents after his marriage.

Although the teacher had made several remarks the girls continued to talk.

92. 'To go on', 'to keep', 'to keep on'

The synonyms of 'to continue' -- 'to go on'<sup>1</sup>, 'to keep' and 'to keep on' -- are used with the gerund only:

The old man only looked up once in my direction and then went on digging the flower-bed.

It has kept raining for a week already.

Although I had told the boy not to disturb me, he kept on pestering me with all sorts of questions.

We might add that 'to keep on' is more emphatic or more emotional than 'to keep', and often implies a shade of disapproval or irritation.

93. 'Possibility', 'chance', 'opportunity'

Another group of words which offers certain difficulties to Estonians consists of the nouns 'possibility', 'chance' and 'opportunity'. Here it should be remembered that in standard British English 'possibility' can only be followed by a gerund with the preposition 'of', and never by an infinitive:

We had not foreseen the possibility of not getting tickets for the morning train.

On the other hand, 'opportunity' and 'chance' can be used with both the gerund and the infinitive, and we are forced to draw certain distinctions. One useful generalisation is the following: with the construction 'there is, there are' only the gerund is possible, whereas after the verbs 'to have' and 'to get' the infinitive is usually preferred.  
Compare:

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<sup>1</sup> When followed by an infinitive 'to go on' is not a synonym of 'to continue', but is used in the meaning of 'to proceed':

When the applause had died down the chairman went on to give a detailed account of the advantages of the new project.

The prime minister went on to say that he hoped the links between the two countries would grow still stronger in the future.

The rains had spoilt the roads and there was no chance of our getting back in time.

Whenever there was the slightest opportunity of practising English with anybody Minnie never failed to make the most of it.

and: In Moscow I had an opportunity to attend several recitals given by world-famous pianists. Molly spoke so fast that nobody else got a chance to put a word in.

Incidentally all three words may also, if necessary, be followed by a simple noun:

The possibility of failure had simply never occurred to him

That unwary remark of William's offered his opponent an opportunity for revenge which the latter was quick to seize.

Our team has been training hard and I think we have a fair chance of success.

Another point worth thinking over in this connection is that some of us should probably use the word 'opportunity' much more often than we actually do. Probably this is due to the fact that in Estonian we have only the one word — 'võimalus' — and this immediately suggests the English word 'possibility', with the result that one of the possible English variants is overworked, to the exclusion of the others. On the whole, whenever we wish to say 'a good chance' we should remember that the correct alternative is not 'possibility', but 'opportunity'.

#### The infinitive without 'to'

As we know, the infinitive is usually preceded by the particle 'to'. However, there are a few verbs and expres-

sions which require the infinitive without 'to'. These are a constant source of mistakes, and the students should be warned against some of the most frequent pitfalls.

94. 'To make'

A surprisingly large number of mistakes are made in connection with the verb 'to make', which, as we all know, or should know, is followed by the infinitive without 'to'. Thus we should say:

The teacher made the pupils learn the poem by heart.

The Nazis made the villagers leave their homes.

On the other hand, the companion verb 'to compel' calls for the infinitive with 'to':

The Nazis compelled the villagers to leave their homes.

In the passive voice, however, 'to make' is treated in the same way as the so-called verbs of perception (to see, to hear, etc.), and is always followed by the infinitive with 'to':

The pupils were made to learn the poem by heart.

The villagers were made to leave their homes.

Compare, for example:

Peter had been seen to talk to ~~the~~ neighbour's boy.

Lily was heard to play the piano in the drawing-room.

Perhaps we should add that in the last two cases the present participle is usually preferred in spoken English, though there is a slight difference in meaning that we need not go into here.

95. 'To let'

Another verb which calls for the infinitive without 'to' is 'to let':

The librarian showed me lots of new books and let me choose the one I liked best.

Note also the quasi-imperative construction:

Let him join us if he wants to.

Let's go to the cinema tonight.

96. 'To help'

The verb 'to help', for its part, may be followed by the infinitive both with or without 'to'. On the whole, the construction without 'to' is regarded as being somewhat more characteristic of American speech, though it is perhaps steadily gaining ground in British English. So we can say either:

He helped me to carry my suitcase;  
or  
He helped me carry my suitcase.

97. 'Why'

The infinitive is also used without 'to' in special questions beginning with the interrogative 'why':

Why not set out immediately?  
Why postpone the discussion if we can have it  
now?

In this connection we should remember that there is no corresponding construction with 'how', and if we want to express in English such ideas as "Kuidas talle sõna saata?", we must insert one of the modal verbs:

How can we send him word?

98. 'Had better', 'would rather', 'cannot but', 'do nothing but'

The expressions 'had better', 'would rather' and 'cannot but' and 'do nothing but' invariably take the infinitive without 'to':

To avoid possible errors you had better look up in the dictionary all the words you are not quite sure about.

I would much rather write a paraphrase than do a translation.

No wonder she couldn't answer the teacher's questions — she had done nothing but talk throughout the lesson.

Watching the cars dash past I could not but think of Harry who was lying in hospital with a broken leg.

True, this last construction sounds rather bookish, and in the ordinary spoken language we prefer 'cannot help' + the gerund:

Watching the cars dash past I could not help thinking of Harry who was lying in hospital with a broken leg.

The possessive pronoun in phrases with the gerund

99.

Another problem which does not seem to be quite clear to many of our students is specifically connected with the use of the gerund. When should this be used with a preceding possessive pronoun, and when not? The rule here might be expressed in the following way: If the doer of the action expressed by the gerund is the same as the subject of the main verb, the gerund needs no pronoun; if, however, the gerund expresses an action carried out by some other person, it is either preceded by the corresponding possessive pronoun, or replaced by a noun, or object clause:

I remember closing the window before going out (i.e. I remember that I closed the window before I went out).

But: I remember her closing the window before we left home (i.e. I remember that she closed the

window).

Or: He insisted on reading his paper at the conference. (i.e. he insisted that he should read his paper).

Compare: He insisted on my reading my paper at the conference (i.e. he insisted that I should read my paper. If we left out 'my' and said "He insisted on reading my paper" it would mean that he insisted that he should read my paper).

If the doer of the action is expressed as a separate noun, there is naturally no need for the pronoun:

The teacher insisted on the students' correcting all their mistakes (i.e. the teacher insisted that the students should correct all their mistakes).

John's knowing the secret made things very complicated (i.e. the fact that John knew the secret. Here 'John' is the only subject in the sentence).

## AUXILIARY AND MODAL VERBS

The auxiliary 'do'

### 100. 'Need'

As we know, the verb 'need' may be treated either as a defective or as a regular verb. In the former case it is used without 'do', in the latter case with 'do'. If

we wish to make a very broad distinction we should say that the verb 'need' is usually regarded as a defective in sentences that are negative quasi-negative or interrogative. But not in purely affirmative sentences. Here the meaning is 'to be necessary', 'to be obliged', 'must', and it is usually followed by an infinitive. Here are a few typical examples:

You needn't worry. It's nothing serious.  
Need you go so soon?

