

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

UNTAPPED PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE-TEACHING

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1. *The first principle: Exceptions first, regularities last.*

No claim is being made here that this principle is original with me, at least not ultimately. The psychological basis for it has been (in another connection) stated by G. Nickel (1972:13): "... da das zuerst Gelernte offensichtlich meistens und besonders stark haftet". ("... since what is learned first obviously sticks most often and especially strongly"). While the principle of teaching the easier before the more difficult is not impugned, the exceptional ought to be presented earlier than what is unexceptional. For it is clear that what we learn as isolated items in a list has a different psychological status from what we learn as regularities: It is relatively easy to learn a list of exceptional items and *then* treat the residue, the "elsewhere" cases, by rule; it is difficult (sometimes never totally achieved) to learn a rule and then try to remember not only what the exceptions are but also that they are exempt from the rule. In the latter case, what one learns interferes with what one has learned;¹ in the former case, this is far from being likely.

If English-speakers learned the *du* (familiar "you") forms before the *Sie* (formal "you, y'all") forms, contrary to prevalent practice, two advantages would ensue: First, the irregular forms of the ablaut verbs would be mastered and the predictable forms of the verbs going with *Sie* (unvarying in respect to singular-plural differences, umlaut, or other irregularities) could later be learned in a minute as elsewhere cases. Secondly, the pragmatic difficulties arising out of the fact that (for adults) the *du* situations are definitely special could be greatly lessened, chiefly the problem of unconsciously lapsing into a formal usage, when that is the one that a person has learned first.

It is important not to confuse what is irregular with what is marked (special, less expected). In fact, irregular forms are more likely to attach to unmarked (usual, expected) items, which are often the most frequently used items. It is reasonable to sequence ordinary usages first and to program last such marked usages as *Don't you believe it!* and *Says you!* But one must in this connection distinguish marked *environments* from marked *forms*. Learning German and Spanish will be easier if the words for "but" in negative-contrasting environments are first learned and the general words for "but" left as elsewhere forms. And the words for "yes" following negative questions found in French and German should be learned before the "regular" words, i.e. those in unmarked environments.

More will be said below (under Principle 4) on learning unmarked *Who to?* before marked *To whom?* (the difference in the meaning or force of these usages is discussed at the beginning of Bailey, 1984).

Examples of learning the irregular before the regular are not hard to come by. If at the beginning of their study of English, Germans were given the less usual and (with current methods) more difficult sense of *bis*, viz. "by", the more usual sense of "until" would be easily mastered as an elsewhere usage. If, before learning any of the verb modalities (cf. Bailey, 1981, 1983 b: Appendix E), foreigners had to learn examples like *That house has/d stood there (for) ten years*, learning the other modalities would not cause this usage to be unlearned or never learned. Present methods are evidently counterproductive, given the trouble that even students of many years have with this English usage -- which differs from practically every other language.

Adults seem to master without difficulty the phenomenon that an irregular form excludes the regular formation, a matter of general linguistics violated by children's *feets* and *came'd*.

Typical problems like *faux amis* (words that look alike in mother and target languages but are used in very different ways) and misleading constructional similarities (e.g. German *muß nicht* is not English *must not* but *need not*) could be dealt with much more efficiently with Principle 1 than with the current approach of beginning with regularities. Only with the Indo-European copula (in languages that have it, in which case it is usually quite irregular) do we generally adopt Principle 1: It would be too self-defeating to do otherwise!

What has been said in the foregoing is part of a more general plea for logic in the sequencing or programing of language materials in second-language learning. Traditional presentations of vocabulary in order of frequency--better than presenting it in alphabetic order!--without regard to structures, not to speak of the intellectual bankruptcy of sequencing declensions and conjugations in terms of their traditional (and unjustified) numbers, have lasted far too long. Teaching intonation with lists of sentence-long patterns that can be shown to miss the point--and in any case are in conflict with the observation that children learn the rudiments of intonation first, though adults perfect their intonation last of all--has lasted far too long. And illogicalities in speaking of a "present tense" and a "subjunctive mode" in English (cf. Bailey MS/1984) confuse and bore the student. This unreality has persisted too long, since an easy and analytically justified approach to the English modalities (cf. Bailey, 1981, 1984, MS/1984, especially the last) lies near to hand. What is needed now is the grit to do what is necessary to end the problems.

2. *The second principle: The principle of teaching the full set of rules*

Language-teachers often lament the alleged impossibility of teaching stylistic differences in pronunciation and, to some extent, in other aspects of the grammar and lexicon as well. Why this gives them licence to teach only formal and usually obsolescent usages in their monostylistic despair is something that I cannot account for. But principles 2 and 3 go toward taking care of the problem and make polystylistic teaching much more feasible. As noted in Bailey 1978, more informal styles, with a few obvious exceptions like pronouncing "h" in German *sehen* for disambiguating, require more rules than more formal styles do--more assimilations and deletions in informal pronunciation and more stylistic transformations in syntax. Moreover, there is an inclusive relationship among the "more" and "less" rules such that the fewer number of rules needed for progressively more formal styles are, except for replacements, included in (are subsets of) the larger number of rules needed for progressively more informal styles. Even where rules vary in the environments in which they operate, the fewer environments found in more formal styles are found in the larger set used in more informal styles. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that teaching the informal language *includes* teaching the more formal language--which is accomplished by deleting rules like the layers of an onion skin. Moreover, this procedure avoids the false notion prevalent in language-learning that more formal styles--those more like the underlying forms (in practice, the written language)--are somehow "more correct" than what native-speakers really do. The strange bookishness and "lameness" of foreigners' language would be lessened in this approach. From a linguistic point of view, it is necessary to learn the difference between underlying forms (e.g. the //t// at the end of *haste*, *adjust*, and *trust*) and the large number of sound rules that alter underlying forms here and there (e.g. they delete the //t// in question in *hasten*, *adjustment*, and often in the middle of *trustworthy*). A "spelling pronunciation" with *t* in *hasten* and *adjustment* or in fast tempos in the middle of *trustworthy* violates the sound rules (phonetological rules) of English in the styles in question.

