Basic English Usage

BASIC ENGLISH USAGE

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Preface

English usage today is an area of discourse—sometimes it seems more like dispute—about the way words are used and ought to be used. This discourse makes up the subject matter of a large number of books that put the word *usage* in their titles. Behind usage as a subject lies a collection of opinions about what English grammar is or should be, about the propriety of using certain words and phrases, and about the social status of those who use certain words and constructions. A fairly large number of these opinions have been with us long enough to be regarded as rules or at least to be referred to as rules. In fact they are often regarded as rules of grammar, even if they concern only matters of social status or vocabulary selection. And many of these rules are widely believed to have universal application even though they are far from universally observed.

The general approach to basic English usage is to encourage a direct, vigorous writing style, and to oppose all artificiality — firmly advising against unnecessarily convoluted sentence construction and the use of foreign words and phrases and archaisms. It opposes all pedantry, and notably ridiculed artificial grammar rules not warranted by natural English usage — such as bans on split infinitives and on ending a sentence with a preposition, rules on the placement of the word only, and distinctions between which and that. It also condemns every cliché and, in classifying them, coined and popularized the terms battered ornament, Wardour Street, vogue words,

and worn-out humour, whilst simultaneously defending useful distinctions between words whose meanings were coalescing in practice, and guiding the user away from errors of word misuse, and illogical sentence construction. It mocks the use of unnecessarily long or arcane words.

On the other hand practical English usage aims at foreign learners of English and their teachers. It features basic descriptions of English grammar and usage as well as highlighting various words which for some reasons are difficult to use by non-native speakers. Although, generally, the model is basically British English, it explains some of the stylistic differences between British and American usage.

This publication titled, "Basic English Usage" provides readers with an introductory overview of history of English usage. The focus here lies on survey and practical aspects. Major types of English and their usage trends are explained. The focus lies on lists related to English usage and disputed usage. Besides, reflections are made on controlled vocabulary and language. The subject area of English as a philosophical, universal, and constructed language has been covered. Here, focus lies on relevant aspects of English grammar and English readability. This publication titled, "English Sentence Structure" is completely user-friendly as it also gives readers a glossary, bibliography and index.

—Editor

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History of English Usage: Focus on Survey and Practical Aspects

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH USAGE

English usage today is an area of discourse—sometimes it seems more like dispute—about the way words are used and ought to be used. This discourse makes up the subject matter of a large number of books that put the word *usage* in their titles. Behind usage as a subject lies a collection of opinions about what English grammar is or should be, about the propriety of using certain words and phrases, and about the social status of those who use certain words and constructions. A fairly large number of these opinions have been with us long enough to be regarded as rules or at least to be referred to as rules. In fact they are often regarded as rules of grammar, even if they concern only matters of social status or vocabulary selection. And many of these rules are widely believed to have universal application even though they are far from universally observed.

To understand how these opinions and rules developed, we have to go back in history at least as far back as the year 1417 when the official correspondence of Henry V suddenly and almost entirely stopped being written in French and started being written in English. By mid-century many government documents and even private

letters were in English and before 1500 even statutes were being recorded in the mother tongue. This restoration of English as the official language of the royal bureaucracy was one very important influence on the gradual emergence of a single standard dialect of English out of the many varied regional dialects that already existed. English now had to serve the functions formerly served by Latin and French, languages which had already assumed standard forms and this new reality was a powerful spur to the formation of a standard in writing English that could be quite independent of variable speech. The process was certainly not completed within the 15th century but increasingly the written form of the language that modern scholars call Chancery English had its effect. in combination with other influences such as the newfangled process of printing from movable type.

But the rise of Standard English did not by itself generate concern over usage. There was no special interest in language as such at that time. Indeed. the English historian G. M. Trevelyan called the 15th century until its last fifteen or twenty years, the most intellectually barren epoch in English history since the Norman conquest. Not until Henry VII had established himself on the throne near the end of the century did the intellectual ferment of the European Renaissance begin to be felt in England. By the middle of the 16th century the English Renaissance was in full flower and the revival of learning and letters brought with it a conscious interest in the English language as a medium for literature and learned discourse. There were those who had their doubts about its suitability. Still the desire to use the vernacular rather than Latin was strong and some of the doubters sought to put flesh on the bare bones of English by importing words from Latin, Italian, and French—the European languages of learned and graceful discourse. Among those who enriched English from the word stock of Europe were Sir Thomas Elyot and Sir Thomas More. Opposed to these enrichers of the language

were purists such as Roger.Ascham and Sir John Cheke, who preferred their English, rude as it might be, untainted by foreign imports. The imported learned terms became known as *inkhorn*terms, and their use and misuse by the imperfectly educated became the subject of much lively satire—some of it written by Shakespeare, among many others.

In addition to the controversy over imported words there were other concerns, such as the state of English spelling. In those days people mostly spelled things the way they sounded. and there was little uniformity indeed. A number of people consequently became interested in spelling reform. Among these was the schoolmaster Richard Mulcaster who may have served as the model for Shakespeare's pedant Holofernes. Mulcaster and the somewhat later Edmund Coote were interested in regularizing spelling as best they could. There were more radical reformers too-John Hart, Sir Thomas Smith, and William Bullokar are examples-who devised phonetic alphabets to better represent English speech sounds. Bullokar is worthy of note for another reason: in 1586 he published *Bref Grammar for English*—the first English grammar book. It was probably intended as an introduction to the subsequent study of Latin grammar.

So 16th-century interest in language produced two of the basic tools of the writer on usage. Bullokar, out of his interest in regularizing and reforming, had been moved to write a grammar of English. And the vocabulary controversy—the introduction of inkhorn terms by the enrichers and the revival of English archaisms by the purists (of whom the poet Edmund Spenser was one)—led another schoolmaster, Robert Cawdrey, to produce the first English dictionary in 1604.

The 17th century provides several more signposts on the way to the treatment of usage as we know it. One of these is the expression of a desire for regulation of the

language by an academy similar to the ones established in Italy in the 16th century and in France in 1635. Calls for the establishment of an English academy came as early as 1617; among the writers to urge one were John Dryden in 1664, John Evelyn in 1665, and Daniel Defoe in 1697.

More grammar books were also published at this time. Ben Jonson's appeared posthumously in 1640. It is short and sketchy and is intended for the use of foreigners. Its grammar is descriptive, but Jonson hung his observations on a Latin grammatical framework. It also seems to be the first English grammar book to quote the Roman rhetorician Quintilian's dictum "Custom is the most certain mistress of language."

John Wallis,a mathematician and member of the Royal Society, published in 1658 a grammar, written in Latin, for the use of foreigners who wanted to learn English. Wallis, according to George H. McKnight, abandoned much of the method of Latin grammar. Wallis's grammar is perhaps best remembered for being the source of the much discussed distinction between *shall* and *will*. Wallis's grammar is also the one referred to by Samuel Johnson in the front matter of his 1755 dictionary.

John Dryden deserves mention too. He defended the English of his time as an improvement over the English of Shakespeare and Jonson. He is the first person we know of who worried about the preposition at the end of a sentence. He eliminated many such from his own writings when revising his works for a collected edition. He seems to have decided the practice was wrong because it could not happen in Latin.

C.C. Fries tells us that 17th-century grammars in general were designed either for foreigners or for school use, in order to lead to the study of Latin. In the 18th century, however, grammars were written predominantly for English speakers, and although they were written for the purpose of instructing, they seem to find more fun in

correcting. A change in the underlying philosophy of grammar had occurred, and it is made explicit in perhaps the first 18th-century grammar, *A Key to the Art of Letters* . . ., published in 1700 by a schoolmaster named A. Lane. He thought it a mistake to view grammar simply as a means to learn a foreign language and asserted that "the true End and Use of *Grammar* isto teach how to speak and write well and learnedly in a language already known, according to the unalterable Rules of right Reason." Gone was Ben Jonson's appeal to custom.

There was evidently a considerable amount of general interest in things grammatical among men of letters, for Addison, Steele, and Swift all treated grammar in one way or another in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* in 1710, 1711, and 1712. In 1712 Swift published yet another proposal for an English academy (it came within a whisker of succeeding): John Oldmixon attacked Swift's proposal in the same year. Public interest must have helped create a market for the grammar books which began appearing with some frequency about this same time. And if controversy fuels sales, grammarians knew it: they were perfectly willing to emphasize their own advantages by denigrating their predecessors, sometimes in abusive terms.

We need mention only a few of these productions here. Pride of place must go to Bishop Robert Lowth's *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*, 1762. Lowth's book is both brief and logical. Lowth was influenced by the theories of James Harris's *Hermes,* 1751, a curious disquisition about universal grammar. Lowth apparently derived his notions about the perfectibility of English grammar from Harris, and he did not doubt that he could reduce the language to a system of uniform rules. Lowth's approach was strictly prescriptive: he meant to improve and correct, not describe. He judged correctness by his own rules—mostly derived from Latin grammar—which frequently went against established usage. His favorite mode of illustration is what was known as "false syntax": examples

of linguistic wrongdoing from the King James Bible, Shakespeare, Sidney, Donne, Milton, Swift, Addison, Pope—the most respected names in English literature. He was so sure of himself that he could permit himself a little joke; discussing the construction where a preposition comes at the end of a clause or sentence, he says. "This is an idiom, which our language is strongly inclined to."

Lowth's grammar was not written for children. But he did what he intended to so well that subsequent grammarians fairly fell over themselves in haste to get out versions of Lowth suitable for school use, and most subsequent grammars—including Noah Webster's first—were to some extent based upon Lowth's.

The older descriptive tradition of Jonson and Wallis was not quite dead, however. Joseph Priestley's grammar, first published in 1761, used false syntax too, but in the main Priestlev was more tolerant of established usages that Lowth considered to be in error. In his later editions he politely but firmly disagreed with Lowth on specific points. Priestlev's grammar enjoyed some success and his opinions were treated with respect, but he was not imitated like Lowth.

The most successful of the Lowth adapters wasLindley Murray. Murray was an American living in England—Dennis Baron informs us that he had made a considerable fortune trading with the Loyalists during the American Revolution and had moved to England ostensibly for reasons of health. Friends asked him to write a grammar for use in an English girls' school, and he obliged. Murrav considered himself only a compiler, and that he was. He took over verbatim large patches from Lowth and teased them out with pieces taken from Priestley and a few other grammarians and rhetoricians. He removed the authors' names from the false syntax and stirred in a heavy dose of piety. He silently and primly corrected Lowth's jocular little clause to "to which our language is strongly inclined." The resulting mixture was one of the most successful

grammar books ever, remaining a standard text in American schools for a half century.

George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1776, is not a grammar book proper, but it contains a long discussion of grammatical proprieties. Campbell starts out sensibly enough; he says that grammar is based on usage, and he rejects notions of an abstract or universal grammar. But he then proceeds to examine usage, concluding that the usage that counts is reputable, national, and present use. He goes on to present nine canons of verbal criticism, by one or another of which he can reject any usage he chooses to. By the time all the discussions of barbarisms, solecisms, and improprieties are finished—the discussions are well supplied with examples from many of Bishop Lowth's favorite whipping boys—it is quite apparent that the reputable, national, and present use that passes all tests is simply whatever suits the taste of George Campbell.

Books of grammar and rhetoric had existed in English from the 16th and 17th centuries. The 18th century's new contribution was the book of unvarnished usage opinion, best exemplified by Robert Baker's anonymously published *Reflections on the English Language,* 1770. (Baker was apparently anticipated in this genre by *Observations upon the English Language,* 1752, another anonymous publication, ascribed by Sterling A. Leonard to one George Harris.) We know nothing of Baker except what he put down about himself in his preface. He says that he left school at fifteen, that he learned no Greek and only the easiest Latin, that he has never seen the folio edition of Johnson's Dictionary, and that he owns no books. He fancies he has good taste, however, and he clearly understands French. His book is patterned on *Remarques sur la langue françoise,* 1659, written by Claude Faure de Vaugelas, a leading member of the French Academy.

Baker's *Reflections* is a random collection of comments mostly about what he considers misuses, based chiefly on books that he has borrowed or read. He brings forward no

authorities to support his *ipse dixit* pronouncements, many of which are on the order of "This is not good English" or "This does not make sense." Yet a surprising number of the locutions he questioned are still to be found as topics of discussion in current books on usage. It is less surprising perhaps, that the moderns are still repeating Baker's conclusions.

The 19th century is so rich in usage lore that it is hard to summarize. We find something new in the entrance of journalists into the usage field. Reviews had commented on grammatical matters throughout the 18th century, it is true, but in the 19th newspapers and magazines with wider popular appeal began to pronounce. One result of this activity was the usage book that consists of pieces first written for a newspaper or magazine and then collected into a book along with selected comments and suggestions by readers (this type of book is still common today). Perhaps the first of these was *A Plea for the Queen's English*, 1864, by Henry Alford, dean of Canterbury. Alford was vigorously attacked by George Washington Moon, a writer born in London of American parents, in a work that eventually became titled *The Dean's English*. The controversy fueled several editions of both books and seems to have entertained readers on both sides of the Atlantic.

On the American side of the Atlantic the puristic strictures of Edward S. Gould, originally newspaper and magazine contributions, were collected as *Good English*in 1867. Gould was apparently annoyed to find that Alford had anticipated him on several points, and devoted a section to belaboring the Dean, only to discover that Moon had anticipated him there. He acknowledged the justness of Moon's criticisms and then appended a few parting shots at Moon's English, before tacking on an assault on the spelling reforms of Noah Webster and a series of lectures on pulpit oratory. Moon replied with *The Bad English of Lindley Murray* and Other Writers on the *English Language*, 1868, listed by H. L. Mencken as being in its eighth edition

in 1882, under the title *Bad English Exposed*. (Gould was one of the "other writers.") Language controversy sold books in America as well as in England.

The most popular of American 19th-century commentators was Richard Grant White, whose *Words and Their Uses*, 1870, was also compiled from previously published articles. He did not deign to mention earlier commentators except to take a solitary whack at Dean Alford for his sneer at American English. His chapters on "misused words" and "words that are not words" hit many of the same targets as Gould's chapters on "misused words" and "spurious words," but White's chapters are longer. Perhaps his most entertaining sections deal with his denial that English has a grammar, which is introduced by a Dickensian account of having been rapped over the knuckles at age five and a half for not understanding his grammar lesson. White, who was not without intellectual attainments—he had edited Shakespeare—was nevertheless given to frequent faulty etymologizing, and for some reason he was so upset by the progressive passive *is being built* that he devoted a whole chapter to excoriating it. These last two features caught the attention of the peppery Fitzedward Hall, an American teacher of Sanskrit living in England.