I don't think that need be taken into consideration.

But whenever 'need' is followed by a direct object, either a noun or a pronoun, the auxiliary 'do' is necessary:

Do you really need this book?

He doesn't need it at all.

And in any essentially affirmative sense the verb 'need' is treated as a regular verb, even though the form may be negative:

What he needs is some good advice.

Yes, he does need to be reminded, he's awfully absent-minded.

He doesn't need to be told about the meeting (i.e. he already knows about it).

He didn't need to be told twice (i.e. it was not necessary to tell him twice, he took the hint immediately).

#### 101. 'To have'

'To have' is another verb which sometimes takes 'do' and sometimes does not. Of course, as an auxiliary 'to have' is always used without 'do' and this seems to have given some students the impression that it should never be followed by 'do'. In actual fact, here are some border-

line cases where 'to have' as a notional verb can be used either way; and there are other cases in which the omission of the auxiliary is a mistake.

In literary language, i.e. in more formal style, 'to have' is used without the auxiliary 'do':

- 1) If it is equivalent in meaning to the construction 'there is':

How many days has February? (i.e. How many days are there in February?)

Had she a hat on? (i.e. Was there a hat on her head?)

Has the room two or three windows? (i.e. Are there two or three windows in the room?)

- 2) In the meaning of 'to possess', 'to be the owner of':

Have you an English dictionary?

- 3) To express various relations between people:

Has Tom a brother?

Have you any foreign pen-friends?

- 4) In such expressions as 'to have an idea' or 'to have no idea', 'to have a reason', 'to have something in mind', etc.:

Have they anything in mind, I wonder?

Have you any idea what has become of Jack?

What reason have you for thinking that he has fallen ill?

In all the above-mentioned cases the colloquial British usage is 'to have got' and the colloquial American usage requires the auxiliary 'do': For example, a Britisher would say:

How many days has February got?

Has Tom got a brother?

and an American would say:

How many days does February have?

Does Tom have a brother?

In such cases everything depends on the style, or tone of the speaker. Such expressions as 'to have the kindness' or 'to have the goodness', etc. are formal in themselves, and are rarely used in the colloquial style. On the other hand expressions like 'to have the impertinence', or 'the cheek', or 'the impudence' etc. imply a certain degree of familiarity and would hardly be used in the formal style.

It should be borne in mind that, for all practical purposes, this rule applies only to the present tense, although the colloquial past form 'had got' is sometimes heard in England:

I knew they'd got plenty of money.

Now for the uses of 'have' as a full notional verb.

The verb 'to have' is regularly used with the auxiliary 'do':

- 1) in the meaning of 'take', 'accept', 'receive', 'obtain', 'get', 'eat' or 'drink':

Do you have coffee or milk for breakfast?

It was the first time he did not have his own way.

- 2) if it forms part of a group verb, such as 'to have a swim, wash, smoke, dream, dance, change, look, try', etc.:

The treatment had a good effect on me. I sleep much more soundly and I don't have bad dreams any more.

How often do you have a smoke?

- 3) in the meaning of 'to cause something to be done' or 'to experience something':

Where did you have your coat made?

No, he didn't have his pocket picked, he simply lost the money.

In its modal meaning as an alternative to 'must' 'to have' is used without the auxiliary 'do' when it refers to the immediate future, i.e. to some specific occasion or prospect:

Have you (got) to go to the dentist today?

But when we refer to regular or habitual activities the auxiliary 'do' is always used:

Do you often have to go to the dentist?

Similar distinctions can be made in nearly all of the above-mentioned applications of the verb 'to have'. In fact it may be regarded as a general rule that the auxiliary 'do' is never used when reference is made to a particular occasion; and conversely that it is always present when we refer to any characteristic, habitual or permanent state of affairs. Compare, for instance, the following two sentences:

Have you (got) time to go to the cinema this afternoon?

and Do you have much spare time? (i.e. in general).

Or again: I haven't a headache now;

and: Do you often have headaches?

The modal verb 'must'

## 102. 'Must' or 'have to'

Another point that might be discussed in this connection is the choice between the verb 'must' and its equivalent 'have to'. When we have in mind a single specific action or event, 'must' is the word we need. But we prefer to use 'have to' when speaking in general or referring to some kind of recurrent action:

I must get home by five today. Mother is going to the theatre and I must look after the baby.

I always have to get home by one, so as to have the dinner ready by the time the children come back from school.

However, since 'must' has no past tense, only 'have to' or rather 'had to' can be used in the past, and there is no need to make the distinction between specific occasions and general facts:

I had to get home by five yesterday. Mother was going to the theatre and I had to look after the baby.

I always had to get home by one o'clock so as to have the dinner ready by the time the children came back from school.

### 103. 'Must' expressing supposition

An interesting exception is to be found in the case of a certain type of object or subject-clauses, where 'must' is used to express supposition. Here 'had to' is impossible:

Suddenly it occurred to him that the man must be blind. Otherwise he could hardly have failed to notice the danger that lay ahead of him.

And if the action expressed by the verb in the subordinate clause is past in relation to that expressed by the verb in the main clause, this is conveyed by the construction 'must' + the perfect infinitive:

I told him he must have been blind not to see the car coming.

## SINGULAR AND PLURAL FORMS OF THE VERB

### 104. 'All', 'everybody'

The translation of such a simple Estonian sentence as "Kõik on kohal" often causes hesitation and leads to mistakes. The word 'kõik' can be rendered in two ways -- either by 'all' or by 'everybody' (or 'everyone'). But it should be remembered that 'all' is followed by a verb in the plural, whereas 'everybody' requires the singular. So the correct variants are:

All are present.

but: Everybody is present.

### 105. 'Both', 'either', 'neither'

The same difficulty arises in the case of 'both', 'either' and 'neither'. The rule here is that 'both' is used with the plural, 'either' and 'neither' with the singular:

My aunt has two children. Both are boys.

"Rob Roy" and "Ivanhoe" are two well-known novels by Walter Scott. Either (or: Either of them) is suitable for home reading.

I've got two sisters. Neither (or: Neither of them) goes to school as yet.

When 'both' and 'all' are modified by a pronoun in the function of an attribute, attention should be paid to the correct word order. In Estonian we can either say 'nad mõlemad' or 'mõlemad nad'. In English there are also two ways:

They both know me.

or: Both of them know me.

They all know me.

or: All of them know me.

In the case of auxiliaries and modal verbs there is a third way: they are inserted between the two pronouns:<sup>1</sup>

We are all here.

They must both go to the Dean's Office.

106. 'A number of', 'the number of'

The phrase 'a number of', which means 'several' (terve rida), is followed by a verb in the plural:

A number of our students are interested in problems of machine translation.

But the corresponding phrase 'the number of', where the word 'number' is used in its basic meaning (arv), calls for the singular:

The number of students, in our country is growing from year to year.

107. 'A lot of'

Another stumbling-block is the popular expression 'a lot of'. When this is followed by a plural countable, the verb should also be in the plural; but when it is followed by an uncountable, the verb is in the singular:

There were a lot of pictures by modern Estonian painters at the Summer Art Exhibition.