The principle of the full set is perhaps part of a larger principle having to do with the "whole picture". In contrast with the way children learn languages, adults usually do it by ratiocinating. It is often easier for the adult if s/he can see the whole pattern--e.g. a paradigm;² or the overall (uniform) syntactic pattern of Japanese--as s/he attacks a part of it. Furthermore, there are examples where a good deal of argument is possible. A foreigner learning English could learn all the pasts as regular--e.g. *did go* for *went*. Of course, this would sound a bit strange; and it conflicts with the principle of learning the irregular before the regular. A student would soon have to "unlearn" *did go* in favor of *went* in most environments, though not of course in those complex situations in which *do* is used. Whether the advantages of such an approach to the "overall picture" would commend themselves is something that could be answered with certainty only after adequate testing.

3. *The third principle: Use as realistic spellings as possible.*

This is touched on in Nickel 1972:14 and made more of in Bailey 1983a, b. Not only does it reduce learning difficulties to use *t'* (or *tw'*) for prevocalic *to* and *th'* for prevocalic *the*; not doing this makes the (in the technical sense) natural allegro pronunciations much more difficult to achieve. It is an absolutely self-defeating practice not to distinguish pronunciations in so-called "non-exposed" positions like *they've* and *he'd* and like *useta* and *wanna* from the less frequent pronunciations heard in exposed positions, where such elisions, contractions, and assimilations are not permitted in English. The difference between *useta*, *wanna*, or *hafta/hasta* and *used to*, *want to*, and *have to/has to* in conversational tempos tells the native speaker whether a clause-initial interrogative or relative is the object of the dependent infinitive or postposition (e.g. *What did he useta do it with? What did he hafta do?* --cf. *He useta do it with that, He hadda do that*) or of the main verb (e.g. *What did he use to do it with? What did he have to eat?* --cf. *He used that to do it with, He had that to eat*). Such differences should be realizable in the English of teachers. The use of a form like *useta* in textbooks for foreigners learning English would have such additional advantages as preventing the splitting up of the items in questions with an adverb or whatever and helping to eliminate the Victorian phrase so often heard in Germany: *was used to do it* (apparently meaning, as in Dickens, *useta do it*, not *was used to doing it*), which neither I nor my British colleagues have heard in our lifetimes in the mouth of a native-speaker (except for expository purposes like the present one).

But the most ordinary phenomena of English pose difficulties for the untutored even where the added problem of exposed positions does not enter into the usage. Spellings like *o'* (*of*), *-a* (*'ve* in *shoulda*, *coulda*, *musta*, etc.; *of* in *lotsa*, *outa*; and *to* in *gotta*, *wanna*, etc.), *'n* (*and*; after *-r*, *than*; sometimes *in*) and the like would be very helpful to children. Think of not writing *let's*, or *yeah* and *yep!* How normal *lemme* (quite old in the history of English), *leggo*, *lessee*, and the rules they illustrate are, not to speak of such assimilations as *hasta*, *hafta*, *hadda*, *gotta*, *useta*, *wanna*, and the like; and the same can be said for *gotcha*, *betcha*, and *didja*, usual in cultivated English. And why not *'im* and *'em*--which go back to Anglo-Saxon? Any knowledgeable reader of Gimson 1980 would know why *izzer* and *whazzat* are reasonable (Gimson, 1980:184); cf. the *lessee* already mentioned. *Izzat* and *whazzat* are most frequent in the comic strips, whereas not using these forms is merely comic--as comic as not knowing why *fac's*, *wis'watch*, and *adju'sment* might be considered useful and desirable by Gimson. If ignorance of the foregoing is perplexing, it does not approach the irrationality of replacing the teaching of punctuation and drills on important matters (like how to pronounce *re-*) that press for attention with drills that require students to repeat over and over "th" in *clothes* (noun) and *months*. But these are routinely enforced by instructors unaware of the phonetological rules of natively spoken.

English, in particular the rule that replaces "ths" in normal tempos (and even in slower ones) with the *position* of the "th" and the *sibilance* of the "s" (giving up the non-sibilance of the "th" and the position of the "s"), so that [ʒ (:) ʒ (:)] are normally heard.³

Principle 3 is not very different in effect from Principle 2, which it implements and short-cuts for taught and teacher alike.

This is a good place to comment on differences in teaching a language in a land where it is natively spoken and in a land where it is a foreign language, a difference that I do not think sufficient attention has been accorded to, especially by experts teaching in countries where the language is natively spoken. If English is taught in Scotland, the U.S., England, Canada, Australia, or any other English-speaking nation, the learner not only is constantly exposed to *ueta, wama, hafta, hasta*, and the like; s/he also has an opportunity to notice the ill effects of not using these pronunciations in the right places and of using these in the wrong places. One might think that the presence of British and American radio and television in Berlin would diminish the problems of being abroad. But, in the first place, it is known that the media have little influence on the pronunciation of native-speakers; and besides, how many listen to the English-language media, and of these, how many are capable of profiting from the details of what they hear--especially if otherwise biased by the spurious "standard" English they have been exposed to in school? It seems to me that writers in England, Scotland, America, etc., evince insufficient awareness of the quantitative and qualitative differences faced by teachers abroad.