Hall produced a whole book—*Recent Exemplifications of False Philology*, 1872—exposing White's errors, and returned to the attack again with *Modern English* in 1873. Hall was a new breed of commentator, bringing a wealth of illustrative material from his collection of examples to bear on the various points of contention. Hall's evidence should have been more than enough to overwhelm White's unsupported assertions, but it was not. Partly to blame is the public's disdain of the scholarly, and partly to blame is Hall's style—he never makes a point succinctly, but lets his most trenchant observations dissipate in a cloud of sesquipedalian afterthoughts. White's books, Mencken tells us, remained in print until the 1930s; Hall's collection of

examples became part of the foundations of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Two other 19th-century innovations deserve mention. William Cullen Bryant's *Index Expurgatorius,* 1877, is the start of the American newspaper tradition in usage—works written by newspaper editors. Bryant was editor-in-chief and part owner of the *New York Evening Post.* His *Index* is simply a list of words not to be used in the *Post;* there was no explanatory matter. Lists of forbidden words were popular for a time afterward, but the fashion passed. The newspaper editor as usage arbiter has continued to the present, however. The pseudonymous Alfred Ayres in *The Verbalist,* 1881, seems to have been the first, or one of the first, of these to arrange his comments in alphabetical order, creating a sort of dictionary of usage.

In the early decades of the Republic, many Americans patriotically supported the home-grown version of the language against the language of the vanquished British oppressors. There were proposals for a Federal English—Noah Webster was in the forefront of the movement—and for the establishment of an American academy to promote and regulate the language—John Adams made one such proposal.

The British, for their part, were not amused by the presumption of former colonials. Americanisms had been viewed askance as early as 1735, but the frequency and the ferocity of denunciation markedly increased in the 19th century, as British travelers, some of them literary folk like Captain Marryat, Mrs. Frances Trollope, and Charles Dickens, visited the United States and returned to England to publish books of their travels, almost always disparaging in tone. They seldom failed to work in a few criticisms of the language as well as the uncouth character and manners of Americans. British reviewers, too, were outspoken in their denunciation of things American, and especially Americanisms.

American writers put up a spirited defense for a time, but the writing class eventually began to wear down under the onslaught. By 1860, in an article crying up Joseph Worcester's dictionary, the *Atlantic Monthly* could call American English "provincial." The general attitude after the Civil War seems to have been one of diffidence rather than defiance. The diffident attitude is of interest here because it was in the second half of the 19th century that Americanisms began to make their way silently into American usage books as errors. Many of these, such as *balance* for *remainder* and *loan* for *lend*, are still denigrated by American usage writers and their native origin passed over in silence.

We have said nothing about 19th-century grammars, and not much needs to be said about them. If those grammars were computers, the most successful could be called clones of Lindley Murray. Some dissatisfaction with the older English traditions existed, especially in the first half of the 19th century in this country, but little seems to have resulted from it. Books with innovative systems met with little success. Goold Brown, in his *Grammar of English Grammars*, first published in 1851, collected most of the grammars published up to his own time, and used them for his examples of false grammar. He also exhibited at length their inconsistencies and disagreements. Goold Brown permitted himself one mild observation (most were rather tart): "Grammarians would perhaps differ less, if they read more."

By the end of the 19th century, differences had developed between the ways usage issues were being treated in England and in the United States. Except for the fruits of the Alford-Moon controversy. there seem to be very few British books concerned exclusively with usage problems. The most frequently reprinted of these few was one written by a Scot: William B. Hodgson's *Errors in the Use of English,* 1881. British literati were not indifferent to such issues, but they seem mainly to have put their comments in reviews

and letters and works directed primarily to other subjects. Walter Savage Landor, for instance, delivered himself of a number of idiosyncratic views about language and usage in one or two of his *Imaginary Conversations*. John Stuart Mill put a few of his opinions into *A System of Logic*.

America, on the other hand, saw the growth of a small industry devoted to the cultivation of the linguistically insecure, who were being produced in increasing numbers by American public schools using the grammar of Lindley Murray combined with the opinions of Richard Grant White. After the Civil War little handbooks for the guidance of the perplexed appeared with some frequency. We have mentioned one of these. Alfred Ayres's *The Verbalist*. Others bear such titles as *Vulgarisms and Other Errors of Speech, Words: Their Use and Abuse*, *Some Common Errors of Speech*, and *Slips of Tongue and Pen*. The production of popular books on usage topics continues to be common in the 20th-century United States.

The different approaches of the British and Americans to usage questions have continued along the lines evident in the last half of the 19th century. Fewer books devoted to usage issues have been produced in England, and the arena there has been dominated by two names: Fowler and Gowers. H. W. Fowler's best-known work is *Modern English Usage,* 1926*,* an expanded. updated. and alphabetized version of *The King's English,* which he had produced with one of his brothers in 1906. This book gained ready acceptance as an authority, and it is usually treated with considerable deference on both sides of the Atlantic. It is a thick book in small print, packed with a combination of good sense, traditional attitudes, pretension-pricking, minute distinctions, and a good deal of what Otto Jespersen, the Danish scholarly grammarian of the English language, called "language moralizing." Fowler, in the tradition of Alford and Richard Grant White, found much to dislike in the prose of contemporary newspapers. He had no gadfly like George Washington Moon to challenge his authority,

although he did dispute a few constructions with Otto Jespersen in the pages of the tracts issued by the Society for Pure English. In some of these disputes a characteristic pattern emerges: the historical grammarian finds a construction in literature and wonders how it came to be; Fowler finds the same construction in the newspapers and condemns it.

Sir Ernest Gowers came into usage commentary from a different direction: he was asked to prepare a book for British civil servants to help them avoid the usual bureaucratic jargon of British official prose. The result was *Plain Words,* 1941. This slender book has gone through several editions, growing a bit each time. In 1965 a new edition of Fowler appeared, edited by Gowers, to which Gowers added a number of his own favorite topics. In addition to Fowler and Gowers, the work of Eric Partridge, particularly *Usage and Abusage*, 1942, has been influential.

In recent years, while some English books about usage have concerned themselves with traditional questions of propriety, others have taken a different path, explaining the peculiarities of English idiom to learners of English.

The treatment of usage in 20th-century America, however, hews steadfastly to the traditional line of linguistic etiquette. School grammars are elaborately graded and decked out with color printing, but the most successful are still solidly based on Lowth and Murray. College handbooks have proliferated since 1917,the date of the earliest one in our collection. The contents of these works have not changed greatly, however: the essential sameness of the "Glossaries of Usage" attached to them suggests that their contents are to some extent determined by a desire to carry over from the previous edition as much as possible and to cover what the competition covers. General-purpose guides for those whose schooling is complete are still produced regularly, and in a wider variety of shapes and sizes than in the 19th century. These have developed offshoots in the

form of books aimed at business writers and others aimed at technical and scientific writers.

The newspaper tradition has also continued strong. Some usage questions are dealt with in house stylebooks (now often published for outsiders, as well), and newspaper editors have written usage guides for the general public, though these usually have a strong newspaper slant. Especially prominent among these are the several books of Theodore Bernstein, particularly *The Careful Writer,* 1965.

A characteristic of writing on usage has been. right from the beginning, disagreement among the writers on specific points. Various attempts at reconciling these differences have been made, especially in the 20th century. One of the earliest dates from 1883, C.W. Bardeen, a schoolbook publisher, put out a little hook in which he tried to discover a consensus by examining some thirty sources, including a number of current usage books, some grammars, some works on philology, some on synonymy, and Webster's and Worcester's dictionaries. Roy Copperud has produced books on the same general plan in 1970 and 1980.

Another approach to the problem of varying opinion has been the survey of opinion. Sterling A. Leonard made the first in 1931. Leonard's survey was replicated in 1971 by Raymond D, Crisp, and a similar survey was conducted in England by G.H. Mittins and three colleagues and published in 1970. The results of these surveys are quantified, so that interested readers can discover the relative acceptability or obloquy of each tested item. Somewhat the same idea has also been tried with the usage panel, an assembled panel of experts to whom each individual item is submitted for approval or disapproval. Again, quantification of relative approval or disapproval is the aim.

The 20th century is the first in which usage has been studied from a scholarly or historical point of view, although

Fitzedward Hall's *Modern English* of 1873 should probably be acknowledged as a precursor. Thomas R. Lounsbury collected a number of his magazine articles into *The Standard of Usage in* English, 1908, which examined the background of attitudes and issues. J. Lesslie Hall's *English Usage,*1917, checked 141 issues drawn from the work of Richard Grant White and from several college-level grammars and rhetorics against evidence from English and American literature. Sterling A. Leonard in *The Doctrine of Correctness in English 1700-1800,* 1929*,* provided the first thorough examination of the origins of many attitudes about usage in the 18th century.

Looking back from the late 1980s we find that the 1920s and 1930s were a time of considerable interest in the examination and testing of attitudes and beliefs about usage and in a rationalization of the matter and methods of school grammar. Various publications written by Charles C. Fries and Robert C. Pooley, for example, seemed to point the way. They had relatively little influence in the following decades, however; the schoolbooks by and large follow the traditional lines, and the popular books of usage treat the traditional subjects. A notable exception is Bergen and Cornelia Evans's *ADictionary of Contemporary* American Usage, 1957. The book takes the traditional view of many specific issues, but it is strong in insisting that actual usage, both historical and contemporary, must be weighed carefully in reaching usage opinions.

If the mainstream of usage commentary has continued to run in the same old channels, there have nonetheless been some undercurrents of importance. Serious examination of the received truths has continued. Margaret M. Bryant's *Current American Usage*, 1962, reported the results of the testing of many specific items against actual use as shown in current books, magazines, and newspapers. Articles in scholarly books and journals (like *American Speech*) evince continuing interest in real language and real usage in spite of a strong tendency in modern linguistics toward the

study of language in more abstract ways. If the popular idea of usage is represented by the continuing series of books produced by the journalists Philip Howard (in England) and William Safire (in the United States) and by the continuing publication of traditionally oriented handbooks, there is also some countervailing critical opinion. as shown by such books as Dwight Bolinger's *Language—the Loaded Weapon*, Jim Quinn's *American Tongue and Cheek*, Dennis Baron's *Grammar and Good Taste*, and Harvey Daniels's *Famous Last Word,* all published in the early 1980s.

A historical sketch of this length necessarily must omit many deserving names and titles and pass over many interesting observers and observations. This we regret, but do not apologize for, as the need to omit what we would prefer to include seems almost omnipresent in our work as lexicographers. Much of the historical information herein draws heavily on materials available in Leonard's *Doctrine of Correctness*: Charles Carpenter Fries's *The Teaching of the English Language,* 1927*;* George H. McKnight's *Modern English in the Making,* 1928; H. L. Mencken's *The American Language*, 4th edition, 1936, and Supplement 1, 1945; Baron's *Grammar and Good Taste*, 1982; and Daniels's *Famous Last Words,* 1983. These books constitute a rich mine of information for the serious student of English usage and its history, to whom we also recommend a perusal of our bibliography.

SURVEY OF ENGLISH USAGE

The Survey of English Usage was the first research centre in Europe to carry out research with corpora. The Survey is based in the Department of English Language and Literature at University College London.

History

The Survey of English Usage was founded in 1959 by Randolph (now Lord) Quirk. Many well-known linguists have spent time doing research at the Survey, including

Valerie Adams, John Algeo, Dwight Bolinger, Noël Burton-Roberts, David Crystal, Derek Davy, Jan Firbas, Sidney Greenbaum, Liliane Haegeman, Robert Ilson, Ruth Kempson, Geoffrey Leech, Jan Rusiecki, Jan Svartvik, Joe Taglicht and many others.

The original Survey Corpus predated modern computing. It was recorded on reel-to-reel tapes, transcribed on paper, filed in filing cabinets, and indexed on paper cards. Transcriptions were annotated with a detailed prosodic and paralinguistic annotation developed by Crystal and Quirk (1964). Sets of paper cards were manually annotated for grammatical structures and filed, so, for example, all noun phrases could be found in the noun phrase filing cabinet in the Survey. Naturally, corpus searches required a visit to the Survey.

This corpus is now known more widely as the London-Lund Corpus (LLC), as it was the responsibility of co-workers in Lund, Sweden, to computerise the corpus. Thirty-four of the spoken texts were published in book form as Svartvik and Quirk (1980), and the corpus was used as the basis for the famous *Comprehensive Grammar* (Quirk *et al.* 1985).

Current Research

Constructing Corpora

In 1988 Sidney Greenbaum proposed a new project, ICE, the International Corpus of English. ICE was to be an international project, carried out at research centres around the world, to compile corpora of English varieties where English was the first or second official language. ICE texts would contain spoken and written English in a balanced sample of one million words per component so that these samples could be compared in a wide varieties of ways. The ICE project continues around the world to the present day.

ICE-GB, the British Component of ICE, was compiled

at the Survey. ICE-GB was annotated to a very detailed level, including constructing a full grammatical analysis (parse) for every sentence in the corpus. The first release of ICE-GB took place in 1998. ICE-GB was distributed with software for searching and exploring the parsed corpus called ICECUP. Release 2 of ICE-GB has now been released and is available on CD.

As well as contrasting varieties of English, many researchers are interested in language development and change over time. A recent project at the Survey undertook the parsing of a large (400,000 word) selection of the spoken part of the LLC in a manner directly comparable with ICE-GB, forming a new, 800,000 word diachronic corpus, called the Diachronic Corpus of Present-Day Spoken English (DCPSE). DCPSE has now been released and is available on CD from the Survey.

These two corpora comprise the largest collection of parsed and corrected, orthographically transcribed spoken English language data in the world, with over one million words of spoken English in this form.

Exploring Corpora

Parsed corpora are large databases containing detailed grammatical tree structures. One of the consequences of forming large collections of valuable linguistic data is a pressing need for methods and tools to help researchers and other users make the most of them. So in parallel with the parsing of natural language data, the Survey team have carried out research and development of software tools to help linguists use these corpora. The ICECUP research platform uses an intuitive grammatical query representation called Fuzzy Tree Fragments (FTFs) to search parsed corpora.

Linguistic Research with Corpora

As well as distributing corpora and tools to the corpus

linguistics research community, the SEU carries out research into English language. Recent projects include research on the English Noun Phrase, Subordination in Spoken and Written English, and the English Verb Phrase. The Survey also provides support for a small number of PhD students who carry out research into English language corpora.

PRACTICAL ENGLISH USAGE

Practical English Usage is a standard reference book aimed at foreign learners of English and their teachers written by Michael Swan.

Published by Oxford University Press, it has sold over 1.5 million copies since the first edition was published in 1980. A new, and greatly extended second edition was published in 1995.

Features

It features basic descriptions of English grammar and usage as well as highlighting various words which for some reasons are difficult to use by non-native speakers. Although the model is basically British English, it explains some of the stylistic differences between British and American usage.

Influences

In his Acknowledgements for the first edition, Swan refers to the aid given him by "various standard reference books - in particular, the splendid *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, by Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik" (Longman 1972), and in the second edition, to "the monumental *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*" (Longman 1985), by the same authors.

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Types of English and Their Usage Trends

BASIC ENGLISH

Basic English, also known as Simple English, is an English-based controlled language created (in essence as a simplified subset of English) by linguist and philosopher Charles Kay Ogden as an international auxiliary language, and as an aid for teaching English as a Second Language. It was presented in Ogden's book *Basic English: A General Introduction with Rules and Grammar* (1930). Capitalised, *BASIC* is sometimes taken as an acronym that stands for *British American Scientific International Commercial*.