There was a lot of trouble with the tickets.

108. Enumerations introduced by 'there'

When we have an enumeration, or a list of nouns in the singular preceded by the introductory particle 'there', the verb is usually in the singular, although the plural cannot be quite ruled out:

On the desk there is a pen and a sheet of paper.

There was my mother, my father, Uncle George and his daughter, all sitting round the drawing-room table.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. § 28.

But as a general rule, if any of the items in the enumeration is in the plural, the plural form of the verb is to be preferred:

In the room there were a table and some chairs.

## SINGULAR OR PLURAL FORMS OF THE NOUN

### 109. 'Advice', 'information'

Another kind of difficulty is caused by the nouns 'advice' and 'information', which are treated as uncountables in English and can only be used in the singular. Since in Estonian we very often use the plural (nõuanded, teated), many students are tempted to use the plural in English too. We should, however, say:

What bad advice!

All the newspapers carried information about the flight of the space ship.

Note that it is often necessary to add the word 'some' if no other modifier is used. "He gave me good advice" is correct, but in nine cases out of ten we should find:

He gave me some good advice.

Have you any information for me this morning?

So also: They offered me plenty of useful advice.

### 110. 'News'

The word 'news' also belongs to this group. Although it is plural in form, it should be treated as an uncountable noun in the singular. This discrepancy between form

and content has proved a constant source of mistakes. The correct variants are:

This is very good news.

No news is good news.

Ill news travels apace .

I heard some astounding news about Tom.

When we wish to stress the idea of singularity in connection with the words 'advice', 'information' and 'news', we have to use some additional word: a piece, a bit, a word, a few words of advice; a piece of information; a piece or item of news:

Let me give you a piece of advice.

John gave me a useful bit of advice.

Here is an interesting piece of information.

I have a piece of news for you.

The last item of news was the one that was least expected.

### 111. 'Weather'

Another noun which is usually used as an uncountable is 'weather'. This means that it can neither be preceded by an indefinite article, nor be used in the plural. Thus both the Estonian singular and plural are rendered indifferently into English by the singular.

What fine weather we are having! (Milline ilus ilm!)

We have had some nasty weather lately;

or: The weather has been rather nasty lately (Viimase ajal on olnud halvad ilmad).

And, as in the previous case, if we wish to stress the fact that we are referring to a specific occasion, or period of time, and we feel the need for an indefinite article, we must add an appropriate word:

We had a spot of rainy weather last month.  
We are in, for a spell of rainy weather,  
I am afraid.

Or we may simply replace the word 'weather' by some other suitable expression:

It was a cold windy day (or morning, afternoon, night, etc.).

However, there are a few set expressions in which the word 'weather' is used in the plural, as for example:

The life-boat has to be ready to put out to sea in all weathers.

## 112. 'Work'

The next word that needs to be discussed is 'work'. It can be used as either a countable or an uncountable, but with a corresponding difference in the meaning. As a countable it denotes a product of the intellect or imagination (e.g. a book, a piece of writing, a musical composition, a picture, etc.) (töö, teos):

This vase is a real work of art.

The whole programme was made up of works by Bach and Beethoven.

In other applications, where it is translated into Estonian by 'töö', 'tööstii', 'töössesuhtumine', etc., and here we should also include the difficult expression 'kontrolltöö'<sup>1</sup>, the word 'work' should be treated as an uncountable, i.e. it should never be used in the plural or be preceded by an indefinite article in the singular. This rule is very often forgotten by our students, with the result that we have a great number of quite unnecessary mistakes. We can say "The work was not complicated"; but we cannot say "The work was not a complicated one".

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<sup>1</sup> See also §1.

Here are a few typical examples:

I was very busy during the winter holidays when I had all sorts of work to do (igasugu töid).

Ted was offered some interesting work on the staff of a newspaper.

We have got through a lot of work during the term.

Most students had written their work well (oma kontrolltööd).

The work done by our students on the construction site did credit to the University (meie üliõpilaste töö, tööstiil, töössesuhtumine ehitustel).

Here, too, if we wish to stress the idea of singularity, we must use an additional word, such as 'piece', 'bit', 'spell', 'spot', etc. to render the idea of countability:

Repairing your bicycle was quite a piece of work (tubli tükk tööd).

Last Sunday I did a spot of work in the garden.

The morning shift had a spell of hard work in the engine room.

And when the plural is absolutely necessary, some other word, such as 'jobs', 'duties', 'tasks', etc., all of which are countables, must be used instead:

He has completed all the tasks he was given (ta on kõik tööd ära teinud, mis talle on teha antud).

The unemployed roam about the United States doing odd jobs whenever they get a chance (tehes juhuslikke töid).

There are also a few cases where the word 'work' is used in the plural only.

In the meaning of 'factory' or 'plant' (vabrik, tehas) it is plural in form, but usually treated as a singular.

When, however, it is the subject of the sentence, the verb may also (though rarely) stand in the plural:

Next year they will start building a glass works in our town.

The gas works is (or are) near the river.

When denoting the moving parts of a piece of machinery 'the works' (always used with the definite article) is plural in form as well as in meaning:

There's something wrong with the works (masinavärk).

The boy opened his watch to see whether the works were in order (kellavärk).

Now let us pass for a moment to the plural of nouns.

### 113. Collective extensions of the noun

A certain hesitation, or even mistakes, are often caused by cases in which a noun in the plural is followed by some sort of extension in the form of a countable which is taken to refer separately to each of its individual members. In Estonian this extension is in the singular; in English it is usually in the plural. For example:

The mice dreamed of what a good time they would have if cats had bells tied round their necks (kui kassidel oleks kellad kaelas).

Three people lost their lives in a street accident (in Estonian; kolm inimest kaotasid liiklusõnnetusel elu).

The boys were shouting at the top (or tops) of their voices (in Estonian: Poissid karjusid täiest kõrist).

We have made up our minds to study biology.

When, however, the extension takes the form of an abstract noun, i.e. an uncountable, it stands in the singular:

The bus stopped so abruptly that several people lost their balance (in Estonian: mitu inimest kaotasid tasakaalu)

It was some time before the children plucked up their courage again (in Estonian: kuni lapsed kogusid uuesti julgust).

114. Two ordinal numbers modifying the same noun

When two ordinal numbers modify the same noun, the latter may stand either in the plural or in the singular. When the noun is in the plural the article or, as is sometimes the case, the possessive pronoun, is used only in front of the first number:

Robert was very active in the Students Scientific Society during his third and fourth years at the university.

The first and second parts of the book are more interesting than the third.

But when we repeat the article before both numbers the noun stands in the singular. So the examples given above might also be read as follows;

Robert was very active in the Students Scientific Society in his third and his fourth year at the university.

The first and the second part of the book are more interesting than the third.

115. 'Year'

When it is modified by a numeral to express somebody's age, the word 'year' stands in the plural;

The child is seven years old.

But when it forms part of a compound attribute it is always used in the singular:

Every seven-year-old child has to attend school.