Whatever may be said for the home situation, spellings of the sort advocated here provide a most useful short-cut to the sound rules of English and, in the case of *ueta*, etc., to the effects of syntax and phonetology on each other. Iconic presentations of intonation also offer, for similar reasons, a far better presentation of this aspect of a language than the baffling notations usually advocated. I believe I can teach these subjects quickly to beginners in a way that ensures that they know better how to handle the phenomena in question than do teachers using inadequate methods over the years.

Linguists speak of two kinds of languages--*configurational* languages like English that depend on the locations of items in a string of words and sounds, and *nonconfigurational* languages, which depend on inflectional or other ways of marking the functions of arguments (subjects, objects, etc.) in a clause. Learning English and German, for example, requires different kinds of memory. For German, the initial phases are difficult, since not only the meaning but the gender and declension of every noun must be learned, unlauted comparatives must be learned, and many items must be learned in connection with each verb--its auxiliary, its various conjugated forms, and the case it takes. When all of this has been put out of the way and a student learns where to place weak, strong, and uninflected adjectives, progress becomes more rapid: There is very little phonetology and the syntax is mostly manageable. But someone that easily learns German may not learn English so easily, or conversely. The initial phases of English are quickly passed through, as detail memory is not required, given the absence of gender, cases, etc. The ablaut and other irregular verbs slow the learner down; and then, it takes forever and ever to get through the array of phonetological and syntactic rules that one must master. Few adult foreigners ever master them--not after decades of work. Students of different kinds ought to be steered into different kinds of languages.

4. *A possible fourth principle: Emphasize constructions in the target language that differ from those in the mother language unless both have a set of parallel constructions used similarly.*

I put this principle forward very diffidently, since I am by no means sure of its validity in all situations. The first half of the proposed principle echoes

principle 1 in an oblique way--since what is different from one's own language is relatively "exceptional" and as such will probably require more effort than what is like one's own language (generally true despite the well instances in contrastive linguistics)--though this again will depend on whether a construct or usage is introduced early or later.

Although foreigners learning English are taught to say *about which*, *for which*, *to whom*, and the like, such usages are ungrammatical in *This is (a topic) about which the book is* (for: *This is [a topic] that the book's about*), *This is on what it is lying* (for: *This's what it's lying on*), *the promotion for which he is up* (for: *the promotion [that] he's up for*, and *Of what is being spoken is (has to do with) about what/which we wanna know* (for: *What is being spoken of is [has to do with] what we wanna know about*). In all but a very few environments, *to whom* and *for whom* sound old-fashioned and stuffy in conversational English. (See Bailey, 1983a:95-101: pp. 212-215 of this writing discuss the differences in meaning or force between *What on* and *On what?* and similar contrasts.) If foreigners speaking languages in which the equivalents of *about which* and *to whom* are normal were first introduced to *which/(that) ... about* and *who/(that) ... to*, their tendency to calque the structures of their own language into stiff and unnatural English would be mitigated, not encouraged, as now. When the marked or special structures were later introduced, their special force and stylistic character in ordinary unmarked environments,⁴ as well as the special or marked environments where English requires them, could be clearly set forth.

But for Germans, the problem can be handled a bit differently, as the second part of the proposed principle 4 suggests. Germans always Pied-Pipe interrogatives and relatives (i.e. move a preposition along with the interrogative or relative pronoun to the beginning of the clause), despite the many postverbs in German, but they have two constructs, at least for nonpersonals: fuller *von was* (at the end of reclamatory questions and in relatives after certain quantifier and pronominal antecedents) or *von dem* (at the beginning of most relative clauses) and briefer *wovon* (cf. English *whereof*) in interrogatives and resumptive relatives, the briefer form being preferred in interrogatives and the longer form being preferred in most relatives. In view of the way that Germans would feel it unnatural ("foreign") and tedious to use the fuller form generally--i.e. where the briefer is usual--it would seem possible that they could gain a feeling for how unnatural ("foreign") and tedious it sounds in English for them to say *to whom* everywhere--*who (...)* to being the generally preferred usage and marked *to whom* bearing special connotations (Bailey, 1983a:57-58, 1984). Although the parallelism is far from complete (in German, interrogatives differ from relatives, and personal forms differ from impersonals; neither difference is relevant to the English difference under discussion), there is enough to offer some insight.

5. Prevalent approaches and misconceptions that language-teachers would do well to abandon.

In Bailey, 1983a:9, I mention a root problem that characterizes far too many language-teachers, a problem referred to as a *static outlook*. When this outlook is imposed on languages--systems vibrant with changes rung on the vowels, consonants, syntactic structures, words, intonation, etc., in order to distinguish ages, classes, regions, and styles--the unholy result is what we see--the student syllogism:

Maj. Prem.: There is a fixed, standard English.

Min. Prem.: What we learned in school is standard English.

Ergo: What I read on the first page of the best newspapers or hear on the B.B.C. (if I bother to listen to it) is nonstandard if it differs from what was taught at the school I attended. [Bailey, 1983a:18]

When students think that the Germlish or Franglish they have been exposed to at

school really is "standard" English and then travel to an English-speaking country, they typically make no attempt to copy what they hear (it is *different* from Germlish and Franglish), convinced that it is "substandard"; so they return home after a year or so abroad with the same Germlish, etc., that they started out with. How is it, in fact, humanly possible to specialize in or even just study English for a decade and not know that no universal auxiliary pronunciation (i.e. one in addition to one's usual speech) is required or even taught in the schools of any English-speaking country--or ever has been or ever could be? This is only one kind of absurdity besetting language-teaching that we could well dispense with, especially in instances where people accept pay for being knowledgeable.