Ogden's Basic, and the concept of a simplified English, gained its greatest publicity just after the Allied victory in the Second World War as a means for world peace. Although Basic English was not built into a program, similar simplifications have been devised for various international uses. Ogden's associate I. A. Richards promoted its use in schools in China. More recently, it has influenced the creation of Voice of America's Special English for news broadcasting, and Simplified English, another English-based controlled language designed to write technical manuals.

What survives today of Ogden's Basic English is the

basic 850-word list used as the beginner's vocabulary of the English language taught worldwide, especially in Asia.

Design Principles

Ogden tried to simplify English while keeping it normal for native speakers, by specifying grammar restrictions and a controlled small vocabulary which makes an extensive use of paraphrasis. Most notably, Ogden allowed only 18 verbs, which he called "operators". His *General Introduction* says "There are no 'verbs' in Basic English", with the underlying assumption that, as noun use in English is very straightforward but verb use/conjugation is not, the elimination of verbs would be a welcome simplification.

Word Lists

Ogden's word lists include only word *roots*, which in practice are extended with the defined set of affixes and the full set of forms allowed for any available word (noun, pronoun, or the limited set of verbs).

The 850 core words of Basic English are found in Wiktionary's *Appendix:Basic English word list*. This core is theoretically enough for everyday life. However, Ogden prescribed that any student should learn an additional 150 word list for everyday work in some particular field, by adding a word list of 100 words particularly useful in a general field (e.g., science, verse, business, etc.), along with a 50-word list from a more specialised subset of that general field, to make a basic 1000 word vocabulary for everyday work and life.

Moreover, Ogden assumed that any student already should be familiar with (and thus may only review) a core subset of around 350 "international" words. Therefore, a first level student should graduate with a core vocabulary of around 1350 words. A realistic general core vocabulary could contain 1500 words (the core 850 words, plus 350 international words, and 300 words for the general fields

of trade, economics, and science). A sample 1500 word vocabulary is included in the Simple English Wikipedia.

Ogden provided lists to extend the general 1500 vocabulary to make a 2000 word list, enough for a "standard" English level. This 2000 word vocabulary represents "what any learner should know". At this level students could start to move on their own.

Rules

The word use of Basic English is similar to full English, but the rules are much simpler, and there are fewer exceptions. Not all meanings of each word are allowed.

Ogden's rules of grammar for Basic English help people use the 850 words to talk about things and events in a normal way.

1. Make plurals with an "S" on the end of the word. If there are special ways to make a plural word, such as "ES" and "IES", use them.
2. There are two word endings to change each of the 150 adjectives: -"ER" and -"EST"
3. There are two word endings to change the verb word endings, -"ING" and -"ED".
4. Make qualifiers from adverbs by adding -"LY".
5. Talk about amounts with "MORE" and "MOST." Use and know -"ER" and -"EST."
6. Make opposite adjectives with "UN"-
7. Make questions with the opposite word order, and with "DO".
8. Operators and pronouns conjugate as in normal English.
9. Make combined words (compounds) from two nouns (for example "milkman") or a noun and a directive (sundown).
10. Measures, numbers, money, days, months, years, clock time, and international words are in English forms. E.g. Date/Time: 20 May 1972 at 21:00

11. Use the words of an industry or science. For example, in this grammar, some special words are for teaching languages, and not part of Basic English: plural, conjugate, noun, adjective, adverb, qualifier, operator, pronoun, and directive.

Criticism

Like all international auxiliary languages (or IALs), Basic English may be criticised as unavoidably based on personal preferences, and thus, paradoxically, inherently divisive. Moreover, like all natural language based IALs, Basic is subject to criticism as unfairly biased towards the native speaker community.

As a teaching aid for English as a Second Language, Basic English has been criticised for the choice of the core vocabulary and for its grammatical constraints.

Literary References

In the novel *The Shape of Things to Come*, published in 1933, H.G. Wells depicted Basic English as the lingua franca of a new elite which after a prolonged struggle succeeds in uniting the world and establishing a totalitarian world government. In the future world of Wells' vision, virtually all members of humanity know this language.

From 1942 to 1944 George Orwell was a proponent of Basic English, but in 1945 he became critical of universal languages. Basic English later inspired his use of Newspeak in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

In his story "Gulf", science fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein used a constructed language, in which every Basic English word is replaced with a single phoneme, as an appropriate means of communication for a race of genius supermen.

PLAIN ENGLISH

Plain English (sometimes referred to more broadly as plain language) is a generic term for communication styles

that emphasise clarity, brevity and the avoidance of technical language - particularly in relation to official government communication, including laws.

The intention is to write in a manner that is easily understood by its target audience: appropriate to their reading skills and knowledge, clear and direct, free of cliché and unnecessary jargon.

United Kingdom

In 1946, writer George Orwell wrote an impassioned essay, "Politics and the English Language", criticizing what he saw as the dangers of "ugly and inaccurate" contemporary written English - particularly in politics where *pacification* can be used to mean "...defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets...".

Two years later Sir Ernest Arthur Gowers, a distinguished civil servant, was asked by HM Treasury to provide a guide to officials on avoiding pompous and over-elaborate writing.

As he wrote:

> *"Writing is an instrument for conveying ideas from one mind to another; the writer's job is to make his reader apprehend his meaning readily and precisely".*

Gowers' guide was published as slim paperback *Plain Words, a guide to the use of English* in 1948, followed by a sequel *The ABC of Plain Words*, in 1951, and in 1954 a hardback book combining the best of both, *The Complete Plain Words* - which has never been out of print since.

Gower himself argued that Legal English was a special case, saying that legal drafting:

> *"...is a science, not an art; it lies in the province of mathematics rather than of literature, and its practice needs long apprenticeship. It is prudently left to a specialised legal branch of the Service. The only concern of the ordinary*

official is to learn to understand it, to act as interpreter of it to ordinary people, and to be careful not to let his own style of writing be tainted by it..."

However, there is a trend toward plainer language in legal documents, and in fact the 1999 "Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts" regulations mandate "plain and intelligible" language.

An inquiry into the 2005 London bombings recommended that emergency services should always use Plain English. It found that verbosity can lead to misunderstandings that could cost lives.

United States

In the US the plain language movement in government communication started in the 1970s, with the Paperwork Reduction Act introduced in 1976, and in 1978 President Carter issued Executive Orders intended to make government regulations "cost-effective and easy-to-understand by those who were required to comply with them".

Many agencies now have long-standing policies mandating plain language, and in 2010 this was made a federal requirement with the Plain Writing Act

In legal writing, the late Professor David Mellinkoff of the UCLA School of Law is widely credited with singlehandedly launching the Plain English movement in American law with the 1963 publication of *The Language of the Law*, and in 1979, Richard Wydick published *Plain English for Lawyers*.

Plain English writing style is now a legal duty for companies registering securities under the Securities Act of 1933, due to rules the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) adopted in 1998.

SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

Simplified English is the original name of a controlled language historically developed for aerospace industry maintenance manuals. It offers a carefully limited and standardized subset of English. It is now officially known under its trademarked name as *Simplified Technical English* (STE). Although STE is regulated for use in the aerospace and defense industries, other industries have used it as a basis for developing their own controlled English standards.

Benefits of STE

Proponents claim that Simplified Technical English can:

- Reduce ambiguity
- Improve the clarity of technical writing, especially procedural writing
- Improve comprehension for people whose first language is not English
- Make human translation easier, faster and more cost effective
- Facilitate computer-assisted translation and machine translation

Specification Structure

The Simplified Technical English specification consists of two Parts—*Part 1: Writing Rules* and *Part 2: Dictionary*. The Writing Rules specify restrictions on grammar and style usage. For example, they require writers to:

- Restrict the length of noun clusters to no more than 3 words
- Restrict sentence length to no more than 20 words (procedural sentences) or 25 words (descriptive sentences)
- Restrict paragraphs to no more than 6 sentences

- Avoid slang and jargon
- Make instructions as specific as possible
- Use articles such as “a/an” and “the” wherever possible
- Use simple verb tenses (past, present, and future)
- Use active voice
- Not use -ing participles or gerunds (unless part of a technical name)
- Write sequential steps as separate sentences
- Put conditions first in warnings and cautions

Dictionary

The dictionary includes entries of both approved and unapproved words. The approved words can only be used in their specified meaning. For example, the word “close” can only be used in one of two meanings:

1. To move together, or to move to a position that stops or prevents materials from going in or out.
2. To operate a circuit breaker to make an electrical circuit.

The verb can be used to express “close a door” or “close a circuit”, but it cannot be used in other senses (for example “to close the meeting” or “to close a business”). The adjective “close” appears in the Dictionary as an unapproved word with the suggested approved alternative “near”. So STE does not allow “do not go close to the landing gear”, but it does allow “do not go near the landing gear”. In addition to the basic STE vocabulary listed in the Dictionary, Section 1, *Words*, gives explicit guidelines for adding technical terms and verbs that writers need to describe maintenance procedures. For example, words such as “overhead panel”, “grease”, “propeller”, “to ream”, and “to drill” are not listed in the Dictionary, but they qualify as approved terms under the guidelines listed in Part 1, Section 1 (specifically, Writing Rules 1.5 and 1.10).

Aerospace and Defense Standard

Simplified English is sometimes used as a generic term for a controlled language. The aerospace and defense standard started as an industry-regulated writing standard for aerospace maintenance documentation, but has become mandatory for an increasing number of military land and sea vehicle programs as well. Although it was not intended for use as a general writing standard, it has been successfully adopted by other industries and for a wide range of document types. The US government's Plain English lacks the strict vocabulary restrictions of the aerospace standard, but it represents an attempt at a more general writing standard.

The regulated aerospace standard used to be called *AECMA Simplified English*, because the European Association of Aerospace Manufacturers (AECMA) originally created the standard in the 1980s. The AECMA standard originally came from Fokker, which had based their standard on earlier controlled languages, especially *Caterpillar Fundamental English*. In 2005, AECMA was subsumed by the Aerospace and Defence Industries Association of Europe (ASD), which renamed its standard to *ASD Simplified Technical English* or *STE*. STE is defined by the specification *ASD-STE100*, which is maintained by the Simplified Technical English Maintenance Group (STEMG). The specification contains a set of restrictions on the grammar and style of procedural and descriptive text. It also contains a dictionary of approx. 875 approved general words. Writers are given guidelines for adding technical names and technical verbs to their documentation. STE is mandated by several commercial and military specifications that control the style and content of maintenance documentation, most notably ASD S1000D.

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH

International English is the concept of the English language as a global means of communication in numerous dialects, and also the movement towards an international

standard for the language. It is also referred to as Global English, World English, Common English, Continental English or General English. Sometimes these terms refer simply to the array of varieties of English spoken throughout the world.

Sometimes "international English" and the related terms above refer to a desired standardisation, i.e. Standard English; however, there is no consensus on the path to this goal.

Historical Context

The modern concept of International English does not exist in isolation, but is the product of centuries of development of the English language.

The English language evolved from a set of West Germanic dialects spoken by the Angles and Saxons, who arrived from the Continent in the 5th Century. Those dialects came to be known as *Englisc* (literally "Anglish"), the language today referred to as Anglo-Saxon or Old English (the language of the poem Beowulf). English is thus more closely related to West Frisian than to any other modern language, although less than a quarter of the vocabulary of Modern English is shared with West Frisian or other West Germanic languages because of extensive borrowings from Norse, Norman, Latin, and other languages. It was during the Viking invasions of the Anglo-Saxon period that Old English was influenced by contact with Norse, a group of North Germanic dialects spoken by the Vikings, who came to control a large region in the North of England known as the Danelaw.

Vocabulary items entering English from Norse (including the pronouns *she*, *they*, and *them*) are thus attributable to the on-again-off-again Viking occupation of Northern England during the centuries prior to the Norman Conquest (see, e.g., Canute the Great). Soon after the Norman Conquest of 1066, the *Englisc* language ceased being a literary language (see, e.g., Ormulum) and was replaced

by Anglo-Norman as the written language of England. During the Norman Period, English absorbed a significant component of French vocabulary (approximately one-third of the vocabulary of Modern English).

With this new vocabulary, additional vocabulary borrowed from Latin (with Greek, another approximately one-third of Modern English vocabulary, though some borrowings from Latin and Greek date from later periods), a simplified grammar, and use of the orthographic conventions of French instead of Old English orthography, the language became Middle English (the language of Chaucer).

The "difficulty" of English as a written language thus began in the High Middle Ages, when French orthographic conventions were used to spell a language whose original, more suitable orthography had been forgotten after centuries of nonuse. During the late medieval period, King Henry V of England (lived 1387-1422) ordered the use of the English of his day in proceedings before him and before the government bureaucracies.

That led to the development of Chancery English, a standardised form used in the government bureaucracy. (The use of so-called Law French in English courts continued through the Renaissance, however.)

The emergence of English as a language of Wales results from the incorporation of Wales into England and also dates from approximately this time period. Soon afterward, the development of printing by Caxton and others accelerated the development of a standardised form of English. Following a change in vowel pronunciation that marks the transition of English from the medieval to the Renaissance period, the language of the Chancery and Caxton became Early Modern English (the language of Shakespeare's day) and with relatively moderate changes eventually developed into the English language of today. Scots, as spoken in the lowlands and along the east coast

of Scotland, developed independently from Modern English and is based on the Northern dialects of Anglo-Saxon, particularly Northumbrian, which also serve as the basis of Northern English dialects such as those of Yorkshire and Newcastle upon Tyne.

Northumbria was within the Danelaw and therefore experienced greater influence from Norse than did the Southern dialects. As the political influence of London grew, the Chancery version of the language developed into a written standard across Great Britain, further progressing in the modern period as Scotland became united with England as a result of the Acts of Union of 1707.

There have been two introductions of English to Ireland, a medieval introduction that led to the development of the now-extinct Yola dialect and a modern introduction in which Hibernian English largely replaced Irish as the most widely spoken language during the 19th century, following the Act of Union of 1800. Received Pronunciation (RP) is generally viewed as a 19th century development and is not reflected in North American English dialects, which are based on 18th Century English.

The establishment of the first permanent English-speaking colony in North America in 1607 was a major step towards the globalisation of the language. British English was only partially standardised when the American colonies were established. Isolated from each other by the Atlantic Ocean, the dialects in England and the colonies began evolving independently.

In the 19th century, the standardisation of British English was more settled than it had been in the previous century, and this relatively well-established English was brought to Africa, Asia and Oceania. It developed both as the language of English-speaking settlers from Britain and Ireland, and as the administrative language imposed on speakers of other languages in the various parts of the British Empire. The first form can be seen in New Zealand

English, and the latter in Indian English. In Europe English received a more central role particularly since 1919, when the Treaty of Versailles was composed not only in French, the common language of diplomacy at the time, but, under special request from American president Woodrow Wilson, also in English - a major milestone in the globalisation of English.