116. 'Hundred', 'Thousand', 'million'

Again, the numerals 'hundred', 'thousand' and 'million' are used in the singular when they are preceded by another numeral:

Eight hundred pupils;

Ten thousand students.

Two million inhabitants.

On the other hand, when there is no preceding numeral or very often when the words 'a few', 'some' or 'several' are used instead, 'hundred', 'thousand' and 'million' are treated as ordinary nouns and stand in the plural, while the following noun is treated as a sort of attribute and is introduced by the preposition 'of':

Hundreds of pupils.

Some (many, etc.) thousands of students.

These possibilities, however, do not affect the normal constructions, in which there is a growing tendency to use the numeral in the singular. Attention should be paid to such examples as the following:

He broke through the enemy lines with only a few thousand men.

Cities with several million inhabitants are by no means uncommon in the modern world.

Note, however, that there may be important differences in the meaning. If we say that there were some hundreds of students at the meeting, we mean that there were several hundred students there (mitusada üliõpilast). But if we say, "There were some hundred students at the meeting" all we mean is that the number of students amounted to roughly one hundred (umbkaudu sada).

Another point to remember is that when the word 'hundred' is followed by another numeral the word 'and' is obligatory in standard British usage, (though it is sometimes omitted in colloquial American style):

Two hundred and nine students attended the scientific conference of our faculty.

THE ARTICLE

117. Omission of the article

The most frequent mistake in this field would seem to be the omission of an article where it should be used. This is clearly due to the fact that we have no articles in Estonian and if we have not yet developed a sufficiently fine feeling for the language, we often simply do not feel the need for an article. To English ears, however, these are glaring mistakes, which often result in distortion of the meaning, especially if the noun is in the plural. In Estonian the corresponding distinctions are often rendered by the use of different cases. Compare the two sentences:

At last Charley appeared, bringing visitors with him. (i.e. we were not expecting any visitors. In Estonian: tuues kaasa külalisi).

and:

At last Charley appeared, bringing the visitors with him (i.e. bringing the visitors whom we were expecting. In Estonian: tuues külalised kaasa).

Or:

I know he has received letters from his brother (i.e. letters in general. In Estonian: Ma tean, ta on saanud vennalt kirju).

but:

I know he has received the letters from his brother (i.e. those letters which were written by his brother. In Estonian: Ma tean, et oma venna kirjad on ta kätte saanud).

If the article is wrongly omitted before a noun in the singular, it is, of course, just as bad. But in most cases, it is at least clear that there is something wrong somewhere, and the hearer is put on his guard. For example, it would

be impossible to say "He bought book yesterday". On the other hand, both of the plural forms are equally correct. We may say either 'books' or 'the books'. And if we choose the wrong form the hearer may not even suspect that what we really meant was something quite different from what we said.

As far as nouns in the singular are concerned, not only is the article wrongly omitted, but the indefinite and the definite article are often used indiscriminately. As we know, here again there should be a clear distinction in the meaning, e.g.:

He bought a book yesterday (i.e. any book.  
We hear of the fact for the first time. In  
Estonian: Ta ostis eile raamatu).

and: He bought the book yesterday (i.e. this  
particular book. In Estonian: Ta ostis selle  
raamatu eile).

#### 118. The basic rule

It is not necessary to give any more examples. What is unknown or mentioned for the first time calls for the indefinite article, and what is known or has already been mentioned calls for the definite article. The basic rule should be known to every beginner, and mistakes of this kind must be put down to sheer carelessness. However, their number is so great that we can safely say that if this one elementary rule were strictly observed by every student of English, the number of grammatical mistakes in their papers would be reduced by a fair third, or even half.

In addition to the general rule governing the use of the article there are a few special cases which need discussion.

#### 119. Words expressing rank or profession

Words expressing military rank (such as 'general', 'colonel', 'major', etc.) and profession (e.g. 'professor',

'doctor', etc.) need no article when they are used as titles preceding a name:

Colonel Jefferson had served many years in India.

Doctor Brown is a well-known heart specialist.

In such cases they are always spelt with a capital. But when they are used as ordinary nouns, they are spelt with a small letter and take the article.

The general appeared, accompanied by several officers.

Frank's uncle is a professor of biology.

#### 120. Proper names in the possessive case

A very bad blunder which is still met with from time to time consists in putting an article before a proper name in the possessive case. The only possible form is, of course:

He has read all of Shakespeare's plays.

We cannot say "all the Shakespeare's plays" any more than we can say 'all the his plays'.

#### 121. Words used in direct address

Another case where there is usually no need for an article is before words used in direct address:

Monitor, collect the exercise-books.

What is your opinion, professor?

As a result, expressions like 'the others', 'the rest', etc., where the article cannot be dispensed with, are either avoided in direct address, or the imperative has to be replaced by some third-person form. So where we can say in Estonian: "Kuusik, lugege teie teksti ja teised kuulake tähelepanelikult", we should have to say in English:

Kuusik, you read the text, and the others, or the rest (of the class), will listen carefully.

122. Not 'one' or 'this', but 'a' or 'the'

In Estonian we have no article, but very often the words 'üks' and 'see' are used where in other languages we should need an article. Take, for example, the following sentences:

Üks naine võttis telefoni vastu (in other words 'keegi naine').

Ta näitas mulle üht Šiškini maali.

Pane see raamat lauale! (instead of simply saying 'Pane raamat lauale!')

Helen kulutas kogu oma raha uue kleidi ostimiseks, ja kõige halvem oli veel see, et see kleit ei sobinud talle).

When these expressions are unemphatic, it is quite enough if we translate the Estonian 'üks' by the indefinite article and the Estonian 'see' by the definite article:

A woman answered the phone.

He showed me a painting by Shishkin.

Put the book on the table.

Helen spent all her money on a new dress, and the worst of it was that the dress did not suit her.

All of the above sentences are examples of cases where the English indefinite article has preserved its old force as a numeral ('ān' = one), and the definite article the force of the old demonstrative 'ēo' (this). Owing to this additional shade of meaning, the bare article is sufficient in itself, and the words 'one' and 'this' are felt to be superfluous. Many Estonian students, however, have no such feeling, and they are consequently tempted to say 'one woman', 'one painting', 'this book' or 'this dress'.

It should be remembered that 'one' is only used when the idea of number is clearly important, i.e. when it is stressed that one woman, not two or three women, answered the phone, or one painting, not several, were shown to a person. And 'this' is used when we refer to one particular person or thing out of a number of others, i.e. this particular book or this particular dress, and no other.

Perhaps the commonest wrong use of 'this' instead of the definite article 'the' occurs with nouns followed by a relative clause. Such monstrosities as "Here is this book which (or that) I have bought for you" are by no means unknown, though the correct form "Here's the book I bought you" is so much simpler and more natural.

### 123. 'Hundred', 'thousand', 'million'

And now for another elementary point. The numerals 'hundred', 'thousand' and 'million' should always be preceded by either the indefinite article 'a' or the numeral 'one'. Actually 'one' is only used in colloquial English when we regard the number as a precise arithmetical quantity, or when it is emphasized. Thus:

A hundred and fifty-three pupils (normal).