If you want something to bewilder you, try static history. What a curiosity it is that those who lay so great an emphasis on "historical" aspects of a foreign language have no feel for changes that have occurred since they were born, no sophisticated view of on-going history, and, in the case of English, no knowledge of the many daughter languages, some of which have become national languages in various parts of world. What good is history if it produces a static outlook? But the static personality is an odd critter on any telling; it's too bad that so many of them flock to language-teaching. In a language like English, where older speakers ape a good deal of the speech of their juniors, such a defect leads to comic results. If history is studied without an appreciation of the social factors that influence it and without understanding the effects of social change on language styles, etc. (see below), this results in a torpid sort of ignorance that belies claims to be a "specialist" and makes the years of specialization not only seem wasted but incomprehensible.

The trouble about teaching history is not that history is bad, but that the present gets left out in many situations--the present-day history of the language and the present-day history of the culture it is embedded in. Think of professors using expressions from Dickens like *he was used to do that* and spellings from Dickens like *negociate*! Let's have history taught in due proportion and including the present; let's have it taught so as to develop a non-static outlook on language! Adequate history would help the student gain a feel for many things that differ from his own culture and language--e.g. the manner in which speakers of English use their pronunciation, syntax, and lexical materials to present a desired self-image--or just to put you down!⁵ Adequate history would give the student a feel for the ways in which social change has affected English in its homeland more than elsewhere; a feel for how silly it is to suppose that the more leftist a foreign learner of English is the fewer Americanisms s/he would use (actually, the more radical one is, the more modish one's language usually is); and a feel for why Britishers, Australians, etc., imitate Americanisms if they wish to sound up-to-date and not lame. And adequate history would help students and teachers alike to escape the arrogance of ignorance. It is quite incomprehensible that scholars of years' devotion have no feel for these things, no sense of the absurdity of aping an aristocratic accent while exhibiting contrary manners and ideals, no feel for what is modish or lame, no feel for the self-projections they make (for example, how comically obsolete and stodgy they may be inviting their hearers to judge them, appearing as ridiculous as a woman wearing a Mother Hubbard, or "granny dress", today), and no sense of what is what in any way.

Serious and fundamental questions arise here in teachers' failure to listen to real English, to observe what they read in real English. How can a person read English for twenty years or more and fail to realize that paragraphs are indented; that double quotation marks are used by leading newspapers in Britain and the U.S. and advocated by *The Chicago Manual of Style* (which one "authority" on punctuation in Germany does not know exists, or at least does not list; he evidently has no awareness of the extent to which it is looked up to in the English-speaking world); that a comma precedes *and* in a listing, according to the

Oxford Press, the *Chicago Manual*, and newspaper usage in London and Atlanta alike; that "students" are found in schools as well as universities; that both sorts of students *study* (and have *learned* what they studied if they have studied with success!); that *city* can refer to the same thing *Stadt* does without functioning (as *Stadt* does) as the neutral term for population centers of differing sizes; that the native use of *in* and *into* or of *who* and *which* conflicts with rules being taught (cf. Bailey 1983a:62-67), and that *the puppy went IN the house from the garden* differs from *the puppy went from the garden INTO the house* (and is explicable with markedness-reversal); and that *If someone should do so* precedes the contingency clause, while *if someone did* (or *should do*) so follows it? Just as I could not, thirty years ago, understand why Europeans always responded to *Thank you* with the baffling marked usage, *Don't mention it!* in the absence of such a usage on the part of native-speakers they chanced to meet, so today I cannot see how, year after year, one could avoid finding out that English-speakers do not say *Good appetite!* before dining, that *acceptable* English has certain ways of using forenames and family names that must be unknown to most teachers of English in Europe, and that *hi-fi* and the ending *-aic* have English pronunciations that differ from the continental values of the letters. (I am assuming that foreigners who do not do these things correctly do not know about them; for it would represent even greater academic irresponsibility to know the right and do the contrary.) It is true that there are interferences from their mother tongues that cause Dutch and Scandinavian speakers, usually excellent learners of English, to say *I shall*; on a Dutch flight from London to Amsterdam some years back, the pilot's saying *We shall land* caused the--mainly English-speaking--passengers to chuckle. But, just as I could not walk down the street in front of my office for ten years and not notice that it is graced with linden (or at least some kind of) trees, I do not see how it is possible for a foreigner to look at English for fifteen or twenty years and not notice the differences in systematic principle and in actual detail between how English is punctuated and how German is, or not feel that the English verb and case systems are (in use, if not form) like the Romance ones and unlike the Germanic ones and especially German; or how such a person could fail to notice the double pluperfect and the way the postpositions 's follows a whole noun phrase in *the man I talked to's daughter* or *John and Mary's books* (not *John's and Mary's books*, despite *his and her books*). How can one so misjudge which varieties of English imitate which? How can a person fail to observe that English speakers say *recognize* and *recommend* and not *rEcognize* and *rEcommend*, or that *rEpresent* means something quite different from what *represent* means? Why do they teach *were* to rhyme with *ware*? If I were to study Anglo-Saxon matters (e.g. culture) for decades, I do not see how I could fail to perceive the differences between legally enforced standards (including an auxiliary language required of all school students, as well as industrial and other standards) in Europe and freedom (*no* pronunciations are systematically taught in the schools of any Anglo-Saxon nation, and it is similar with industrial standards, other than weights and measures and products that would be harmful to their users) in the Anglo-Saxon countries. The question ever recurs, "How can so much escape one's attention?" How is it in fact possible to go on teaching (and apparently believing) that English never has *will* or *going* to after conditional *if*, despite "If you're going to get them to co-operate" on the first page of *The Guardian*? How is such immunity to the evidence of the senses and intellect thinkable?

One could believe that the author of *Eugénie Grandet* was (in the first chapter) referring to the language-teacher when he said that "il n'y a pas un de ses bonheurs qui ne vienne d'une ignorance quelconque" ("there's not one of his joys that doesn't stem from some sort of ignorance")! At least the vigor with which some of the species endeavor to combat the truth once it has been pointed out can hardly lead to any other conclusion.