The English-speaking regions of Canada and the Caribbean are caught between historical connections with the UK and the Commonwealth, and geographical and economic connections with the U.S. In some things, and more formally, they tend to follow British standards, whereas in others, especially commercial, they follow the U.S. standard.

Methods of Promotion

Unlike proponents of constructed languages, International English proponents face on the one hand the belief that English already is a world language and, on the other, the belief that an international language would inherently need to be a constructed one (e.g. Esperanto). In such an environment, at least four basic approaches have been proposed or employed toward the further expansion or consolidation of International English, some in contrast with, and others in opposition to, methods used to advance constructed international auxiliary languages.

1. Laissez-faire approach. This approach is taken either out of ignorance of the other approaches or out of a belief that English will more quickly (or with fewer objections) become a more fully international language without any specific global legislation.
2. Institutional sponsorship and grass-roots promotion of language programs. Some governments have promoted the spread of the English language through sponsorship of English language programs abroad, without any attempt to gain formal international endorsement, as have grass-roots individuals and

organisations supporting English (whether through instruction, marketing, etc.).

3. National legislation. This approach encourages countries to enshrine English as having at least some kind of official status, in the belief that this would further its spread and could include more countries over time.
4. International legislation. This approach involves promotion of the future holding of a binding international convention (perhaps to be under the auspices of such international organisations as the United Nations or Inter-Parliamentary Union) to formally agree upon an official international auxiliary language which would then be taught in all schools around the world, beginning at the primary level. While this approach allows for the possibility of an alternative to English being chosen (due to its necessarily democratic approach), the approach also allows for the eventuality that English would be chosen by a sufficient majority of the proposed convention's delegates so as to put international opinion and law behind the language and thus to consolidate it as a full official world language.

English as a Global Language

Braj Kachru divides the use of English into three concentric circles.

The *inner circle* is the traditional base of English and includes countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland and the anglophone populations of the former British colonies of the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada, and various islands of the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean.

In the *outer circle* are those countries where English has official or historical importance ("special significance"). This includes most of the countries of the Commonwealth

of Nations (the former British Empire), including populous countries such as India, Pakistan and Nigeria; and others, such as the Philippines, under the sphere of influence of English-speaking countries. Here English may serve as a useful lingua franca between ethnic and language groups. Higher education, the legislature and judiciary, national commerce, and so on, may all be carried out predominantly in English.

The *expanding circle* refers to those countries where English has no official role, but is nonetheless important for certain functions, notably international business. This use of English as a lingua franca by now includes most of the rest of the world not categorised above.

An interesting anecdote is the developing role of English as a lingua franca among speakers of the mutually intelligible Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian and Swedish). Older generations of Scandinavians would use and understand each others' mother tongue without problems. However, today's younger generations lack the same understanding and some have begun using English as the language of choice.

Research on English as a lingua franca in the sense of "English in the Expanding Circle" is comparatively recent. Linguists who have been active in this field are Jennifer Jenkins, Barbara Seidlhofer, Christiane Meierkord and Joachim Grzega.

English As a Lingua Franca in Foreign Language Teaching

English as an additional language (EAL) is usually based on the standards of either American English or British English. English as an international language (EIL) is EAL with emphasis on learning different major dialect forms; in particular, it aims to equip students with the linguistic tools to communicate internationally. Roger Nunn considers different types of competence in relation to the teaching of English as an International Language, arguing

that linguistic competence has yet to be adequately addressed in recent considerations of EIL.

Several models of "simplified English" have been suggested for teaching English as a foreign language:

- Basic English, developed by Charles Kay Ogden (and later also I. A. Richards) in the 1930s, a recent revival has been initiated by Bill Templer
- Threshold Level English, developed by van Ek and Alexander
- Globish, developed by Jean-Paul Nerrière
- Basic Global English, developed by Joachim Grzega

Furthermore, Randolph Quirk and Gabriele Stein thought about a Nuclear English, which, however, has never been fully developed.

Varying Concepts

Universality and Flexibility

International English sometimes refers to English as it is actually being used and developed in the world; as a language owned not just by native speakers, but by all those who come to use it.

Basically, it covers the English language at large, often (but not always or necessarily) implicitly seen as standard. It is certainly also commonly used in connection with the acquisition, use, and study of English as the world's lingua franca ('TEIL: Teaching English as an International Language'), and especially when the language is considered as a whole in contrast with *British English*, *American English*, *South African English*, and the like. — McArthur (2002, p. 444–445)

It especially means English words and phrases generally understood throughout the English-speaking world as opposed to localisms. The importance of non-native English language skills can be recognised behind the long-standing

joke that the international language of science and technology is broken English.

Neutrality

International English reaches towards cultural neutrality. This has a practical use:

> "What could be better than a type of English that saves you from having to re-edit publications for individual regional markets! Teachers and learners of English as a second language also find it an attractive idea — both often concerned that their English should be neutral, without American or British or Canadian or Australian coloring. Any regional variety of English has a set of political, social and cultural connotations attached to it, even the so-called 'standard' forms." — Peters (2004, *International English*)

According to this viewpoint, International English is a concept of English that minimises the aspects defined by either the colonial imperialism of Victorian Britain or the so-called "cultural imperialism" of the 20th century United States. While British colonialism laid the foundation for English over much of the world, International English is a product of an emerging world culture, very much attributable to the influence of the United States as well, but conceptually based on a far greater degree of cross-talk and linguistic transculturation, which tends to mitigate both U.S. influence and British colonial influence.

The development of International English often centres on academic and scientific communities, where formal English usage is prevalent, and creative use of the language is at a minimum. This formal International English allows entry into Western culture as a whole and Western cultural values in general.

Opposition

The continued growth of the English language itself is seen by many as a kind of cultural imperialism, whether it is English in one form or English in two slightly different forms.

Robert Phillipson argues against the possibility of such neutrality in his *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992). Learners who wish to use purportedly correct English are in fact faced with the dual standard of American English and British English, and other less known standard Englishes (including Australian, Scots and Canadian).

Edward Trimnell, author of *Why You Need a Foreign Language & How to Learn One* (2005) argues that the international version of English is only adequate for communicating basic ideas. For complex discussions and business/technical situations, English is not an adequate communication tool for non-native speakers of the language. Trimnell also asserts that native English-speakers have become "dependent on the language skills of others" by placing their faith in international English.

Appropriation Theory

There are also some who reject both linguistic imperialism and David Crystal's theory of the neutrality of English. They argue that the phenomenon of the global spread of English is better understood in the framework of appropriation (e.g. Spichtinger 2000), that is, English used for local purposes around the world. Demonstrators in non-English speaking countries often use signs in English to convey their demands to TV-audiences around the globe, for instance.

In English-language teaching Bobda shows how Cameroon has moved away from a mono-cultural, Anglo-centered way of teaching English and has gradually appropriated teaching material to a Cameroonian context. Non Western-topics treated are, for instance, the rule of Emirs, traditional medicine or polygamy (1997:225). Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) describe how Western methodology and textbooks have been appropriated to suit local Vietnamese culture. The Pakistani textbook "Primary Stage English" includes lessons such as "Pakistan My Country", "Our Flag", or "Our Great Leader" (Malik 1993:

5,6,7) which might well sound jingoistic to Western ears. Within the native culture, however, establishing a connection between ELT, patriotism and Muslim faith is seen as one of the aims of ELT, as the chairman of the Punjab Textbook Board openly states: "The board...takes care, through these books to inoculate in the students a love of the Islamic values and awareness to guard the ideological frontiers of your [the students] home lands" (Punjab Text Book Board 1997).

Many Englishes

There are many difficult choices that have to be made if there is to be further standardisation of English in the future. These include the choice over whether to adopt a current standard, or move towards a more neutral, but artificial one. A true International English might supplant both current American and British English as a variety of English for international communication, leaving these as local dialects, or would rise from a merger of General American and standard British English with admixture of other varieties of English and would generally replace all these varieties of English.

We may, in due course, all need to be in control of two standard Englishes—the one which gives us our national and local identity, and the other which puts us in touch with the rest of the human race. In effect, we may all need to become bilingual in our own language. — David Crystal (1988: p. 265)

This is the situation long faced by many users of English who possess a 'non-standard' dialect of English as their birth tongue but have also learned to write (and perhaps also speak) a more standard dialect. Many academics often publish material in journals requiring different varieties of English and change style and spellings as necessary without great difficulty.

As far as spelling is concerned, the differences between

American and British usage became noticeable due to the first influential lexicographers (dictionary writers) on each side of the Atlantic. Samuel Johnson's dictionary of 1755 greatly favoured Norman-influenced spellings such as *centre* and *colour*; on the other hand, Noah Webster's first guide to American spelling, published in 1783, preferred spellings like *center* and the Latinate *color*. The difference in strategy and philosophy of Johnson and Webster are largely responsible for the main division in English spelling that exists today. However, these differences are extremely minor. Spelling is but a small part of the differences between dialects of English, and may not even reflect dialect differences at all (except in phonetically spelled dialogue). International English refers to much more than an agreed spelling pattern.

Dual Standard

Two approaches to International English are the individualistic and inclusive approach and the new dialect approach.

The individualistic approach gives control to individual authors to write and spell as they wish (within purported standard conventions) and to accept the validity of differences. The *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, published in 1999, is a descriptive study of both American and British English in which each chapter follows individual spelling conventions according to the preference of the main editor of that chapter.

The new dialect approach appears in *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* (Peters, 2004) which attempts to avoid any language bias and accordingly uses an idiosyncratic international spelling system of mixed American and British forms (but tending to prefer the more phonetic American English spellings).

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3

Focus on Lists Related to English Usage and Disputed Usage

BASIC ENGLISH ALPHABETICAL WORDLIST

Spelling as in Original Version

I've read the discussion below and cannot really understand why American spellings are used. This is Wikipedia and sources should be taken seriously. In the original publication of this list British spelling is used, that's a simple fact. The spelling should be changed accordingly. The current list violates Wikipedia principles. 89.56.195.163 19:14, 24 August 2006 (UTC)

This page is not a historical document. It is the list of words preferred on this Wikipedia. It does make sense that a single spelling is preferreed here. As the US spellings are, in general, closer to the phonetic pronunciations of these words I believe it is appropriate to use those spellings and I speak as one born and brought in Ireland and living in the UK.193.82.249.131 11:03, 18 September 2006 (UTC)

How to Handle Words on this List

I've starting adding articles based on this list (like size and position). I propose that we:

1. Keep these articles at an extremely simple level, on the theory that anyone looking at these word

articles would not know what the word means at all.

2. Keep each article based on this list heavily linked, especially to other words on the list.
3. Use pictures and diagrams as the primary method of describing the items.

— Netoholic @ 21:12, 13 Sep 2004 (UTC)

Spellings

Concerning the claim that Ogden's list uses U.S. spellings:

> That's simply not correct. Ogden was a British linguist and he used (obviously) British English.

For the original list from Ogden's book. 202.32.3.147 04:20, 25 Feb 2005 (UTC) Please note that the website http://ogden.basic-english.org/ is NOT affiliated with Ogden. It's a U.S. institution, which is probably why they dropped the U.K. spellings in the lists. Since Ogden's world list is a historical document, it should be quoted exactly "as is", according to Wikipedia guidelines. However, U.S. spellings are so common that is o.k. to include them.

But the approach to use U.S. ONLY cannot be justified.

Neither source you quote is authoritative, and their spellings are in the minority of Basic English usage today. Even if you produce a scanned page from an original Ogden book showing British spelling, it is irrelevant. *Modern* Basic English uses American spelling only. — Netoholic @ 17:55, 25 Feb 2005 (UTC)

Very funny. Even if I produce a scanned page... it's "irrelevant"? Let me summarize what you're saying here:

- Ogden's original list doesn't use British spellings (claim from history page): Wrong.
- You seem to be of the opinion that you can change spellings of historical documents. This clearly violates Wikipedia policy. How about converting

Shakespeare texts to common U.S. usage, because it's more "common"?

- Wikipedia accepts both U.S. and U.K. spellings.
- You call U.K. spellings a minority. Maybe they are, but it's a huge (!) minority: U.K., Australia, Ireland, India, South Africa, Canada (with some exceptions) and the rest of the Commonwealth, the European Union, the United Nations (U.K. official standard!), the WTO, ISO, NATO, IOC (Olympic Movement)...
- You say my quotes are not "authoritative". But you are authoritative, I guess? You seem to be the King ruling these pages. "Modern Basic English uses American spelling only." Interesting. Who says that? Ogden, the inventor and only true authority regarding Basic English, whould probably find this statement quite outrageous.

That's your personal opinion! When I searched for "modern basic english", I didn't find a single page. I found that quite amusing. It's called "Ogden's Basic English". There is no classification, like "old" - "modern". Even in American dictionaries, it's perfectly normal to give U.K. variants. That's all I'm asking for. Maybe you don't like "color/colour"? Maybe "color/colour" or "color (colour)" is better? Well, fine. You might be wondering why I insist on alternative spellings? I think it is not acceptable that you take a British word list, published by a British linguist, Americanize it and proclaim: "This is the INTERNATIONAL standard." Because it simply isn't. 202.32.3.147 07:30, 26 Feb 2005 (UTC).

The list was not made by me, though I did format it. It is taken from http://ogden.basic-english.org/ which seems to be very authoritative. I don't care about American/ British spellings, only that the list reflect Basic English usage as documented by the most authoritative source. Your changes are not supported by documentation. Keep

in mind that even though en:wikipedia accepts both spellings does not mean that this Wikipedia does. That policy is for us to decide. These word lists are not to be changed lightly in order to placate your spelling sensibilities. Find a source which supports the assertion that Basic English usage allows both usages, then come back. — Netoholic @ 18:54, 26 Feb 2005 (UTC).

It's true, http://ogden.basic-english.org/ is the main site about Basic English on the net. However, if it was a British or Australian website, they would definitely use different spellings. On http://ogden.basic-english.org/intlworj.html, the following sentence makes it quite clear, that even this website (which you call authoritative), accepts spelling variants: "For ease of understanding in the digital age, I have allowed the spell checker to change spelling to "Microsoft American." There may be slight spelling and pronunciation differences around the world - the British may include some silent letters; the French may add accents, the Dutch will no doubt double some letters - but the words should be understandable." By the way, I doubt that Ogden would have liked his list to be changed to "Microsoft American". It don't care about Dutch/French variations, but since this is a Simple *English* wikipedia, and British English is a major international variety of English, BrE variants should be included. The "B" in BASIC stands for "British" by the way.

Besides, I noticed that "aluminum" is the only spelling in the "International Basic English Wordlist". However "aluminum" is only used in the U.S. and Canada. The official (IUPAC-favored) international spelling is "aluminium". How international is an "international wordlist" that only includes a regional spelling?

You asked for sources: Well, first of all Ogden himself. He's the inventor, the original source, actually, the only authority.