One hundred and fifty-three pupils (emphatic).

Over a thousand people took part in the demonstration

The number of the inhabitants is now about a million.

### 124. Article or possessive pronoun

Another frequent mistake is for Estonians to use a possessive pronoun instead of the indefinite article. In compositions we often find such sentences as:

In the street Nick met his friend;

My classmate paid me a visit yesterday; etc., in reference to somebody that has not been mentioned before. In actual fact the first sentence, as it stands, implies that Nick has only one friend, and that he met that particular friend in the street. If this is what is really meant the sentence is correct. On the other hand, the second sentence is clearly incorrect, because nobody can have only one classmate. In most cases the idea the students really wish to express is 'one out of many' or 'several':

Tänaval kohtas Nick üht sõpra.

Eile külastas mind üks klassivend (or: klassiõde).

As we have already seen, the obvious correct solution is simply to use the indefinite article:

In the street Nick met a friend.

A classmate paid me a visit yesterday.

But there are other possibilities:

In the street Nick met a friend of his.

or: In the street Nick met one of his friends.

And similarly: A classmate of mine paid me a visit yesterday.

or: One of my classmates paid me a visit yesterday.

## 125. 'Such'

Another common mistake in the use of the indefinite article occurs in connection with the word 'such'. In affirmative and interrogative sentences 'such' calls for the indefinite article when it modifies a noun in the singular:

Philip is such a clever boy.

Is philip really such a clever boy?

This is also the case with simple negatives:

He isn't such a fool as he looks.

But the negative phrase 'no such' needs no article:

There's no such boy in our group.

I have no such book.

It would be impossible to say 'no such a boy' for the same reason that we can say 'I have a book' and 'I have no book', but nobody would dream of saying 'I have no a book'.

And when it governs a noun in the plural, 'such' never takes the article, since the plural counterpart of the indefinite article is the so-called zero article:

Philip and Ben are such clever boys.

## 126. Noun predicative expressing rank, state or occupation

Most of our students seem to know the rule that a noun predicative denoting rank, state or occupation needs no article when the occupation in question is unique, i.e. when a particular post or job is meant. For example:

Comrade Potter is head doctor of the Surgical Hospital.

Norah's father is chairman of a collective farm. This is usually the case when it is followed by an attribute or adverbial modifier indicating the institution or establishment at which the job is held. If the modifier is not expressed, it should at least be implied, as for instance:

We elected him secretary (i.e. of our organisation),

If, however, the modifier is neither expressed nor implied, the noun should be used with the indefinite article since it no longer refers to a particular job, but to one out of many persons who fill such a post in a certain district, country, etc. This is where mistakes are often made. Compare, for example:

Tom's brother is a station-master in the West of England (there are many station-masters in the West of England).

- and: Tom's brother is station-master at Fabivere  
(i.e. the station-master, there being only one).
- Or again: "What is Peter's father?" -- "I'm not quite  
sure but I think he's a head-master at some  
secondary school or other;
- but: Peter's father is head-master of the Fifth  
Secondary School.

#### 127. Phraseological combinations

The next thing to be remembered in connection with the article is that it is usually omitted in phraseological combinations consisting of two nouns governed by prepositions and functioning as adverbial modifiers, such as 'from top to toe', 'from morning till night', etc.:

The expedition had been on the move from sunrise till sunset, (or from dawn to dusk).

The child was covered with mud from head to foot.

#### 128. Singular and plural nouns qualified by the same adjective

Another kind of difficulty crops up when two (or more) nouns, of which one is in the plural and the other in the singular, are modified by one and the same attribute. The trouble here is due to the fact that the singular requires the indefinite article, but the plural the zero article. So mistakes may creep in. We obviously cannot say:

He had big hands and mouth.

because the indefinite article cannot be omitted before 'mouth'. But there are two possible ways out. Either we can put the singular first and say:

He had a big mouth and hands.

Or if we wish to preserve the original word order, the attribute will have to be repeated:

He had big hands and a big mouth.

129. Parts of the day

With nouns denoting parts of the day certain prepositions, notably 'before', 'till', 'until', 'since', 'towards', 'at' and 'by' call for the article whenever we wish to stress the fact that we are referring to a particular morning or evening, etc., but not when we speak in a more general sense, i.e. simply to indicate the beginning, middle or end of the day, or of the daylight period.

Compare:

They danced till morning (i.e. till it became light once again, or till the next day began);

and: They danced till the morning (i.e. of the next day).

The same is true of phrases with 'all':

It rained all day (= the whole day).

We worked all the day (= all that day).

The article is never used when these words function as predicatives in impersonal sentences introduced by 'it':

It was evening when we arrived.

Certain words like 'dawn', 'dark', 'noon', 'night', 'day', never take the article in unqualified prepositional phrases:

We must get there before dark.

By noon the rain had passed over.

It's coldest before dawn.

So also 'by night', 'after dark', 'at dawn', etc.; though we naturally say:

By the dawn of the following day (where the phrase is qualified).

Conversely certain prepositions, like 'in' and 'during', rarely occur without the definite article: 'in the morning', 'during the afternoon', etc. This partly ex-

plains why we have to say 'by day' and 'at night', but 'in the night', 'during the night', 'in the `daytime', 'during the daytime', etc.

130. 'Next'

Some hesitation is caused by the word 'next'. When do we say 'next day', 'next week', 'next year', 'next time', 'next lesson', etc., and when should we add the article 'the next day', 'the next lesson', etc.? As a general rule, we might remember the following:

When speaking from the point of view of the past, the article is usually necessary, because we then refer to the particular day, week, year, etc. which follows the one in question. On the other hand, when speaking from the point of view of the present and referring to some future moment, the article is normally dispensed with. However usage varies, and deviations from the general rule are by no means rare, especially in the first case. Thus:

Dolly left the secondary school in 1964.

The next autumn she entered the university.

But: When will Dolly enter the university? --

Next autumn, if she passes the entrance exams.

Or again: The autumn term began on the first of September. The next week some of the students were sent to the country to lend a hand with the harvesting.

And: We shall continue our discussion next week.

131. The specific and general use of certain nouns

Most students are aware of the fact that such nouns as 'school', 'market', 'prison', 'court', 'hospital', 'bed', 'camp', 'table', etc. have no article when they are treated as abstract ideas and denote a certain state or form of activity. But it is quite wrong to assume

that these words can never be used with the article. On the contrary, whenever we wish to refer to a particular school, church, bed, etc., we should always use the article. In other words 'to go to school' means 'to attend lessons', 'to be sent to prison' is to be sentenced to a term of imprisonment, 'to go to bed' means 'to lie down in bed with the object of going to sleep'. But when these places are used for some other purpose, apart from their basic functions, the article at once becomes necessary. Compare, for example:

At the age of seven all Soviet children go to school (i.e. begin their studies);

and:

I must go to the school to a parents' meeting next Tuesday.

Or again:

John is in hospital. He was operated on for appendicitis last week.

On Sunday I shall go to the hospital to visit a friend of mine.