The static language-teacher must be the weirdest critter on the face of God's

earth, claiming allegiance to the (search for) truth while shunning it with all his or her might. When s/he is provincial on top of that, the vacuum is filled by transferring ideas about his or her own language or culture to the target language or culture. Not that it would be within his or her mental scope to envision what the status of English might be in the third world, particularly in former colonies of the British Empire;⁶ but couldn't we at least expect some feeling for English at home? Does the German tell us (against the counter-evidence) that English is more conservative in England than elsewhere--as though it were axiomatic--without feeling some surprise that German in Namibia is more conservative than in Berlin? (Of course, the specific reasons for the non-conservative character of English in England and German in Berlin are different, but the general causes are social in both cases.) And what a monumental deception it requires to convince oneself one is pursuing--or even advocating--the truth when one is doing all within one's power to keep a glimmer of it from getting through!

Should there be a Principle 5: *Be open to the truth and promote it rather than fight against it?* While the principle is valid in the realm of general intellectual integrity, to make it a principle that language-teachers should adopt as a principle of language-teaching would be beside the mark; it would be to treat as specific that which should be acknowledged and taken for granted as a supervening principle on all academic endeavor. Not that every violator of this principle is as academically dishonest as other cozeners that violate it; some personalities are so static and blind that they do not even have to work at it to fail to see the self-evident. As I said, they are funny critters! The teacher that would not spend money on a doctor or repairman that s/he believed had not kept up to date on new knowledge and techniques will nonetheless accept pay for doing precisely this to his or her students.

If I study something for years, I notice certain obvious things about it; I cannot help doing so. I learn how the authors of old-fashioned pronouncing ("phonetic") dictionaries wish their entries to be treated--as idealized or potential forms that need the application of rules (which they don't know and don't bother to supply) to eventuate in real pronunciations. I know from my general knowledge of English that the presence of a given pronunciation in a dictionary is no guarantee that it's all right for *me* to use it--or for anyone in any old style. After years of exposure to English, it cannot escape my notice that the way I speak will project an image of me as jovial and friendly, stilted and standoffish, interested or bored, lazy or energetic, macho or esthete, jock or artist, craven or self-confident, pompous or genial, creative or burnt-out. It could not fail to come to my notice that the "present tense" cannot in any unmarked context refer to the present (one could put up a good argument that the same is true of marked contexts); at least, it could not possibly escape my notice year after year over decades--not if I were searching for truth in the course of investigating the relevant subject! If I couldn't, *qua* specialist, listen to the media year after year without hearing the prevalence of [b] in *government*, *haven't*, and *given* in newscasters' and cabinet-ministers' English (not to speak of that of others), how can I account for others' ability to accomplish this? Or do they never listen to the radio, never read a book or newspaper printed in an English-speaking country? Even after I allow for the observer's paradox, distractors, and markedness-reversal⁷ (Bailey, 1982:80-81), I still cannot fathom this inscrutable blindness to the obvious. If I studied English literature year after year, I would have a feel for the language, at least realizing what a role modishness (rather than a mythical standardicity)⁸ plays in language acceptability in the English-speaking world. And I do not see how a person could avoid finding out the differences between *Earlier*, *meetings were held* and *Earlier meetings were held*; or, after decades of looking at English, those between *border-crossing* and *border crossing*, *swimming-instructor* and *swimming instructor*, and *ten-dollar bills* and *ten dollar bills*, as well as an *American history-teacher* and

and an American-history teacher.

Does it require superhuman sophistication to realize that language innovations are not necessarily worse than what is old--is not the purpose of innovation to fill a deficiency?--and is this not especially true of a situation where the elder borrows from the junior more than the other way round? Is it really impossible to keep up to date? It is doubtless a subtle matter for a learner to learn that, although *you* usually gets reduced to *yer/ya* in conversation, this would not be appropriate or even polite in marked contexts such as those heard in *Don't you cry!* and *Will you be dining at eight, sir?* But even stylistic facts as complex as these ought to be learnable in time--if one is an expert and accepts pay for being one! If unsophisticated but obvious factual knowledge is to be expected from the amateur, sophisticated and accurate knowledge on all these matters is fairly to be required of the paid expert--certainly not the Chaucerian "What means it?" that one so often hears from teachers.

The static trait is so strange that it will be inconsistent. The greatest advocate of radical political innovation will find it congenial to insist on the hoariest and most *passé* information, the most out-moded and discredited ideas, and the worst boondoggles of inadequate methodology--if s/he is a specialist in English or--probably--other languages. What is new may be wrong; it will surely be replaced in time with the better. But it has as good a chance of being right as what has been discredited. In saying this, I would not wish to be thought to be one that delights in the vigorous flux of language-teaching fads that the field is beset with. One could wish for a better way.

A teacher worth his or her salt--with a nonstatic view of language--will keep track of the changes in the language s/he specializes in. Where variants exist, as they do in most aspects of English, the teacher will distinguish what older speakers do from what younger ones do and, aware of the directionality of change, teach those that have a future. If on the front page of a leading London newspaper the writer writes the *B.B.C. is* and *has* but quotes a retired head of that organization saying *B.B.C. are* and *have*, there should be no doubt in the teacher's mind over which should be taught to young students.⁹ Uses of *that* and *who* or *which* and the differentiation of *who* and *which* are sorting themselves out in Britain and in America in ways that have been noticed by only a few (cf. Bailey, 1983a: with references to work by Bolinger), ways that contradict what one finds in the teaching grammars.