Here are some links with different spellings from various countries:

> Now, considering all these points, you should admit, that adding variants is fine. After all, it's only *additional* information for just a few words, less than 1%. The U.S. spellings are not changed. By the way, I'm a Germany university student. I learned British English at school and later American English. I like both. The reason why I'm arguing with you is that I'm a strong supporter of language neutrality. 202.32.3.147 07:39, 1 Mar 2005 (UTC).

One more thing I noticed while reading the International word list. It uses "meter" and "liter". Now, you may not be used to the spellings "metre" and "litre", but consider the following:

> The only English-speaking country not using the metric system in daily life and business is the U.S. And the U.S. is also the only country to spell "meter" and "liter". Now, do you really think it is justified to include only "meter" and "liter" in the list, when no English-speaking country using these units spells them this way? :-) 202.32.3.147 07:39, 1 Mar 2005 (UTC).

Nevertheless it appears that Ogden supported American spelling for BASIC English (and in fact any spelling reform in principle). The following interesting footnote appears in BASIC English: International Second Language (http://ogden.basic-english.org/isl111.html#ednote) as footnote 10...

> *Although Ogden refused to associate Basic with any movement for spelling reform, he was, of course, prepared to accept whatever could be accomplished, and he recommended that "wherever possible without arousing prejudice, the changes already achieved in America should be extended to the rest of the English-speaking world." Accordingly, in The Basic Words as here printed in Section Two, the American spellings, behavior, color, harbor, humor, and plow will be found.*

It was written by the editor for the 1968 edition and

seems to pretty conclusively prove that we should be using American spelling if we are to follow Ogden's own intentions.

It's a footnote to the following paragraphs...

> *A chief obstacle to the spread of English has hitherto been its phonetic irregularity, the frequency with which the same symbols are used to represent different sounds, and the uncertainties of stress. There is the fact that the word fish, as Sir Richard Paget has noted, might appear as ghoti (gh as in enough, etc.); and if dealt with in the same way foolish might be spelled in 613,975 different ways.*
>
> *To master such details in a vocabulary of 20,000 words, or even 2,000, necessitates an amount of drudgery which has given phoneticians and advocates of synthetic languages their opportunity. With the Basic vocabulary, however, such irregularities are reduced to a minimum in which, by treating each word as an individual, the learner can even profit by its peculiar appearance in written form as an aid to memory, and historical continuity can thus be preserved. The 850 sounds being fixed by the gramophone records, their written forms can be memorized as individual entities, with no special emphasis on any principle but that of stress.*
>
> *Phonetic (spelling) reform can thus be left to pursue its separate path. It may find Basic a useful ally, and Basic may later profit by its progress. Hence the importance of Basic for educational work which cannot allow itself to be involved in controversies such as any violent departure from the habits of centuries must always engender.*
>
> ...which again appear to support the case that Ogden liked the idea of spelling reform in principle, American or otherwise. — Derek Ross 07:27, 12 Mar 2005 (UTC).

Perhaps it would be better to move this to Wikipedia: Ogden's Basic Worldlist and keep it as the original list, and then have something editable at this page, where alternative spellings etc can be added? Angela 19:25, 18 Mar 2005 (UTC).

On another page, it says: "Foreigners found they could indeed learn it as quickly as advertised. They liked it

(except for the spelling, which Ogden refused to agree to reform.)"

Derek, it makes sense to include US spelling, if it's true that Ogden really said that (the quote you presented). But it's probably a quote from later in his life. In the original publication, he didn't use US spelling.

In the US constitution, British spelling is used, by the way. You could say as well: "Today the founding fathers would use US spellings", so let's change the Constitution. But it wasn't changed, because it's an historical document. Just as Ogden's word list. Including both US and British spellings should really be no problem. And as outlined with "metre": it simple doesn't make sense to say that Basic English should only use "meter", when in every single English-speaking country where the metric system is actually used, it's spelled "metre". In fact, the international standard is "metre", see [9] 202.32.53.38 05:13, 22 Mar 2005 (UTC)

Funnily enough, I don't have a strong axe to grind on this subject and don't really care which spelling is used. I just thought that it would be helpful to those who do care, if I had a look for some evidence on what Ogden really thought, since both sides seemed to be guessing about it. When we combine the note that I discovered (*"wherever possible without arousing prejudice, the changes already achieved in America should be extended to the rest of the English-speaking world."*) and the note that you discovered, (*"They liked it (except for the spelling, which Ogden refused to agree to reform.)"*), plus the fact that the original publication used unreformed spelling, it seems to reinforce the point that Ogden liked the idea of spelling reform in principle but was not prepared to use it in practice (over and above the limited reforms already accepted by the American public) for fear of jeopardising the progress of BASIC English. What a sensible fellow! Let us likewise not allow the issue of spelling to compromise the progress of this Wikipedia. — Derek Ross 20:56, 22 Mar 2005 (UTC)

Original Source

Apparently some users believe that Basic English is from the US and have thus created word lists using the American spellings. This is of course incorrect. A look at the original publications reveals of course, the British spelling is used. Why such a long discussion about this? It's simple: the original source is British and Wikipedia should provide information based on original sources and not on secondary sources. DenisL 18:35, 2 September 2006 (UTC).

The source is http://ogden.basic-english.org/basiceng.html. — Netoholic @ 23:16, 2 September 2006 (UTC).

Bot Request

I'm on Wikipedia as SBHarris, and just discovered Simple English Wikipedia. Kick me if this has been suggested someplace else, but it occurs to me that what simple English Wikipedia needs, is a lot of robotic flagging of articles to see which of their component words are part of the Basic English 850, or 1500, or derivatives thereof(a much longer list). The output might give words in three different colors, for example.

It would be most useful if a user had some way of running the 'bot repetitively on an article, while editing it. The best place for the bot to run in the background, would obviously be to have it run every time the user did a "show preview." Results would come up very much like the "linked" or "unlinked" colors now used for THOSE purposes.

Without a lot of experience, it's quite difficult for the average native English speaker to tell if words beyond a certain complexity are part of the BE 850 or 1500. However, with these things automatically flagged by bot, it IS easy even for inexperienced people to spot target words outside basic English, and then to make a decision if there is some shorter and more basic replacement that works as well, or if the word needs to stand "as is."

Won't one of your considerate 'bot makers consider working on this? It really would change *everything* here.

Sharris 21:24, 2 October 2006 (UTC) (SBHarris on Wikipedia).

Link to Wiktionary, Not to Wikipedia

Many of these words have definitions in Simple English Wiktionary. The links need to be like this: decision or [[wikt:decision|decision]] not like this: decision or [[decision]]. See wikt:Basic English alphabetical wordlist. It links to Wiktionary definitions, not to Wikipedia definitions. Wikipedia is not a dictionary. —Coppertwig 19:39, 25 November 2006 (UTC).

Question

My I ask a question? Is it completely necessary to follow these words only? What if other words need to be used? For example, if I need to introduce new words, can I?

Prime Contributer

Don´t speak English? Don´t understand this? Use the Spanish translation of this message:

¿Puedo hacer una pregunta? ¿Realmente es necesario seguir al pie de la letra las palabras de esta lista? ¿Y que pasa si necesito otras palabras? Por ejemplo, si quiero introducir nuevas palabras ¿puedo?

Prime Contributer

This message was translated automatically from English to Spanish, don't answer it.

Enormous Fail

There´s one thing I don´t understand. In the list of words by the N, the word "none" in not listed! If that word is not listed is because it level is higher not? But in te X and in the Z appears "none" so if my level of english is basic I wont know what means none, so I´ll be confused. Imagine I see none in the X, but what is none? I don´t now

because is not listed in the N. I´ll get crazy trying to guest it mean.

Conclusión, I think "none" shold be included in the N, this will solve the problem. —88.16.202.63 (talk) 14:21, 19 August 2008 (UTC)

Maybe it's the problem with the concept of nothing. And the cypher zero (0) was not accepted in math until the iterative process of addition and multiplication were need to be express in writen terms. WFPMWFPM (talk) 18:38, 25 October 2008 (UTC)

Agree. I think (none) should be replaced by (no Basic English word start with the letter x). While this is more verbose, all the words are in the list. —74.15.138.197 (talk) 10:07, 23 February 2009 (UTC)

What Does the Red Mean?

Would someone who knows please add a note to the top of the page explaining why some words are in red. It's very annoying to see some words intentionally highlighted, with no explanation as to why. Thank you.

The red words mean that the word has been linked. There is not article created yet for that word. You can start one there! Very best! NonvocalScream (talk) 16:48, 18 January 2009 (UTC)

Or that the non-noun redlinks haven't been linked to their wiktionary definitions. I'm fixing that. If this is incorrect, please revert. BusterD (talk) 03:53, 26 February 2009 (UTC)

GENERAL SERVICE LIST

The General Service List (GSL) is a list of roughly 2000 words published by Michael West in 1953. The words were selected to represent the most frequent words of English and were taken from a corpus of written English. The target audience was English language learners and ESL teachers. To maximize the utility of the list, some

frequent words that overlapped broadly in meaning with words already on the list were omitted. In the original publication the relative frequencies of various senses of the words were also included.

Details

The list is important because a person who knows all the words on the list and their related families would understand approximately 90-95 percent of colloquial speech and 80-85 percent of common written texts.

The list consists only of headwords, which means that the word "be" is high on the list, but assumes that the person is fluent in all forms of the word, e.g. am, is, are, was, were, being, and been.

Researchers have expressed doubts about the adequacy of the GSL because of its age and the relatively low coverage provided by the words not in the first 1000 words of the list. Engels was, in particular, critical of the limited vocabulary chosen by West 1953, and while he concurred that the first 1000 words of the GSL were good selections based on their high frequency and wide range, he was of the opinion that that the words beyond the first 1000 of the GSL could not be considered *general service words* because the range and frequency of these words were too low to be included in the list.

Recent research by Billuroðlu and Neufeld (2005) confirmed that the General Service List was in need of minor revision, but the headwords in the list still provide approximately 80% text coverage in written English. The research showed that the GSL contains a small number of archaic terms, such as *shilling*, while excluding words that have gained currency since the first half of the twentieth century, such as *plastic*, *television*, *battery*, *okay*, *victim*, and *drug*.

The GSL evolved over several decades before West's publication in 1953. The GSL is not a list based solely on

frequency, but includes groups of words on a semantic basis. Today there is no version of the GSL in print; it only exists in virtual form via the Internet. Various versions float around the Internet, and attempts have been made to improve it.

LIST OF ENGLISH WORDS WITH DISPUTED USAGE

Some English words are often used in ways that are contentious between writers on usage and prescriptive commentators. The contentious usages are especially common in spoken English. While in some circles the usages below may make the speaker sound uneducated or illiterate, in other circles the more standard or more traditional usage may make the speaker sound stilted or pretentious.

Abbreviations of Dictionaries Cited

Abbrev.	*Dictionary*	*Further details*
AHD4	American Heritage Dictionary	fourth edition
CHAMBERS	Chambers 21st Century Dictionary	2006
COD11	Concise Oxford English Dictionary	11th edition
COED	Compact Oxford English Dictionary	AskOxford.com
ENCARTA	Encarta World English Dictionary	online
FOWLER	The New Fowler's Modern English Usage	Revised Third Edition (1998)
M-W	Merriam-Webster	online
OED	Oxford English Dictionary	online
RH	Random House Unabridged Dictionary	2006; at Dictionary.com

A

- **aggravate–** Some prescriptivists have argued that this word should not be used in the sense of "to annoy" or "to oppress", but only to mean "to make worse". However, this proscription against "to annoy" is not rooted in history. According to AHDI, the "annoy" usage occurs in English as far back as the 17th century; furthermore, in Latin, from which

the word was borrowed, both meanings were used. Sixty-eight percent of AHD4's Usage Panel approves of its use in "It's the endless wait for luggage that aggravates me the most about air travel." M-W mentions that while *aggravate* in the sense of "to rouse to displeasure or anger by usually persistent and often petty goading" has been around since the 17th century, disapproval of that usage only appeared around 1870. RH states in its usage note under *aggravate* that "The two most common senses of *aggravate* are 'to make worse' and 'to annoy or exasperate.' Both senses first appeared in the early 17th century at almost the same time; the corresponding two senses of the noun *aggravation* also appeared then. Both senses of *aggravate* and *aggravation* have been standard since then." Chambers cites this usage as "colloquial" and that it "is well established, especially in spoken English, although it is sometimes regarded as incorrect."

- *Disputed usage*: It's the endless wait for luggage that aggravates me the most about air travel.
- *Undisputed usage*: Being hit on the head by a falling brick aggravated my already painful headache.

- **ain't–** originally a contraction of "am not", this word is widely used as a replacement for "aren't", "isn't", "haven't" and "hasn't" as well. While *ain't* has existed in the English language for a very long time, and it is a common, normal word in many dialects in both North America and the British Isles, it is not a part of standard English, and its use in formal writing is not recommended by most usage commentators. Its unselfconscious use in speech may tend to mark the speaker as uneducated. Nevertheless, *ain't* is used by educated speakers and writers for deliberate effect, what *Oxford American Dictionary* describes as "tongue-in-cheek"

or "reverse snobbery", and what *Merriam-Webster Collegiate* calls "emphatic effect" or "a consistently informal style".

- **alibi–** Some prescriptivists argue this cannot be used in the non-legal sense of "an explanation or excuse to avoid blame or justify action." AHD4 notes that this usage was acceptable to "almost half" of the Usage Panel, while most opposed the word's use as a verb. M-W mentions no usage problems, listing the disputed meaning second to its legal sense without comment. OED cites the non-legal noun and verb usages as colloquial and "orig[inally] U.S.". Chambers deems this use "colloquial".
- **alright–** An alternative to "all right" that some consider illiterate but others allow. RH says that it probably arose in analogy with other similar words, such as *altogether* and *already*; it does concede the use in writing as "informal", and that *all right* "is used in more formal, edited writing." AHD4 flags *alright* as "nonstandard", and comments that this unacceptance (compared to *altogether* etc.) is "peculiar", and may be due to its relative recentness (*altogether* and *already* date back to the Middle Ages, *alright* only a little over a century). Chambers refers to varying levels of formality of *all right*, deeming *alright* to be more casual; it recommends the use of *all right* "in writing for readers who are precise about the use of language."
- **also–** Some prescriptivists contend this word should not be used to begin a sentence. AHD4 says "63 percent of the Usage Panel found acceptable the example *The warranty covers all power-train components. Also, participating dealers back their work with a free lifetime service guarantee.*" See also and & but, below.
- **alternate–** In British English this adjective means,

according to OED and other sources, *switching between two options* or similar. It does not mean the same as *alternative*, which OED specifically marks as an American meaning of *alternate*. In international English it is thus thought better to observe the British distinction: then the meanings of *alternative* and *alternate* will be clear to everyone.