### 132. Musical instruments and games

Another stumbling-block is the verb 'to play'. Here, however, the rule is very simple: musical instruments require the definite article, but games have no article.

Thus we say:

Does your sister play the piano well?

We could hear somebody playing the violin in the flat next door.

But:

Uncle James doesn't play cards as a rule, though he enjoys an occasional round of bridge.

Can you play chess?

And now for a few words and expressions which evidently cause difficulty.

133. 'Space', 'cosmos'

'Space' needs no article, but 'cosmos' takes the definite article. We can either say:

During the last few years immense progress  
has been made in probing outer space;

or: ... in probing the cosmos.

134. 'Society', 'system', 'order'

'Society' needs no article:

Man cannot live outside society.

But 'system' and 'order' require the definite article:

We are convinced that the socialist system  
is superior to the capitalist system.

The Napoleonic wars struck the death blow  
to the feudal order in Europe.

135. Nouns modified by ordinal or cardinal numbers

In the case of the expression 'world war' we must go by the general rule, which we all know, but which we often forget to apply: ordinal numbers take the definite article, but cardinal numbers have no article.

Thus: The Second World War ended with the defeat  
of Nazi Germany.

But: World War II (read: World War Two) ended  
with the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The usage here is exactly the same as in the more familiar examples:

The novel reaches its climax in the tenth  
chapter;

and: The novel reaches its climax in Chapter 10  
where, unfortunately, students also often go wrong.

### 136. Subjects of study

Such words as 'literature', 'history', 'music', 'art', 'architecture', etc., need no article when they are preceded by a mere descriptive attribute;

In January we shall have an exam in English literature.

The Academy of Sciences is compiling a book on world history.

Fred is fond of classical music.

Professor Mill is a specialist in prehistoric art.

But when the attribute is limiting, the definite article is necessary:

Peter is writing a report on the literature of the Restoration period.

The names of our spacemen will go down in the history of the world.

The music of most oriental peoples is very different from European music.

This statue is a fine specimen of the art of Ancient Greece.

### 137. 'In the negative', 'in the affirmative'

The expressions 'in the negative' and 'in the affirmative' are set phrases, from which the definite article should never be omitted:

He answered in the negative.

The answer was in the affirmative.

### 138. 'The following'

The word 'following' takes the definite article when it is used to introduce a series or a succession of different items:

In order to keep fit one should observe the following rules: properly distributed work and rest,

healthy food, and plenty of exercise and fresh air.

The gerund, and not the infinitive, is used with the following verbs: to succeed, to insist, to avoid, to finish, etc.

## THE PRONOUN

### 139. 'This', 'that' or 'it'?

Very often the personal pronoun 'it' is erroneously used instead of the demonstrative pronouns 'this' or 'that'. However, properly speaking, 'it' usually refers to a person or thing and is seldom used to indicate a general idea or situation. In the latter case 'this' or 'that' should be preferred:

Where is my fountain-pen? - It is in your bag.

George suggested going for a swim. - That's not a bad idea.

My grandmother has fallen ill. This will delay our departure for the South.

When, however, we hark back to an idea or situation already referred to as 'this' or 'that', the pronoun 'it' is used:

My grandmother has fallen ill. This will delay our departure for the South, but I hope it won't make us cancel the trip altogether.

Here we may say that 'it' is not so much a substitute for the statement of the fact as for the pronoun 'this', which cannot be repeated.

In the above examples 'this' and 'that' refer to a situation or idea that lies in the focus of our attention, i.e. they are used emphatically. However, 'it' may be used to refer to some fact already mentioned if the emphasis is laid not on its antecedent, but on some other part of the sentence:

"The fishermen ate the fish raw on the spot" - "I have done it too" ('I' and 'too' are emphasised here).

"You are late." - "It is not my fault" ('my fault' is emphasised).

140. "So'

With certain verbs denoting speaking or thinking ('believe', 'expect', 'fear', 'be afraid', 'hope', 'think', 'maintain', 'say', 'suppose', 'tell', etc.), and with the verb 'do', 'so' is used as a pronoun representing a preceding statement. Its Estonian translation, if the object is expressed at all, is usually 'see', sometimes 'nii':

"The play was a great success." - "So they say." (Nii (seda) nad räägivad).

"Nancy will be delighted with the present." - "I hope so." (Loodan seda).

"Peter won't come to the meeting tonight." - "He told me so." (Ta ütles mulle (seda)).

"He may have fallen ill." - "I'm afraid so." (Kardan küll).

"Will you also be present?" - "I suppose so." (Arvan küll).

I asked Jack to ring me up and he did so (ta tegi seda).

Whenever you have a chance to drop in at my place, please do so (palun tehke seda).

In this application 'so' approximates to 'this' or 'that', which are more emphatic, and to 'it', which denotes something more specific than 'so'. Compare the following:

He said it slowly (Ta ütles seda aeglaselt) (the weight is on the manner how it was said);

He said so (Ta ütles seda) (The weight is on the verb, we stress the content of what he said);

"They say you aren't friends with Willie any more."  
- "Who told you that?" (Kes teile niisugust asja rääkis?) (Emphatic. The weight is on the content).

#### 141. Indefinite pronoun + attribute

The indefinite pronouns 'somebody', 'someone', 'anybody', 'anyone', 'nobody' and 'no one' cannot be modified by an attribute. When an attribute follows the correct forms are 'one', 'any' and 'none'. In every case the Estonian translation will be 'keegi':

Somebody wants to see you (Keegi tahab teiega kokku saada).

One of you will come with me (Keegi teist tuleb minuga kaasa).

Has anyone asked for me? (Kas keegi küsis minu järele?)

Does any of them know German? (Kas keegi neist oskab saksa keelt?)

Nobody is absent today. (Keegi ei puudu täna).

None of the students had seen that film. (Keegi üliõpilastest polnud näinud toda filmi).

#### 142. Incorrect double negatives

We all know the rule that double negatives must be avoided in English, so that with negative verbs the correct pronouns are not 'no', 'nobody' (or 'no one'), 'none' or 'nothing', but 'any', 'anybody' (or 'anyone') or 'anything'. Unfortunately it is one thing to know the rule, but another thing to apply it in practice, and blunders of the type:

Don't say a word about it to none of your friends, etc. are by no means uncommon.

There is a similar tendency in connection with the so-called 'implied negative', which results in similar misunderstandings:

She was too proud to speak to nobody;  
or: He refused to show us nothing;

instead of the correct forms:

She was too proud to speak to anybody;  
and He refused to show us anything.

### 143. The pronoun as object

Again, we all know that when the indefinite pronoun is the object of the verb, or when we have to do with one of the corresponding adverbs, we may choose one of two possible forms, i.e. we can say either:

I liked none of them;  
or: I didn't like any of them;  
He was nowhere to be seen,  
or: He wasn't anywhere to be seen.

The same holds good when the pronoun is introduced by the phrase 'there is':

There was nobody there,  
or: There wasn't anybody there.