Lee (1972:161-162) maintains the reasonable view that speakers whose native languages differentiate what is neutralized in other languages have less difficulty with those languages than the reverse. But more needs to be known about whether speakers with marked phenomena understand the corresponding unmarked phenomena more easily than vice-versa (Eckman, 1977; Bailey, 1982:78). And we have a while to wait before tests are devised that will adequately test the multiple causes of errors rather than their mere occurrence. My comments in Bailey, 1978 on the goals of language-teaching will have to suffice now, though the subject is certainly important enough to warrant expatiating on here.¹⁰

6. Literature in FLT: Benign influence or wolf in sheep's clothing?

In what follows, I am not speaking of the study of literature for its own sake or of the role of literature in one's becoming an advanced expert selling one's skills as such on the labor market. Even the last, and especially the teacher of literature, cannot hope to achieve anything positive without a thorough knowledge of the idiom and grammatical structures of the language they deal with. Linguists do not, of course, require such a high degree of competence in the literature of the language(s) they specialize in; but without constant reading in the literature of all periods of the languages they specialize in, they deprive themselves of important data and the developmental basis for explaining (how) structures (evolve). No one denies that studying literature for its own sake or to become a writer has its own justifications; what I will be speaking of here is

the role of literature in teaching foreign languages--either to beginners or to those that are going to be teachers of languages to foreigners.

There are drawbacks in the emphasis on literature in the education of the last group, as all are aware: The President of France, an advocate of good literature (as I trust I am too) has said that he studied

English for many years in school; but in those days, we were taught the kind of English that was spoken from Shakespeare to Coleridge, but not the kind of English spoken by any living person today.

He needn't have put "in those days" in; and he could have allowed that European specialists in English do speak English that way. Aside from these quibbles, his point is clear, easily taken, and so requires no amplification by me.

It will be well to draw a further distinction here before directly addressing the question that forms the title of this section: we must distinguish literature viewed as an art, an approach to the human soul, a way of understanding the nature and destiny of our kind, a spiritual activity carried on with spiritual creativity that can evoke and even exalt human sensitivities; or it can be viewed as a non-spiritual affair, carried on by non-spiritual persons (on which, cf. Bailey, 1983c:53-54, 401-409), and above all interpreted and judged by critics and scholars that are parasitic on the creators of literature. The heritage of non-spiritual and allegedly "scientific" approaches to replace art-appreciation is "literary science", "the theory of the novel", etc. (If it is a science or a theory, it certainly is a unique one or a sham, given the proper definitions of *science*, *theory*, and *literature*.) Whether such pretences or impostures of science are useful for language-learning depends in the first instance of whether they really exist. But the indubitable existence of the *art* of literature puts it on a par with psychology, philosophy, anthropology, linguistics, genetics, and all the other pursuits that open a door to understanding humankind; indeed, given the elevation that literature (as an art, in contrast with literature as a science) can afford, it has the potential of offering greater spirituality. This potential can, however, be destroyed by nigging analyses and pettiness.

Doris Lessing knew what she was doing when she published books under an assumed name to see what the critics would say. The devastating lack of objective standards that this caper revealed is telling. One need not draw conclusions as to the harm that subjectivity posing as objectivity (when literature pretends to be objective) wreaks on language-teaching; one can understand why literature-teachers would like to treat their studies as objective. The worst aspect of the whole affair is the failure to distinguish what literary creators can offer from what the parasites on this creativity can offer a student. A valid subjectivity might be worth teaching as a counterpoise to the over-objectifications met with in some disciplines. A literature presentation that would be valid for foreign-language learning and teaching would seek to inculcate that missing sense of style that students get from overexposure, or rather an unbalanced exposure, to texts in formal and old-fashioned styles. Beautiful texts may be presented with such dull objectivity as to turn students off rather than on. A valid presentation would be to present texts showing the ill effects on native speakers of stilted and old-fashioned English; I think of an episode in Kingsley Amis's *I like it here*. Finally, there is the matter of competence: What is the worth of a literary judgement by a non-native speaker whose grasp of plain and idiomatic English is so meagre that the simplest writings are misunderstood or misinterpreted? Standards in neither literature nor linguistics are what they should be, and language-learners suffer accordingly. Cases could be cited, if anyone doubted it, to show that teachers of English are graduated without knowing much analytical syntax, any of the important sound rules of English, punctuation principles, a sense of style (just the minimum required for the modulations present in even a single speech in Shakespeare), a correct perspective of English in the world (including some acquaintance with its daughter languages throughout

the world), and the usual immersion in incorrect ideas about the origin of English and overimmersion in static history.

Artistic literature can be very helpful not only to education in general, but also--if the tail is not allowed to wag the dog--to language-learning in particular. This latter pursuit certainly requires sensitivity to style. Surely, the monostylistic learner (whether the style is too archaic or too low-life) is regrettable at best. But the use of literature in language-teaching must be managed with great care, if it is to be profitable. The basic problem with literature is that the styles set down in writing are so often foreign to contemporary cultivated spoken English; indeed, much more uncultivated speech is found in a good deal of recent literature than cultivated--not something I would bewail, since in language-learning that which is real is a good deal better than that which is dead, dying, or artificial. In fact, we do use more *whom*'s in written style, fewer postpositions and *going to*'s, and more *should*-deletions (as in *It was imperative that she be on time*, for *It was imperative for her to be on time*), etc., so that written styles are not necessarily good guides to real, spoken English.

But as for the literary pseudoscience, does not the endless analysis of background, "philosophy", and other external claptrap--as opposed to style, pacing, character-development, symbolism, etc.--bore one to tears? No-one would deny that background can be helpful in appreciating literature; but a faulty emphasis on it harms a proper perspective and degrades the subject--certainly in most writers' eyes, who regard critics and teachers as writers *manqué(e)s*, uncreative types that get ego-satisfaction out of setting up themselves as judges over those who are superior to them--and so on. No one denies that literary criticism can be creative and even esthetic--rare as such examples may be--but all too often the failing fraught with misdirected emphases is met with:

There is a danger [in literary criticism] of losing one's sense of the mystery of the creative act and of the secrecy of the text in the presumption that one can pin down, or even worse, pile up in an encyclopaedic and entangling manner all the inputs that went into the making.