- **alternative–** Some prescriptivists argue that *alternative* should be used only when the number of choices involved is exactly two. While AHD4 allows "the word's longstanding use to mean 'one of a number of things from which only one can be chosen' and the acceptance of this usage by many language critics", it goes on to state that only 49% of its Usage panel approves of its use as in "Of the three alternatives, the first is the least distasteful." Neither M-W nor RH mentions any such restriction to a choice of two. Chambers qualifies its definition as referring to "strictly speaking, two, but often used of more than two, possibilities".
- **a.m./p.m.–** These are Latin abbreviations for the adverbial phrases *ante meridiem* ("before noon") and *post meridiem* ("after noon"). Some prescriptivists argue that they thus should not be used in English as nouns meaning "morning" and "afternoon"; however, such use is consistent with ordinary nominalization features of English. AHD4 lists adjectival usage with "an A.M. appointment" and "a P.M. appointment". RH gives "Shall we meet Saturday a.m.?" without comment; it gives no corresponding example at *p.m.*, so that usage can only be extrapolated. Also, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (n.d.) contends it is incorrect to use 12 a.m. or 12 p.m. to mean either noon or midnight.
- **among/amongst and between–** The traditionalist view is that *between* should only be used when there are only two objects for comparison; and *among*

or *amongst* should be used for more than two objects. Most style guides and dictionaries do not support this advice, saying that *between* can be used to refer to something that is in the time, space or interval that separates more than two items. M-W says that the idea that *between* can be used only of two items is "persistent but unfounded" and AHD4 calls it a "widely repeated but unjustified tradition". The OED says "In all senses, *between* has been, from its earliest appearance, extended to more than two". Chambers says "It is acceptable to use *between* with reference to more than two people or things", although does state that *among* may be more appropriate in some circumstances.

- *Undisputed usage*: I parked my car between the two telegraph poles.
- *Undisputed usage*: You'll find my brain between my ears.
- *Disputed usage*: The duck swam between the reeds.
- *Disputed usage*: They searched the area between the river, the farmhouse, and the woods.
- *Undisputed usage*: We shared the money evenly amongst the three of us.
- *Disputed usage*: We shared the money between Tom, Dick, and me.
- *Undisputed usage*: My house was built among the gum trees.

- **amount–** Some prescriptivists argue *amount* should not be substituted for *number*. They recommend the use of *number* if the thing referred to is countable and *amount* only if it is uncountable. While RH acknowledges the "traditional distinction between *amount* and *number*, it mentions that "[a]lthough objected to, the use of *amount* instead of *number* with countable nouns occurs in both speech and

writing, especially when the noun can be considered as a unit or group *(the amount of people present; the amount of weapons)* or when it refers to money *(the amount of dollars paid; the amount of pennies in the till)*.

- *Disputed usage*: I was amazed by the amount of people who visited my website. (With knowledge of the exact number)
- *Undisputed usage*: The number of people in the lift must not exceed 10.
- *Undisputed usage*: I was unimpressed by the amount of water consumed by the elephant.

- **and–** Some prescriptivists argue that sentences should not begin with the word *and* on the argument that as a conjunction it should only join clauses within a sentence. AHD4 states that this stricture "has been ridiculed by grammarians for decades, and ... ignored by writers from Shakespeare to Joyce Carol Oates." RH states "Both *and* and *but*, and to a lesser extent *or* and *so*, are common as transitional words at the beginnings of sentences in all types of speech and writing'; it goes on to suggest that opposition to this usage "...probably stems from the overuse of such sentences by inexperienced writers." ENCARTA opines that said opposition comes from "too literal an understanding of the 'joining' function of conjunctions", and states that any overuse is a matter of poor style, not grammatical correctness. COED calls the usage "quite acceptable". Many verses of the King James Bible begin with *and*, as does William Blake's poem *And did those feet in ancient time* (a.k.a. *Jerusalem*). Fowler's Modern English Usage defends this use of "and". Chambers states that "Although it is sometimes regarded as poor style, it is not ungrammatical to begin a sentence with *and*." See also also, above, and but, below.

- **anxious–** Some prescriptivists argue that this word should only be used in the sense of "worried" or "worrisome" (compare "anxiety"), but it has been used in the sense of *eager* for "over 250 years"; 52% of AHD4's Usage Panel accepts its use in the sentence "We are anxious to see the new show of contemporary sculpture at the museum." Also, it suggests that the use of *anxious* to mean *eager* may be mild hyperbole, as the use of *dying* in the sentence "I'm dying to see your new baby." RH states bluntly that "its use in the sense of 'eager'...is fully standard." M-W defines *anxious* as "3 : ardently or earnestly wishing <anxious to learn more> / synonym see EAGER" Chambers gives "3 very eager • *anxious to do well.*"

B

- **barbaric and barbarous—** *Barbaric* applies to the culture of barbarians and may be positive ("barbaric splendor"); *barbarous* applies to the behavior of barbarians and is negative ("barbarous cruelty"). This is standard English usage. However, M-W equates the third meaning of "barbaric" with the third of "barbarous", that is, "mercilessly harsh or cruel"; COD11 and Chambers list "savagely cruel" and "cruel and brutal; excessively harsh or vicious", respectively, as the *first* meanings for "barbaric". Only AHD4 disallows this usage, and without comment.
  - *Undisputed*. The environment of the venue was barbaric.
  - *Undisputed*. Terrorism is barbarous.
  - *Disputed*. Capital punishment is a disgusting, barbaric measure.
- **begging the question–** In logic, *begging the question* is another term for *petitio principii* or arguing in a circle, in other words making

assumptions in advance about the very issue in dispute. Now often used to mean simply *leading to the question*.

- *Undisputed*. You argue that Christianity must be true because the Bible says so. Isn't that begging the question?
- *Disputed*. You want to go to the theatre. That begs the question which day we should go.

- **but–** Some prescriptivists argue that if *and* should not be used to begin sentences, then neither should *but*. These words are both conjunctions; thus, they believe that they should be used only to link clauses within a sentence. AHD4 states that "it may be used to begin a sentence at all levels of style."

C

- **can and may–** Some prescriptivists argue that *can* refers to possibility and *may* refers to permission, and insist on maintaining this distinction, although usage of *can* to refer to permission is pervasive in spoken and very frequent in written English. M-W notes: "*Can* and *may* are most frequently interchangeable in senses denoting possibility; because the possibility of one's doing something may (or can) depend on another's acquiescence, they have also become interchangeable in the sense denoting permission. The use of *can* to ask or grant permission has been common since the 19th century and is well established, although some commentators feel *may* is more appropriate in formal contexts. *May* is relatively rare in negative constructions (*mayn't* is not common); *cannot* and *can't* are usual in such contexts." AHD4 echoes this sentiment of formality, noting that only 21% of the Usage Panel accepted *can* in the example "Can I take another week to submit the application?". For its part, OED labels the use of *can* for *may* as "colloquial".

- **comprise–** *Comprise* means "to consist of". A second meaning, "to compose or constitute" is sometimes attacked by usage writers. However, it is supported as sense 3 along with a usage note in M-W, and although AHD4 notes the usage as a "usage problem", its usage note says, "Our surveys show that opposition to this usage is abating. In the 1960s, 53 percent of the Usage Panel found this usage unacceptable; in 1996, only 35 percent objected."
  - o *Undisputed usage*: The English Wikipedia comprises more than two million articles.
  - o *Disputed usage*: The English Wikipedia comprises of more than two million articles.
  - o *Disputed usage*: The English Wikipedia is comprised of more than two million articles.
  - o *Disputed usage*: More than two million articles comprise the English Wikipedia.
  - o *Disputed usage*: Diatoms comprise more than 70% of all phytoplankton.
  - o *Disputed usage*: "Those in the industry have mostly scoffed at the young, inexperienced Carter and the rest of the high school pals that comprise the company."

D

- **deprecate–** The original meaning in English is "deplore" or "express disapproval of" (the Latin from which the word derives means "pray to avert evil", suggesting that some event would be a calamity). The word is now also used to mean "play down", "belittle" or "devalue", a shift that some prescriptivists disapprove of, as it suggests the word is being confused with the similar word *depreciate;* in fact, AHD4 states that in this sense *deprecate* has almost completely supplanted

depreciate, however a majority of the dictionary's Usage Panel approved this sense. Its use with the approximate meaning *to declare obsolete* in computer jargon is also sometimes condemned.

- **diagnose–** Cochrane (2004) states that to "diagnose [someone] with a disease" is an incorrect usage of the verb *diagnose*, which takes the physician as subject and a disease as object (e.g. "to diagnose cancer"). In American English, according to AHD4 and M-W, the sense of "diagnose [someone] with a disease" is listed without comment or tag; however, for its part, RH does not list such a usage, with or without comment. For British English, COD11 offers "identify the medical condition of (someone): *she was diagnosed as having epilepsy* (2004); this usage, however, did not appear in editions as recently as the 1990s. Chambers does not offer this sense at all.
  - o *Disputed usage*: Mr. Smith was diagnosed with diabetes.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: The doctor diagnosed diabetes.
- **different–** Standard usage in both Britain and America is "different from" (on the analogy of "to differ from"). In Britain this competes with "different to" (coined on the analogy of "similar to"). In America it competes with "different than" (coined on the analogy of "other than"). "Different to" is also found in Irish, Australian, and New Zealand English.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: The American pronunciation of English is different from the British.
  - o *Disputed usage*: The American pronunciation of English is different to the British.
  - o *Disputed usage*: The American pronunciation of English is different than the British.
- **disinterested–** Standard usage is as a word for

"unbiased," but some have also rendered it synonymous with "uninterested" or "apathetic".

- o *Undisputed usage*: As their mutual best friend, I tried to remain disinterested in their argument so as not to anger either.
- o *Disputed usage*: The key to attracting a member of the opposite sex is to balance between giving attention to him or her and appearing disinterested.

- **due to–** The adjectival use of *due to* is undisputed. Its adverbial use, however, has been a subject of dispute for many years, as witnessed by several (especially U.S.) dictionary usage notes that in the end designate it as "standard." William Strunk in his *Elements of style* labelled the disputed adverbial use of *due to* as "incorrect." Although the first (1926) edition of FOWLER condemned the adverbial use as "common ... only ... among the illiterate", the third (1996) edition said, "Opinion remains sharply divided, but it begins to look as if this use of *due to* will form part of the natural language of the 21C., as one more example of a forgotten battle." *Due to* is frequently used in place of *from*, *for*, *with*, *of*, *because of*, and other prepositions. Undisputed synonyms for *due to* are *caused by* and *attributable to*.
  - o *Disputed usage*: He died due to cancer. *(He died of cancer.)*
  - o *Disputed usage*: Due to the end of the Second War, circumstances altered profoundly. *(With the end of the Second War, circumstances altered profoundly.)*
  - o *Disputed usage*: The project failed due to lack of funds. *(The project failed for lack of funds.)*
  - o *Undisputed usage*: His death was due to cancer.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: Many thought the problem was due to mismanagement.

E

- **enormity–** Frequently used as a synonym for "enormousness" or "immensity", but traditionally means "extreme wickedness". According to AHD4, this distinction has not always occurred historically, but is now supported by 59% of the dictionary's Usage Panel. COD11 states that *enormity* as a synonym for *hugeness* "is now broadly accepted as standard English." Although Chambers lists "immenseness or vastness" as a meaning, it says it "should not be used" in that sense, commenting that it is encountered often because the word *enormousness* is "awkward"; it recommends using instead another word, such as *hugeness, greatness,* etc.
  - o *Disputed usage*: The enormity of the elephant astounded me.
  - o *Traditional usage*: The enormity of Stalin's purges astounds me.

F

- **farther and further–** Many prescriptivists adhere to the rule that *farther* only should refer to matters of physical distance or position, while *further* should be reserved for usages involving time or degree (as well as undisputed descriptions of *moreover* and *in addition*).
  - o *Disputed usage*: San Jose is further from L.A. than Santa Barbara.
  - o *Disputed usage*: L.A. was a couple hours farther from home than I expected.
  - o *Disputed usage*: If her fever increases any farther, I will call the doctor.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: I would like to discuss the issue further at a later time.
- **fortuitously–** Used by some interchangeably with

fortunately, strictly speaking *fortuitousness* is a reference to an occurrence depending on chance. M-W notes that use of the word in sense of "fortunate" has been in standard use for at least 70 years and notes that the sense of "coming or happening by a lucky chance" is virtually unnoticed by usage critics.

G

- **gender –** *Gender* is often used interchangeably with *sex* in the sense of the biological or social quality, *male* and *female*. It is never used to refer to sexual intercourse.
  - o *Gender* traditionally refers to grammatical gender, a feature in the grammar of a number of different languages. Some prescriptivists argue that its use as a euphemism for *sex* is to be avoided as a genteelism; Fowler (p. 211) says it is used "either as a jocularity...or a blunder."
  - o *Sex* and *gender* can be used in different but related senses, with *sex* referring to biological characteristics and *gender* to social roles and expectations based on sex. Use of *gender* as interchangeable with or as a replacement for *sex* may confuse readers who draw this distinction. *See gender identity, gender role.*

H

- **hoi polloi–** The question surrounding *hoi polloi* is whether it is appropriate to use the article *the* preceding the phrase; it arises because *hoi* is the Greek word for "the" in the phrase and classical purists complain that adding *the* makes the phrase redundant: "the the common people". Foreign phrases borrowed into English are often reanalyzed as single grammatical units, requiring an English article in appropriate contexts. AHD4 says "The Arabic element *al-* means 'the', and appears in

English nouns such as *alcohol* and *alchemy*. Thus, since no one would consider a phrase such as *the alcohol* to be redundant, criticizing *the hoi polloi* on similar grounds seems pedantic."

- **hopefully–** Some prescriptivists argue this word should not be used as an expression of confidence in an outcome; however, M-W classes *hopefully* with other words such as *interestingly*, *frankly*, and *unfortunately* (which are unremarkably used in a similar way) as disjuncts, and describes this usage as "entirely standard". AHD4, however, notes that opposition to this usage by their usage panels has grown from 56% to 73%, despite support for similar disjuncts (such as 60% support for the use of *mercifully* in "Mercifully, the game ended before the opponents could add another touchdown to the lopsided score"). AHD4 opines that this opposition is not to the use of these adverbs in general, but that this use of *hopefully* has become a "shibboleth". OED lists this usage without any "colloquial" or other label, other than to say "Avoided by many writers". See also the discussion of *hopefully* as a dangling modifier. One investigation in modern corpora on Language Log revealed that outside fiction, where it still represents 40% of all uses (the other qualifying primarily speech and gazes), disjunct uses account for the vast majority (over 90%) of all uses of the word.
  - o *Disputed usage*: Hopefully I'll get that scholarship!
  - o *Undisputed usage*: The prisoner thought hopefully about the prospect for escape when he realized the guards accidentally left his cell unlocked.