In all such cases both variants are correct in themselves. But that does not mean to say that they are identical. On the contrary they differ appreciably in tone and we should try to remember that in each of the pairs enumerated above the first alternative is somewhat stiffer and more formal in style, whereas the second is the natural colloquial form used in everyday speech. Nine times out of ten we should say:

I didn't speak to anybody (not 'I spoke to nobody'),  
We didn't buy anything (not 'We bought nothing'),  
etc.

### 144. The indefinite pronoun as subject

But that does not mean that we can use 'anybody' or 'anything' as the subject of the sentence; and since the grammars are unfortunately silent on this point, that is

precisely what some students do, producing such monstrosities as:

Anybody wouldn't lend them another penny,  
and Anything couldn't be seen in the dark.

Here there is no alternative and the only correct forms are:

Nobody would lend them another penny,  
and Nothing could be seen in the dark.

#### 145. 'Every' or 'any'

Another common mistake is to use 'every', 'everybody' (or 'everyone') and 'everything' instead of 'any' and 'anybody' (or 'anyone') and 'anything' in affirmative sentences in the meaning of 'no matter which' and 'no matter who'. Let us take a few examples with 'every':

I shall be at home every afternoon at five (i.e. on all afternoons; in Estonian: iga päev kell viis).

Every Soviet citizen has the right to work i.e. all Soviet citizens; in Estonian: kõigil nõukogude kodanikel).

Everybody has to die some time (i.e. all people are mortal; in Estonian: kõik inimesed).

Compare these with the following examples containing 'any':

You can bring the money back any afternoon at five (i.e. on no matter which afternoon; in Estonian: ükskõik millisel pärastlõunal).

Each student is expected to make a book report. You may choose any novel by a modern British author (i.e. no matter which novel; in Estonian: ükskõik millise romaani).

When you reach the village, ask the first person you meet. Anybody will direct you to

the schoolhouse (i.e. no matter who; in Estonian; igaiüks).

146. 'Any' as noun-equivalent

'Any' can also be used as an independent noun-pronoun. It is then plural and is used of persons:

Any who want to participate in the competition will have to register at the dean's office.

The audience kept talking all the time. I don't think any were interested in what the speaker had to say.

When followed by an attributive of-phrase referring to countable phenomena 'any' may be either singular or plural, according to the speaker's intention:

Do any of you know where he lives?

Do any of the guests speak Russian?

It was not suggested that any of the boys was a thief.

I don't think any of these dancers is a real gipsy.

147. 'Some' or 'any'

Another point to remember is that not only 'any', but also 'some' may be used in interrogative sentences. Quite a number of students, evidently misled by the oversimplified explanations given in most of the standard grammars, seem to be of the opinion that only 'any' and its derivative forms can be used in questions. This is not the case. 'Some' is also occasionally used and the two words should be carefully distinguished, though the distinction is not always easy to make. Perhaps the simplest explanation is the following. 'Any' is correct when the meaning is 'any at all', i.e. where we should use in Estonian such words as 'üldse', 'mingisugune', etc. On the other hand 'some' implies a definite quantity which the speaker has in mind. Thus when making an offer we usually prefer 'some' and its derivatives. Compare the following two sentences:

Did you listen to any new records? (i.e. any new records at all)

and: Would you like to hear some new records? (i.e. I have some that I should like to play to you).

Or: Did they offer you anything to eat?

and: Would you have something to eat? You must be hungry after your outing.

#### 148. 'Some' and 'a few'

We are all well aware of the fact that the Estonian word 'mõned' has two main equivalents in English: 'some' and 'a few'. Nevertheless almost everybody seems to prefer 'some', whereas 'a few' is conspicuous by its absence. Yet the two words are slightly different in meaning, and cannot be used indiscriminately. 'Some' means 'not all' or 'a certain appreciable quantity or number', while 'a few' means 'not many'. 'Some' is positive, and 'a few' negative in force:

Some people pick up languages very easily.

But: I should like to say a few words about the activities of our English Study Circle.

#### 149. 'No', 'not' or 'none'

The choice between 'no', 'not' and 'none' gives rise to hesitation more often than might be suspected. The rule here is that 'no' is used to modify nouns, 'none' is a true pronoun, i.e. a substitute for a noun, and 'not' is used with verbs. So the correct variants are:

-- Has he got any tickets for the cinema?

-- No, he has no tickets.

-- No, he has none.

or simply:

-- No, he hasn't, i.e. he has not.

There is only one case which leaves room for doubt. In alternative questions such as:

Does he skate or not?

the conjunction 'or' may also be followed by 'no'. This is usually the case when the alternative is expressed by 'whether ... or no', especially when the particle stands at the end of the sentence:

Alice was determined to go to the party, whether her mother would let her or no.

However, 'no' is often, if not usually, replaced by 'not' when the phrase occurs in some other part of the sentence, and sometimes even in end position:

What I want to know is whether or not you can get the work done in time.

He must attend the meeting whether he wants to or not.

In other alternative phrases the conjunction 'or' is nearly always followed by 'no':

Tired or no, she must go to the shops.

Pleasant or no, you must take your medicine.

#### 150. Article or pronoun

The following is a common mistake of a slightly different type. Many Estonian students have the habit of using the definite article instead of the corresponding possessive pronoun when referring to parts of the human body or articles of clothing. What we should say is:

He put his hand in his pocket;

and: The man adjusted his tie.

In English the possessive is indispensable here, and if we leave it out, it is not clear whose hand was put in whose pocket, or whose tie the man adjusted. However, when the person referred to is the object of the verb, the definite article, and not the possessive pronoun, is usually preferred:

Grandmother was leading the child by the hand (seldom 'by his, her or its hand').

Jeff seized his companion by the collar and dragged him out (not 'by his collar').

151. Obligatory use of the possessive pronoun

There are a few other cases where a possessive pronoun is needed in English, but not in Estonian, and these should be watched. For example:

On his way home he dropped in at the bookshop (in Estonian: teel koju, koduteel).

They took their seats (in Estonian: nad võtsid istet).

In the last example the possessive pronoun may be dropped when some adverbial modifier of place follows:

They took seats in the smoking compartment.

152. The possessive of 'one'

Further, some students do not seem to know what possessive pronoun corresponds to the indefinite pronoun 'one'. It is 'one's', not 'his' or 'her'; and the correct forms are:

One should always do one's duty.

In the darkness one may easily lose one's way.

Perhaps the confusion can be partly explained by the modern tendency to avoid 'one' in colloquial speech, and to replace it with some other pronoun:

You could easily lose your way in the dark, etc.

153. The possessive after 'everybody'

A difficult problem is the choice of the possessive to follow 'everybody' (or 'everyone'). The English themselves are at a loss here. Most grammarians recommend 'his' or 'her' when the persons in question are all of the same sex, and 'their' when we refer to mixed company or when we are uncertain. In the latter case the most correct form would be 'his or her', but it is very clumsy and can only be used in the most formal language. Thus we can say:

After the girls had filed in, everybody sat down at her desk.

The boys watching the football game were very excited. Everybody was shouting at the top of his voice.

The streets were lined with people. Everybody was craning their necks to see the procession pass, where the formal variant would be:

Everybody was craning his or her neck to see the procession pass.