In this warning by a critic of true stature (Ramchand, 1983:vii), the spiritual deformity of the sort of arrogance described here informs an insipid discipline that contributes only sterility to our knowledge of human beings, language-teaching, and anything else worth naming. Dissecting characters can be a desiccating job, and analysing the minutiae of form and the like can be debilitating, though they don't have to be; but endless tractates on externals can lose sight of what is under analysis altogether.

It is easy to argue that the best language-learner and the best appreciator of literature are not the best teachers of language. The person that picks up languages intuitively and without analysis does not know how s/he does it and is usually so lacking in systematic knowledge and practical skills as to be very inadequate in teaching languages to those that go about it like ordinary mortals. The person that has a genuine appreciation for abstruse literary productions may alienate the student by supplying him or her with materials beyond his or her ability to appreciate. Far better, is it not, to start the child off with nursery rhymes, lilting lyrics by Poe, etc., and programing more sophisticated productions gradually as each prior phase has come to be appreciated? Cannot some of the masterful productions in English by Caribbean and African writers--or a comparison of these with *Brer Rabbit*--turn many children on? Trouble is, though, the *literati* often ignore these writers, and few of them are good enough "linguists" to handle the creole grammar in the dialogues with adequate understanding. One would suppose that such procedures would commend themselves to teachers of underprivileged, especially black, children. I am not suggesting that foreigners should be offered for study examples that deviate so much from their target language as these examples may. What I am suggesting is

that the form (rollicking rhymings) and content (subject matter) should be on the level of the learner and that they should be of a quality that would be attractive to the learner.

If literature is to have value for the language-learner, it must not only be inspiring; it will have to acquaint the learner with the real language and motivate him or her favorably toward it, not turning the student off.¹¹ It must not fail to offer an up-to-date idiom as well as customs and cultural attitudes, widely known characters like Max and Moritz in German and Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, Scrooge, Tiny Tim, etc., in English--not to speak of nursery rhymes, well-known stories like "The night before Christmas", advertizing slogans, products, etc., that have caught the public fancy and entered into the language, features of comedy shows and talk shows on the media such as well-known radio commentators and television anchor-persons, slogans from popular shows like "the sixty-four dollar question", lyrics from popular songs--and of course Bartlett's quotations to the greatest extent possible. Popular historical figures and events that have taken on symbolic value should be known.

Being a language-teacher requires knowing the culture and its motivations--for English, ideas like "innocent until proved guilty", "it is degrading to do business as usual with those that act in an unseemly way towards oneself or others", and others cited in Bailey, 1093a:50. Just being able to cite these is useless if one interprets them in terms of one's own cultural concepts--a common failing; one must be able to interpret these in the manner that members of the culture in question interpret them.

One should also be familiar with manners, cuisine, moral notions and spiritual orientations, and all the other things that are grist for the literary mill if it is to serve the purpose. From Shakespeare to the lyrics of the Beatles and beyond, there is information and inspiration that the language-learner can profit from and in fact needs.

So what is the answer to the question that this section began with? Briefly put, there is an unhelpful and even harmful "literature", and there is a beneficial one than can help applied linguists achieve the desired goal. There is a mechanical, despiritualized, irrelevant, cliché-ridden, and philistine "literary science" that so far gives up real subjectivity and real objectivity for a pseudo-objectivity that enables students to get a top mark in it while failing every other subject and leads away from language-learning, not to speak of education itself. And there is inspired art whose splendor can be appreciated by the finer senses of all but the grossest, which not only helps forward the goals of language-learning but also, by opening windows into the human spirit, advances true education. One is spiritually dead, uncreative, and boring to sensitive souls; the other is vibrant with life, informing the spirit, and a help to all other studies so long as it does not pervert the Aristotelian maxim of ordering means to suit ends. These ends it can even serve as means to when it is an end itself--something providing for appreciation, plus a dash of the didactic--guideposts along life's way.

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Notes

- 1 Cf. Lee, 1972:159: "Es gibt eine Interferenz von [der Muttersprache] und--in jeder Phase--von dem her, was schon gelernt und registriert worden ist". ("There is an interference from [the mother tongue] and--in every phase--from what has already been learned and registered").
- 2 The way paradigms are arranged is usually irrational. Since in Indo-European languages masculine forms are sometimes like neuters and sometimes like femi-

nines, paradigms can be simplified by placing masculines between the other two--something hardly ever done. Since the accusative forms are often like the nominative forms--always so with neuters--it aids the learning of the pattern when these forms are not separated (e.g. by a genitive form). The wrong-headedness of beginning with unmarked (technically, "unmarkeded") masculines in French, for example, instead of with marked (technically, "markeded") feminines has been pointed out by various linguists: You can unambiguously derive most masculines from their corresponding feminines; you cannot unambiguously predict feminines just by knowing the corresponding masculines--you still have to learn the feminines anyhow!