L

- **less–** Some prescriptivists argue that *less* should

not be substituted for *fewer*. Merriam-Webster notes "The traditional view is that *less* applies to matters of degree, value, or amount and modifies collective nouns, mass nouns, or nouns denoting an abstract whole while *fewer* applies to matters of number and modifies plural nouns. *Less* has been used to modify plural nouns since the days of King Alfred and the usage, though roundly decried, appears to be increasing. *Less* is more likely than *fewer* to modify plural nouns when distances, sums of money, and a few fixed phrases are involved <*less* than 100 miles> <an investment of *less* than $2000> <in 25 words or *less*> and as likely as *fewer* to modify periods of time <in *less* (or *fewer*) than four hours>"

- *Disputed usage*: This lane 12 items or less.
- *Undisputed usage*: We had fewer players on the team this season.
- *Undisputed usage*: There is less water in the tank now.

- **like and as–** Some prescriptivists object to the use of *like* as a conjunction, stating it is rather a preposition and that only *as* would be appropriate in this circumstance. M-W, however, cites *like*'s use as a conjunction as standard since the 14th century, and opines that opposition to it is "perhaps more heated than rational". AHD4 says "Writers since Chaucer's time have used like as a conjunction, but 19th-century and 20th-century critics have been so vehement in their condemnations of this usage that a writer who uses the construction in formal style risks being accused of illiteracy or worse", and recommends using *as* in formal speech and writing. OED does not tag it as colloquial or nonstandard, but notes, "Used as conj[unction]: = 'like as', as. Now generally condemned as vulgar or slovenly, though examples may be found in many recent writers of standing." Chambers lists the conjunctive use as "colloquial".

- *Undisputed usage*. He is an American as am I.
- *Undisputed usage*. He is an American like me.
- *Undisputed usage*. It looks as if this play will be a flop.
- *Undisputed usage*. This play looks like a flop.
- *Disputed usage*. He is an American like I am.
- *Disputed usage*. It looks like this play will be a flop.

- **literally–** Some prescriptivists argue *literally* should not be used as a mere emphatic, unless the thing to which it refers is actually true. It is used to disambiguate a possible metaphorical interpretation of a phrase. M-W does not condemn the second use, which means "in effect" or "virtually", but says "the use is pure hyperbole intended to gain emphasis, but it often appears in contexts where no additional emphasis is necessary".
  - *Disputed usage*: The party literally went with a bang. (No, it did not, unless there was an actual loud noise.)
  - *Undisputed usage*: I literally ran more than 25 miles today. I ran a marathon.
- **loan–** The use of *loan* as a verb meaning "to give out a loan" is disputed, with *lend* being preferred for the verb form. AHD4 flatly states "[t]he verb loan is well established in American usage and cannot be considered incorrect"; M-W states "...loan is entirely standard as a verb". RH says "Sometimes mistakenly identified as an Americanism, *loan* as a verb meaning "to lend" has been used in English for nearly 800 years"; it further states that objections to this use "are comparatively recent". Chambers defines the verb *loan* as "to lend (especially money)". OED merely states "Now chiefly U.S.", and COD11 includes the meaning without tag or comment.

- o *Undisputed usage*. I lent him some money.
- o *Undisputed usage*. Fill out the paperwork for a loan.

o *Disputed usage*. I loaned him some money.

M

- **may and might–** "May" should only be used where the event in question is still possible, not for something that was possible in the past, or for a hypothetical present possibility. "Might" is properly the past tense form of "may". (In similar fashion, "could", "should", and "would" are all past tense forms for "can", "shall", and "will", respectively.)
  - o *Undisputed usage*: My brother may have gone to China last week (*perhaps he did*)
  - o *Disputed usage*: If he had not been prevented, my brother may have gone to China last week (*but he didn't*)
  - o *Undisputed usage*: If he had not been prevented, my brother might have gone to China last week.
  - o *Disputed usage*: He thought it may be true (*but it wasn't*)
  - o *Undisputed usage*: He thought it might be true.
- **meet–** Some prescriptivists state that as a transitive verb in the context "to come together by chance or arrangement", *meet* (as in *meet (someone)*) does not require a preposition between verb and object; the phrase *meet with (someone)* is deemed incorrect. Chambers flags this usage "US"; RH allows it in the sense of "to join, as for conference or instruction: *I met with her an hour a day until we solved the problem.*" On the other hand, none of M-W, AHD4, or COD11 entertains this usage. NOTE: In the sense of fulfilling prerequisites or criteria (*We met with the entry requirements*), or that of encountering

(*Our suggestions may meet with opposition; the soldiers met with machine-gun fire*), the verb phrase *meet with* is not in dispute.

- o *Disputed usage*: I will meet with you tonight.
- o *Undisputed usage*: I will meet you tonight.

- **momentarily–** Traditionally, *momentarily* means "for a moment", but its use to mean "in a moment" is sometimes disputed. M-W and RH give this latter usage a standard entry without comment, while OED and Chambers tag it "N.Amer." AHD4 has a usage note indicating that 59% of their Usage Panel deems this usage "unacceptable".
  - o *Disputed usage*: Ladies and gentlemen, the captain wishes to inform you the plane will be in the air momentarily.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: The flash from the atom bomb momentarily lit up the night sky.

N

- **nauseous–** Traditionally *nauseous* means "causing nausea" (synonymous with "nauseating"); it is commonly used now as a synonym for "queasy," that is, having the feeling of nausea. AHD4 notes the traditional view, stating that 72% of the Usage Panel preferred *nauseated* over *nauseous* to mean "affected with nausea"; however, 88% of that same panel preferred *nauseating* to *nauseous* to mean "causing nausea"; in other words, a maximum of only 28% prefers *nauseous* in either case. It also states that in common usage, *nauseous* is synonymous with *nauseated*, but deems this usage "incorrect". M-W, however, asserts that "[t]hose who insist that nauseous ... is an error for nauseated are mistaken". Both M-W and AHD4 accept that *nauseous* is supplanting *nauseated* for "feeling nausea", and in turn being replaced by *nauseating*

for "causing nausea" in general usage; they only differ on the correctness of the change. RH states "The two literal senses of nauseous [...] appear in English at almost the same time in the early 17th century, and both senses are in standard use at the present time. *Nauseous* is more common than *nauseated* in the sense 'affected with nausea', despite recent objections by those who imagine the sense to be new." CHAMBERS lists the sense of causing nausea first and affected with nausea second, while COD11 gives the affliction first and causation second; both dictionaries list the entries without comment. OED goes further, tagging its "nauseated" usage as "Orig[inally] U.S.", but demoted its "nauseating" usage to "literary". OED also notes that the original (now obsolete) sense of the word in English was "inclined to sickness or nausea; squeamish". Curiously, this oldest seventeenth-century meaning (inclined to nausea), while distinct from the disputed twentieth-century usage (afflicted by nausea), more closely resembles the latter than it does the prescribed meaning (causing nausea).

- *Undisputed usage*: That smell is nauseous.
- *Disputed usage*: That smell is making me nauseous.
- *Undisputed usage*: That smell is nauseating.
- *Undisputed usage*: That smell is making me nauseated.

O

- **overly–** FOWLER notes that some editors regard this as an Americanism. The American source M-W's *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, 1989, eventually settles on accepting it, but has this to say: "Bache 1869 and Ayres 1881 succinctly insulted contemporaries who used this word, calling them vulgar and unschooled. Times have changed: modern

critics merely insult the word itself. Follett 1966, for example, claims that overly is useless, superfluous, and unharmonious, and should be replaced by the prefix over-. Bryson 1984 adds that 'when this becomes overinelegant ... the alternative is to find another adverb [...]'." The prefix *over-* is safer, and accepted by all: "He seemed over-anxious." M-W, AHD4, and RH include the word without comment, and OED notes only "After the Old English period, *rare* (outside Scotland and North America) until the 20th cent." In most cases "too" or "excessively" would be better choices than "over-".

Note, however that this word is rather frequent in the American media.

P

- pleasantry originally meant a joke or witticism (like in French *plaisanterie*). It is now generally only used to mean polite conversation in general (as in the phrase "exchange of pleasantries").
- **people and persons–** By some linguistic prescriptions, *persons* should be used to describe a finite, known number of individuals, rather than the collective term *people*.
  - o *Disputed usage*: There are 15 people registered to attend. (Compare to: There are 15 persons registered to attend.)
  - o *Undisputed usage*: There are countless people online at this moment.
- **presently–** Traditionally, *presently* is held to mean "after a short period of time" or "soon". Also, it is used in the sense "at the present time" or "now", a usage which is disapproved of by many prescriptivists, though in medieval and Elizabethan times "presently" meant "now" (but in the sense of "immediately" rather than "currently"). RH dates

the sense of "now" back to the 15th century—noting it is "in standard use in all varieties of speech and writing in both Great Britain and the United States"—and dates the appearance of the sense of "soon" to the 16th century. It considers the modern objection to the older sense "strange", and comments that the two senses are "rarely if ever confused in actual practice. *Presently* meaning 'now' is most often used with the present tense *(The professor is presently on sabbatical leave)* and *presently* meaning 'soon' often with the future tense *(The supervisor will be back presently)*." M-W mentions the same vintage for the sense of "now", and that "it is not clear why it is objectionable." AHD4 states that despite its use "nowadays in literate speech and writing" that there is still " lingering prejudice against this use". In the late 1980s, only 50% of the dictionary's Usage Panel approved of the sentence *General Walters is … presently the United States Ambassador to the United Nations*. COD11 lists both usages without comment; CHAMBERS merely flags the sense of "now" as "N Amer, especially US".

- *Disputed usage*: I am presently reading Wikipedia.
- *Undisputed usage*: I will be finished with that activity presently.

R

- **refute–** The traditional meaning of *refute* is "disprove" or "dispel with reasoned arguments". It is now often used as a synonym for "deny". The latter sense is listed without comment by M-W and AHD4, while CHAMBERS tags it as colloquial. COD11 states that "Traditionalists object to [the use of *refute* as *deny*], but it is now widely accepted in standard English." However, RH does not mention this use at all.

- **relatively–** Literally meaning "compared to", some now use *relatively* to mean "moderately" or "somewhat." AHD4 does not list this usage at all; M-W has apparently blended the two usages in one.
  - o *Disputed usage*: That man was relatively annoying.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: Though relatively harmless when compared to dimethylmercury, mercury (II) oxide is still quite toxic.

S

- **Scotch, Scots, and Scottish–** Formerly, English people used "Scotch" where Scottish people used "Scottish". The current convention is as follows:
  - o "Scottish" for people
  - o "Scotch" for things (especially whisky)
  - o "Scots" for institutions (Scots law, Scots language)
- **seek–** This means 'look for', but is used to mean 'try' or 'want'. This usage is criticised by Fowler in the entry "Formal Words".
  - o *Disputed usage*: '...we did seek to resolve the Iraq crisis by peaceful means.... those who seek to emulate his legacy of murder.... the Liberals seek to undermine that future...'.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: 'Seek and ye shall find.'

T

- **than—** *Than* is the subject of a longstanding dispute as to its status as a preposition or conjunction; see *than*. For the disputed construction *different than*, see Different.
- **they—** Prescriptivists regard this as a plural pronoun that uses a third person plural verb

conjugation, but the word is now commonly used, especially in speech and informal writing, as a non-gender-specific third-person singular pronoun (which modern English otherwise lacks). Alternatives include "he or she" and generic "he". Some writers argue that generic "he" is generic (as the name implies) and thus includes both sexes. Others find it sexist or too old-fashioned. The pronouns "you" or "one" can be used in some sentences.

- o *Disputed usage*: A person is rude if they show no respect for their hosts.
- o *Undisputed usage*: One is rude if one shows no respect for one's hosts.
- o *Undisputed usage*: It is rude not to show respect for hosts.

- **thusly—** *Thusly* (AHD4 suggests) was originally coined by educated writers to make fun of uneducated persons trying to sound genteel. *Thusly,* however, diffused into popular usage. Some people accept it as an adverb in its own right, while others believe thus should be used in all cases. The word "thusly" appears with no associated usage notes in M-W; COD11 tags it as "informal", with the entry *thus* tagged as "literary or formal". CHAMBERS does not list the word at all, and it is unknown in British usage.

U

- **unique–** Some prescriptivists argue that *unique* only means "sole" or "unequaled" (British spelling: "unequalled"), but most dictionaries give a third meaning: "unusual", which can be qualified by *very* or *somewhat*, as in "The theme of the party was somewhat unique"; see *comparison*. "Almost unique" or "nearly unique" is universally acceptable; it means there are few other things of its kind.

W

- **whilst and while—** *Penguin Working Words* recommends *while* only, and notes that *whilst* is old-fashioned. *Cambridge Guide to English Usage* and M-W's *Webster's Guide to English Usage* comment on its regional character, and note that it is rare in American usage. It is thus safer to use only *while*, in international English.
- **who—** Some prescriptivists argue that "who" should be used only as a subject pronoun, the corresponding object pronoun being "whom". Strictly speaking, using *who* instead of *whom* is substituting a subjective pronoun for an objective pronoun and hence is the same as using *she* instead of *her* (e.g., *I talked to she today.*). Most people never use *whom* in spoken English and instead use *who* for all cases. Those who use *whom* in everyday speech may recognize substitution of *who* as substandard. FOWLER has an extensive entry on *who and whom* including several quotes from major publications where *whom* is used incorrectly.
  - o *Undisputed usage*: You are talking to whom?
  - o *Disputed usage*: You are talking to who?
  - o *Undisputed usage*: To whom are you talking?
  - o *Disputed usage*: To who are you talking?
  - o *Disputed usage*: ... far more hostile to Diana whom she believes betrayed the Prince of Wales—Independent Mag., 1993 (FOWLER)
  - o *Undisputed usage*: ... far more hostile to Diana who she believes betrayed the Prince of Wales
  - o *Disputed usage*: Whom do men say that I am? (Mark 9:27, King James Version)
- **whoever—** This extension of *who* along with its object form *whomever* is attended by the same uncertainties as *who* along with *whom*, and is discussed in the same sources.

- o *Undisputed usage*: Give it to whoever wants it.
- o *Undisputed usage*: Give it to whoever you think should have it.
- o *Undisputed usage*: Give it to whomever you choose to give it.
- o *Disputed usage*: Give it to whoever you choose to give it to.
- o *Disputed usage*: Give it to whomever wants it.
- o *Disputed usage*: Give it to whomever you think should have it.

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4

Reflections on Controlled Vocabulary and Language

CONTROLLED VOCABULARY

Controlled vocabularies provide a way to organize knowledge for subsequent retrieval. They are used in subject indexing schemes, subject headings, thesauri and taxonomies. Controlled vocabulary schemes mandate the use of predefined, authorised terms that have been preselected by the designer of the vocabulary, in contrast to natural language vocabularies, where there is no restriction on the vocabulary.

In Library and Information Science

In library and information science controlled vocabulary is a carefully selected list of words and phrases, which are used to tag units of information (document or work) so that they may be more easily retrieved by a search. Controlled vocabularies solve the problems of homographs, synonyms and polysemes by a bijection between concepts and authorized terms. In short, controlled vocabularies reduce ambiguity inherent in normal human languages where the same concept can be given different names and ensure consistency.