Perhaps we should add that there is a growing tendency in modern English to use 'their' with the noun in the plural in every case, i.e. to regard 'their' as the regular possessive corresponding to 'everybody'. This should certainly help to simplify matters at least as far as the spoken language is concerned. But it still has a rather colloquial flavour and cannot yet be recommended for indiscriminate use on more formal occasions.

#### 154. 'What', 'which' or 'that'

Much difficulty is experienced by a number of students in choosing the right pronoun to introduce relative clauses. More often than not we may come across expressions like "the film what I saw yesterday" or "the chair what stands in the corner", etc. Unfortunately, this is quite wrong. It should be kept in mind that 'what' is not a relative but a connective pronoun and as such it can never be used to introduce a relative clause. It can only stand at the head of an object clause to introduce an indirect question:

We couldn't understand what he was talking about (Me ei mõistnud, millest ta räägib).

Do you know what her name is? (Kas te teate, mis ta nimi on?)

This mistake is probably due to the fact that in Estonian object as well as relative clauses are introduced by the pronoun 'mis'. In this connection it will be useful to remember that in object clauses the pronoun can be translated by 'see mis', whereas in relative clauses 'see mis' is impossible. The English relative pronouns are 'who', 'that' and 'which'. 'Who', which is applied with reference to living beings, can be used in both relative and object

clauses and consequently does not offer any difficulty to the Estonian learner in this respect.

155. 'Who', 'which' or 'that' in relative clauses

As we know, relative clauses can be either restrictive or descriptive. In the former kind the pronoun 'that' can be used of both persons and things. The Estonian translation here is always 'see kes' or 'see mis':

This is the man that I told you about (See on (see) mees kellest ma sulle rääkisin).

Here is the picture that Father bought at the exhibition (Siin on (see) pilt, mille isa näituselt ostis).

Nowadays, however, there is a growing tendency to use 'who' instead of 'that' in reference to living beings. Thus we can also say:

This is the man whom I told you about.

In colloquial language the relative pronoun, mostly when it performs the function of an object, is often dispensed with altogether:

This is the man I told you about.

Here is the picture Father bought at the exhibition.

But a pronoun functioning as the subject of a relative clause can seldom be omitted:

This is the man that lives next door to us (See on see mees, kes elab kõrvalmajas)

In descriptive clauses, on the other hand, 'who' is used of persons and 'which' of things. A descriptive clause only gives additional information and it can be put in brackets or left out altogether without damage to the sentence.<sup>1</sup> It will be easy to distinguish between the two kinds of clauses if we remember that the Estonian translation of the pronouns here can only be 'kes', 'mis', but never 'see kes' or 'see mis':

<sup>1</sup> See also § 21.

Yesterday I got acquainted with Mary's brother, whom I had never met before (keda ma polnud varem ko-  
hanud).

Frank told us about his trip to Armenia, which he had made in summer together with two friends (mille ta oli koos kahe sõbraga suvel teinud).

In descriptive clauses the relative pronouns can never be omitted.

#### 156. 'Who', 'that' or 'which' with indefinite pronouns

Another thing to be remembered is that the indefinite pronouns 'all', 'everything', 'something' and 'anything' are nearly always followed by the relative pronoun 'that', not 'which'. On the other hand, when we refer to persons ('everybody', 'everyone', 'all', 'somebody', 'someone') both 'that' and 'who' may be used:

Jack is successful in everything that he undertakes.

Auntie's sudden return was something that nobody had expected.

Is there anything that I can do for you?

Everybody who (or that) saw the film liked it.

Yesterday I met somebody whom (or that) I had not seen for fifteen years.

In the case of 'all' it is better to keep 'all that' for things, and 'all who' for persons:

We tried to remember all that we had heard and seen at the congress.

All who were told about it supported the idea.

Note that the object relatives can be safely omitted, and we might have said equally well:

Jack is successful in everything he undertakes.

Auntie's sudden return was something nobody had expected.

Is there anything I can do for you?

Yesterday I met somebody I had not seen for fifteen years.

In fact the pronouns 'that' and 'whom' functioning as objects in the relative clause are usually dropped in colloquial style, though in more formal language (e.g. when writing course papers, diploma theses, etc.) they should often be preserved.

157. The possessive of 'which'

Some students find difficulty in translating the Estonian word 'mille'. After the pattern of 'whose' (kelle) they simply use 'which' and fall into the blunder of saying: 'The club which member he was'. True, the correct form 'of which' is often extremely awkward:

The club the member of which he was organised a debate.

'Whose' can also be occasionally used to refer to inanimate things or ideas, and it would not be impossible to say 'The club whose member he was...'. But perhaps the best solution would be to avoid the construction altogether and to say for example: 'The club he belonged to ...'

158. 'Which' or 'what'

Another constant source of mistakes springs from a tendency to confuse the interrogative pronouns 'which' and 'what'. When we mean 'missugune' or 'milline', the word we need is nearly always 'what'. 'Which' should only be used when we wish to imply choice out of a given number of persons or things:

What foreign languages have you studied? (i.e. what languages in general).

But: "I have studied Russian, English and German". -

"And which language do you know best?" (i.e. which of the three foreign languages mentioned) - "I know Russian best".

Or again:

What books by American authors have you read?" (i.e. what books in general);

but: Which of Hemingway's novels have you read? Which did you like best? etc.

159. 'Such' or 'so'

Another pair of words which are sometimes confused are 'such' and 'so'. Here we should remember that the former is used to modify nouns and the latter to modify verbs. In other words 'such' is an adjective and 'so' is an adverb. 'Such' can usually be replaced by 'this' and 'so' by 'in this way'. In both cases the Estonian translation is 'niil'. The difference between the two may be illustrated by the following example:

They called him Mr. Tiny and it turned out that such was really his name. I had always thought that he was called so because of his small stature.

160. The pronoun in enumeration

When enumerating people the Estonian 'üks, teine, kolmas' should be expressed by 'one' (of them, the boys, etc.), 'another', 'yet (or 'still') another':

On leaving school each of the friends chose the trade he liked best: one became a carpenter, another a turner, yet another went to sea and so on.

161. 'The other'

'The other' can only be used when there are not more than two persons meant:

The two friends were given jobs at the same school: one taught biology, the other history.

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Лайне Хоун

ТИПИЧНЫЕ ОШИБКИ В ПИСЬМЕННЫХ РАБОТАХ  
НАШИХ СТУДЕНТОВ

На английском и эстонском языках  
Тартуский государственный университет  
ЭССР, г. Тарту, ул. Юликооли, 18

Vastutav toimetaja G. Kiviväli

=====

Paljundamisele antud 16.IV 1973. Rotaatori-  
paber 30x42. 1/4. Trükipoognaid 7,0. Ting-  
trükipoognaid 6,51. Arvestuspoognaid 5,0.  
Trükiarv 500. Tell. nr. 424.

TRÜ rotaprint, ENSV, Tartu, Pälsoni tn.14

Hind 18 kop.

Hind 18 kop.