- 3 Of course, the native-speaker hears the fronted sibilant as "th" plus "s". The problem in all of this is Labov's Paradox and the inadequate manner in which dictionaries are idealized. Windsor Lewis writes *d* for *admit* in his dictionary (Windsor Lewis, 1972:xvii; cf. his remarks on the *t* in *adjustment*) even while observing that native-speakers usually have *b* here. William Labov's "observer's paradox" involves the effects of the observer on the observed and the way we use monitored instead of unmonitored data in replying to queries on how we speak. If you ask native-speakers that normally say *gibm* (where *m* is a vowel-like use of *m*) how they pronounce *given*, instead of listening to how speakers on the BBC pronounce the word in normal tempos and styles, they will deny the use of *b* because the monitored style (the only one that one can attend to) has *v*. And it is similar with *b* in *admit* and many other words. It is not too different with "ths" in *clothes* and *months*, though some dictionaries are a bit more realistic here. A large problem faced by a person looking up a pronunciation in a phonetic dictionary involves the addition of inflectional or derivational endings. The dictionary might lead you to believe that you can add *-ly* to *soft* or *exact* and get a pronunciation including the *t* at the end of the base; worse, it might lead you to think that adding pluralising *-s* to *fact* or *colonist* can be done in just any tempo without deleting the base *-t* and--in the case of *fact*--without lengthening the *-c-* in *lento* tempos. While dictionary authors discuss some of these questions in volumes that dictionary-users don't bother to read, it is clear that much more adequate dictionaries are needed ... and that data-gatherers need to profit a good deal more from studies proving Labov's paradox.
- 4 I do not believe that this can be done without the use of markedness-reversal analysis, the basis of which is that the form and/or the force of a usage is more likely to get reversed as the environment is more marked. A non-technical presentation is found in Bailey, 1984.
- 5 What purpose can the study of history serve in language study if it is not meant to create a dynamic feeling for a language? Yet, this is precisely what is so generally lacking in language historians. How many teachers still teach what they learned--as data or as analysis or as demography--decades ago (and it wasn't even true then)? I leave aside the policy of teaching the history of dead would-be theories in language study. And as for the use of static claptrap like phonemes--the worst possible tool for language-teaching--the parallel of that in physics would be to teach caloric and phlogiston. For more on how to study history, see Bailey to appear.
- 6 Though such countries have the British Council and generally British external examiners, it has escaped the notice of many teachers of English how pervasive and dominant the influence of the American media is, how enormous a percentage of their teachers (of any subject) have studied in the States rather than elsewhere, and often how many Peace Corps workers are active in every village--and not just in Anglophone countries. In the most remote parts of the boondocks, one sees jeans, American university T-shirts, etc.. There must be something in all this of sufficient prestige or attraction to cause its adop-

tion; overlooking such factors does not lead to wisdom. But if Britain borrows American linguistic as well as other usages (to the extent that a few lames claim they are being swamped with them), why should third-world countries trying to fit into the larger picture do otherwise? I am not advocating this--just pointing out that prevalent facts are open to explanations, the ignoring of which leads to ignorance just as quickly as convincing ourselves of the truth of what we would like to believe, whatever the facts themselves may be.

- 7 If I had not (in Bailey, 1984) expatiated at such length on the role played by markedness-reversal in misleading analysts of language, I would feel compelled to do so here. It will suffice if I just observe in passing that markedness-reversal offers an account of how analysts can look at certain things and come to false conclusions for all the best intentions in the world.
- 8 I would suppose that one could shuck off one's local notions enough to see how acceptability in English depends on prestige (which may attach more to a disc jockey than to a cabinet minister, so far as language-users are concerned); how views towards stereotypes and spelling pronunciations affect the result; and how, contrary to European views on the matter, America or England could not legislate an official language, an official pronunciation in the schools, etc., any more than public opinion would tolerate official identification cards for general use--which a British parliamentarian has dubbed "Orwellian" and a member of the U.S. Congress has characterized as "Nazi".
- 9 The special usage of British sportscasting (e.g. *The United States are ...*) is of course something different from general usage in both Britain and the U.S.A. It can (in Britain) be heard in connection with various contests, including the line-up for the best-selling pop-music record of the week.
- 10 I am not unaware of the view that many third-worlders don't need to learn an up-to-date pronunciation, etc.; that, for what they do, they need English just to get information with and occasionally communicate information in. I don't wish to denigrate this point of view; if it is all that can be adequately achieved in a given situation, so be it. But in many parts of the world, people learn English for travel, to communicate in trade and at airports, and even at scholarly conventions. In these situations, the aforementioned goal will not suffice. Indeed, I believe it should be the goal of last resort--adopted only out of despair at doing more. Given that people can "specialize" in English for decades and never get a feel for fundamental aspects of the language or accurate knowledge of fundamental aspects of the grammar or pronunciation, we might as well face the fact that the third-worlders are not much worse off than a lot of others, but with greater excuse, since their resources are less, the teachers accept less pay for their inadequacies, and they may have less access to the natively spoken language. If they don't read newspapers printed in the English-speaking lands, one can forgive them far more easily than those that possess the funds and other opportunities to make this small contribution toward being competent in their specialty. But of the few in the best-off parts of the world that deign to expose themselves to the native English-speaking media, it would seem that a high percentage are blind or deaf toward the form and content of what they do expose themselves to.
- 11 It would perhaps be naive to suppose that this job is easier for English than other languages because of the way the American media have spread so much of this information already--from Snoopy to jeans. The problem is that there is much more to learn about Anglo-Saxon culture, found in English-speaking countries inhabited by Keltic peoples, African peoples, etc.. It would be enlightening for European students to watch one of the daily phone-in programs (last-

ing four hours in Hilo) in villages and cities where the local people voice their daily complaints about how the government is run, what it plans to do, what's going amiss, etc.--not just political questions, but matters of education and even the state of the English language. English is a big language spoken natively on all continents and boasting a score of daughter languages, some of which have also become national languages. It is not on a par with others, so the job of teaching it is different in important respects, particularly attitudinal respects. But it should be easier, if one is doing one's job properly, to create a motivation for learning a language that is the doorway to the world of knowledge and commerce than to a language whose limitations in these respects lower the motivation for all but those having special interests relevant to learning it.

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