

Book Review

Common Mistakes in English

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T.J.Fitikides, 2002, *Common Mistakes in English*, Pearson Education Limited, viii + 200 pages, ISBN 0 582 344581

I. OVERVIEW

The book is Timothy Fitikides' last available version of *Common Mistakes in English*. It is aimed at helping EFL and ESL learners to correct the common mistakes to which they are liable. Regarding the main objective of the book, it is planned that "all the errors dealt with are singled out, for they have to be recognized before they can be corrected; then, correct forms are substituted for incorrect ones; finally, simple explanations are given wherever necessary to justify particular usages" (p. iii). In order to ensure that the principles may become firmly fixed in the learners' minds, exercises are set at the end.

II. SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL PARTS

This book is divided into five parts. The book starts with an explanation of how to use it; then, the first part consists of six subdivisions including misused forms, using the wrong preposition, misuse of the infinitive, use of the wrong tense, miscellaneous examples, and un-English expressions; the second part includes three subdivisions of incorrect omissions, mission of prepositions, and miscellaneous examples. The third part comprises unnecessary words, unnecessary propositions, unnecessary articles, use of the infinitive, and miscellaneous examples. There are three subdivisions in Part Four; they are misplaced words, wrong position of adverbs, and miscellaneous examples. The last part consists of eight subdivisions including confusing words, prepositions often being confused, verbs often being confused, adverbs often being confused, adjectives often being confused, nouns often being confused, confusion of number, and confusion of parts of speech. In addition to these parts, there are exercises and an index at the end of the book.

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One principal theme of the book is the typical mistakes made by those people who use English as a foreign language, and it offers a correct version and explanation that helps learners avoid making those mistakes.

The book "Common Mistakes in English" by Fitikides is a unique and gripping blend of rich genres. In fact, it is an informative work having a system-oriented organization. That is why one can say that it is a coherent collection of common mistakes or errors in English. Additionally, the learners of English as a foreign language can use this as a self-study source or as an ordinary textbook. Moreover, due to having the pocket design of the book, everyone can "get it right every time".

On page vii, Preface to the first edition, T.J.Fitikides points to the issue that "the method adopted throughout this work is uniform. All the errors dealt with are singled out, for they have to be recognized before they can be correct; then correct forms are substituted for incorrect ones"(P. iii). In spite of what it is said, if a learner of English as a foreign language looks at an incorrect form of language at the first sight in a book, and then, looks at the correct form, the incorrect one may become firmly fixed in his or her mind. Concerning this matter, one can recommend that novice learners be exposed to the authentic and correct language as the first input in order not to face negative washback effects. Even some mentors do prefer not use this collection as a text book in classes where there are learners brought up weak and suffer from malfunctioning in grammar because they believe that they might have negative influence. Therefore, it is better for the learners to be exposed to the correct forms, and then, become familiar with the incorrect ones.

Besides, the main part of the book relies on grammar. In order to have a perfect reference book of common errors in English, some parts about common errors in writing and in pronunciation can be added. For instance, some common English errors in writing are as following: spelling, punctuation, verbs, inaccurate word choice and so on.

To make the exercises more interesting and useful, it is recommended that in some parts concerning exercises, matching the right preposition with the proper word, the sentences with missing words should be designed by putting the related letters of a word in boxes. As an example, "She is very different ...her sister".

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III. CONCLUSION

This book is strongly recommended and will be invaluable not only to all learners who are interested in studying in English as a foreign language, but also to those who are looking for an answer to the question whether language can be taught through pointing to common mistakes or errors in language or not.

REFERENCE

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