For example, in the Library of Congress Subject Headings (a subject heading system that uses a controlled

vocabulary), authorized terms — subject headings in this case — have to be chosen to handle choices between variant spellings of the same concept (American versus British), choice among scientific and popular terms (Cockroaches versus Periplaneta americana), and choices between synonyms (automobile versus cars), among other difficult issues.

Choices of authorised terms are based on the principles of user warrant (what terms users are likely to use), literary warrant (what terms are generally used in the literature and documents), structural warrant (terms chosen by considering the structure, scope of the controlled vocabulary).

Controlled vocabularies also typically handle the problem of homographs, with qualifiers. For example, the term "pool" has to be qualified to refer to either swimming pool, or the game pool to ensure that each authorised term or heading refers to only one concept.

There are two main kinds of controlled vocabulary tools used in libraries: subject headings and thesauri. While the differences between the two are diminishing, there are still some minor differences.

Historically subject headings were designed to describe books in library catalogs by catalogers while thesauri were used by indexers to apply index terms to documents and articles. Subject headings tend to be broader in scope describing whole books, while thesauri tend to be more specialised covering very specific disciplines. Also because of the card catalog system, subject headings tend to have terms that are in indirect order (though with the rise of automated systems this is being removed), while thesaurus terms are always in direct order. Subject headings also tend to use more pre-co-ordination of terms such that the designer of the controlled vocabulary will combine various concepts together to form one authorised subject heading. (e.g., children and terrorism) while thesauri tend to use singular direct terms. Lastly thesauri list not only equivalent

terms but also narrower, broader terms and related terms among various authorised and non-authorised terms, while historically most subject headings did not.

For example Library of Congress Subject Heading itself did not have much syndetic structure until 1943, and it was not until 1985 when it began to adopt the thesauri type term "Broader term" and "Narrow term".

The terms are chosen and organized by trained professionals (including librarians and information scientists) who possess expertise in the subject area. Controlled vocabulary terms can accurately describe what a given document is actually about, even if the terms themselves do not occur within the document's text. Well known subject heading systems include the Library of Congress system, MeSH, and Sears. Well known thesauri include the Art and Architecture Thesaurus and the ERIC Thesaurus.

Choosing authorized terms to be used is a tricky business, besides the areas already considered above, the designer has to consider the specificity of the term chosen, whether to use direct entry, inter consistency and stability of the language. Lastly the amount of pre-co-ordinate (in which case the degree of enumeration versus synthesis becomes an issue) and post co-ordinate in the system is another important issue.

Controlled vocabulary elements (terms/phrases) employed as tags, to aid in the content identification process of documents, or other information system entities (e.g. DBMS, Web Services) qualifies as metadata.

Indexing Languages

There are three main types of indexing languages.

- Controlled indexing language - Only approved terms can be used by the indexer to describe the document
- Natural language indexing language - Any term

from the document in question can be used to describe the document.

- Free indexing language - Any term (not only from the document) can be used to describe the document.

When indexing a document, the indexer also has to choose the level of indexing exhaustivity, the level of detail in which the document is described. For example using low indexing exhaustivity, minor aspects of the work will not be described with index terms. In general the higher the indexing exhaustivity, the more terms indexed for each document.

In recent years free text search as a means of access to documents has become popular. This involves using natural language indexing with an indexing exhaustively set to maximum (every word in the text is *indexed*). Many studies have been done to compare the efficiency and effectiveness of free text searches against documents that have been indexed by experts using a few well chosen controlled vocabulary descriptors.

Controlled vocabularies are often claimed to improve the accuracy of free text searching, such as to reduce irrelevant items in the retrieval list. These irrelevant items (false positives) are often caused by the inherent ambiguity of natural language. Take the English word *football* for example. *Football* is the name given to a number of different team sports. Worldwide the most popular of these team sports is Association football, which also happens to be called *soccer* in several countries. The English language word football is also applied to Rugby football (Rugby union and rugby league), American football, Australian rules football, Gaelic football, and Canadian football. A search for *football* therefore will retrieve documents that are about several completely different sports. Controlled vocabulary solves this problem by tagging the documents in such a way that the ambiguities are eliminated.

Compared to free text searching, the use of a controlled vocabulary can dramatically increase the performance of an information retrieval system, if performance is measured by precision (the percentage of documents in the retrieval list that are actually relevant to the search topic).

In some cases controlled vocabulary can enhance recall as well, because unlike natural language schemes, once the correct authorised term is searched, you don't need to worry about searching for other terms that might be synonyms of that term.

However, a controlled vocabulary search may also lead to unsatisfactory recall, in that it will fail to retrieve some documents that are actually relevant to the search question.

This is particularly problematic when the search question involves terms that are sufficiently tangential to the subject area such that the indexer might have decided to tag it using a different term (but the searcher might consider the same). Essentially, this can be avoided only by an experienced user of controlled vocabulary whose understanding of the vocabulary coincides with the way it is used by the indexer.

Another possibility is that the article is just not tagged by the indexer because indexing exhaustivity is low. For example an article might mention football as a secondary focus, and the indexer might decide not to tag it with "football" because it is not important enough compared to the main focus. But it turns out that for the searcher that article is relevant and hence recall fails. A free text search would automatically pick up that article regardless.

On the other hand free text searches have high exhaustivity (you search on every word) so it has potential for high recall (assuming you solve the problems of synonyms by entering every combination) but will have much lower precision.

Controlled vocabularies are also quickly out-dated and

in fast developing fields of knowledge, the authorised terms available might not be available if they are not updated regularly. Even in the best case scenario, controlled language is often not as specific as using the words of the text itself. Indexers trying to choose the appropriate index terms might mis-interpret the author, while a free text search is in no danger of doing so, because it uses the author's own words.

The use of controlled vocabularies can be costly compared to free text searches because human experts or expensive automated systems are necessary to index each entry. Furthermore, the user has to be familiar with the controlled vocabulary scheme to make best use of the system. But as already mentioned, the control of synonyms, homographs can help increase precision.

Numerous methodologies have been developed to assist in the creation of controlled vocabularies, including faceted classification, which enables a given data record or document to be described in multiple ways.

Applications

Controlled vocabularies, such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings, are an essential component of bibliography, the study and classification of books. They were initially developed in library and information science. In the 1950s, government agencies began to develop controlled vocabularies for the burgeoning journal literature in specialized fields; an example is the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) developed by the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Subsequently, for-profit firms (called Abstracting and indexing services) emerged to index the fast-growing literature in every field of knowledge. In the 1960s, an online bibliographic database industry developed based on dialup X.25 networking. These services were seldom made available to the public because they were difficult to use; specialist librarians called search intermediaries handled the searching job. In the 1980s,

the first full text databases appeared; these databases contain the full text of the index articles as well as the bibliographic information. Online bibliographic databases have migrated to the Internet and are now publicly available; however, most are proprietary and can be expensive to use. Students enrolled in colleges and universities may be able to access some of these services without charge; some of these services may be accessible without charge at a public library.

In large organizations, controlled vocabularies may be introduced to improve technical communication. The use of controlled vocabulary ensures that everyone is using the same word to mean the same thing. This consistency of terms is one of the most important concepts in technical writing and knowledge management, where effort is expended to use the same word throughout a document or organization instead of slightly different ones to refer to the same thing.

Web searching could be dramatically improved by the development of a controlled vocabulary for describing Web pages; the use of such a vocabulary could culminate in a Semantic Web, in which the content of Web pages is described using a machine-readable metadata scheme. One of the first proposals for such a scheme is the Dublin Core Initiative. An example of a controlled vocabulary which is usable for indexing web pages is PSH.

It is unlikely that a single metadata scheme will ever succeed in describing the content of the entire Web. To create a Semantic Web, it may be necessary to draw from two or more metadata systems to describe a Web page's contents. The eXchangeable Faceted Metadata Language (XFML) is designed to enable controlled vocabulary creators to publish and share metadata systems. XFML is designed on faceted classification principles.

CONTROLLED NATURAL LANGUAGE

Controlled natural languages (CNLs) are subsets of natural languages, obtained by restricting the grammar and vocabulary in order to reduce or eliminate ambiguity and complexity. Traditionally, controlled languages fall into two major types: those that improve readability for human readers (e.g. non-native speakers), and those that enable reliable automatic semantic analysis of the language.

The first type of languages (often called "simplified" or "technical" languages), for example ASD Simplified Technical English, Caterpillar Technical English, IBM's Easy English, are used in the industry to increase the quality of technical documentation, and possibly simplify the (semi-)automatic translation of the documentation. These languages restrict the writer by general rules such as "write short and grammatically simple sentences", "use nouns instead of pronouns", "use determiners", and "use active instead of passive".

The second type of languages have a formal logical basis, i.e. they have a formal syntax and semantics, and can be mapped to an existing formal language, such as first-order logic. Thus, those languages can be used as knowledge-representation languages, and writing of those languages is supported by fully automatic consistency and redundancy checks, query answering, etc.

Languages

Existing logic-based controlled natural languages include:

- Attempto Controlled English
- Common Logic Controlled English (CLCE)
- Metalog's Pseudo Natural Language (PNL)
- Ordnance Survey's Rabbit
- Processable ENGlish (PENG)
- Semantic parameterization

- Semantics of Business Vocabulary and Business Rules
- ClearTalk

Other existing controlled natural languages include:

- ASD Simplified Technical English (AeroSpace and Defence Industries Association of Europe, formerly AECMA)
- E-Prime
- Gellish
- Newspeak, the fictional language in the dystopia novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell, is a controlled natural language as well as a semi-constructed language.
- Uwe Muegge's Controlled Language Optimized for Uniform Translation (CLOUT)
- Special English (Voice of America)
- Simplified Technical Russian
- EasyEnglish (Wycliffe Associates)

INTERNATIONAL AUXILIARY LANGUAGE

An international auxiliary language (sometimes abbreviated as IAL or auxlang) or interlanguage is a language meant for communication between people from different nations who do not share a common native language. An auxiliary language is primarily a second language.

Languages of dominant societies over the centuries have served as auxiliary languages, sometimes approaching the international level. Arabic, English, French, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish have been used as such in recent times in many parts of the world.

However, as these languages are associated with the very dominance—cultural, political, and economic—that made them popular, they are often met with strong resistance as well. For this reason, some have turned to the idea of

promoting an artificial or constructed language as a possible solution.

The term "auxiliary" implies that it is intended to be an additional language for the people of the world, rather than to replace their native languages. Often, the phrase is used to refer to planned or constructed languages proposed specifically to ease worldwide international communication, such as Esperanto, Ido and Interlingua. However, it can also refer to the concept of such a language being determined by international consensus, including even a standardized natural language (e.g., International English), and has also been connected to the project of constructing a universal language.

History

Some of the philosophical languages of the 17th-18th centuries could be regarded as proto-auxlangs, as they were intended by their creators to serve as bridges among people of different languages as well as to disambiguate and clarify thought. However, most or all of these languages were, as far as we can tell from the surviving publications about them, too incomplete and unfinished to serve as auxlangs (or for any other practical purpose). The first fully-developed constructed languages we know of, as well as the first constructed languages devised primarily as auxlangs, originated in the 19th century; Solresol by François Sudre, a language based on musical notes, was the first to gain widespread attention although not, apparently, fluent speakers. Volapük, first described in an article in 1879 by Johann Martin Schleyer and in book form the following year, was the first to garner a widespread international speaker community. Three major Volapük conventions were held, in 1884, 1887, and 1889; the last of them used Volapük as its working language. André Cherpillod writes of the third Volapük convention,

In August 1889 the third convention was held in Paris. About two hundred people from many countries attended.

And, unlike in the first two conventions, people spoke only Volapük. For the first time in the history of mankind, sixteen years before the Boulogne convention, an international convention spoke an international language.

However, not long after this the Volapük speaker community broke up due to various factors, including controversies between Schleyer and other prominent Volapük speakers, and the appearance of newer, easier-to-learn planned languages, primarily Esperanto. This language was developed from about 1878-1887, and published in that year, by L. L. Zamenhof. Within a few years it had thousands of fluent speakers, primarily in eastern Europe. In 1905 its first world convention was held in Boulogne-sur-Mer. A wide variety of other auxlangs were devised and proposed in the 1880s-1900s, but none except Esperanto gathered a speaker community until Ido.

The "Délégation pour l'adoption d'une langue auxiliaire internationale" was founded in 1900 by Louis Couturat and others; it tried to get the International Association of Academies to take up the question of an international auxiliary language, study the existing ones and pick one or design a new one. However, the meta-academy declining to do so, the Delegation decided to do the job itself. Among Esperanto speakers there was a general impression that the Delegation would of course choose Esperanto, as it was the only auxlang with a sizable speaker community at the time; it was felt as a betrayal by many Esperanto speakers when in 1907 the Delegation came up with its own reformed version of Esperanto, Ido. Ido drew a significant number of speakers away from Esperanto in the short term, but in the longer term most of these either returned to Esperanto or moved on to other new auxlangs. Still, Ido remains today one of the three most widely spoken auxlangs.

Edgar von Wahl's Occidental (also called "Interlingue"; 1922) was in reaction against the perceived artificiality of some earlier auxlangs, particularly Esperanto; von Wahl

created a language whose words, including compound words, would have a high degree of recognizability for those who already know a Romance language. However, this design criterion was in conflict with ease of coining new compound or derived words on the fly while speaking. Occidental gained a small speaker community in the 1920s and 1930s, and supported several publications, but had almost entirely died out by the 1980s. More recently Occidental has been revived on the Internet.

The International Auxiliary Language Association was founded in 1924 by Alice Vanderbilt Morris; like the earlier Delegation, it at first worked on studying language problems and the existing auxlangs and proposals for auxlangs, and attempted to negotiate some consensus between the supporters of various auxlangs. However, like the Delegation, it finally decided to create its own auxlang; Interlingua, published in 1951, was primarily the work of Alexander Gode, though he built on preliminary work by earlier IALA linguists including André Martinet. Interlingua, like Occidental, was designed to have words recognizable at sight by those who already know a Romance language or a language like English with much vocabulary borrowed from Romance languages; to attain this end Gode accepted a degree of grammatical and orthographic irregularity and complexity considerably greater than in Volapük, Esperanto or Ido, though still less than in most natural languages. Interlingua gained a significant speaker community, perhaps roughly the same size as that of Ido (considerably less than the size of Esperanto.)

Esperanto suffered a setback after the 1922 proposal by Iran and several other small countries in the League of Nations to have Esperanto taught in member nations' schools failed, and Esperanto speakers were subject to persecution under Hitler and Stalin's regimes, but in spite of these factors more people continued to learn Esperanto, and significant literary work (both poetry and novels) began to appear in Esperanto in the period between the World Wars.

All of the auxlangs with a surviving speaker community seem to have benefited from the advent of the Internet, Esperanto more than most. The CONLANG mailing list was founded in 1991; in its early years discussion focused on international auxiliary languages. As people interested in artistic languages and engineered languages grew to be the majority of the list members, and flame-wars between proponents of particular auxlangs irritated these members, a separate AUXLANG mailing list was created, which has been the primary venue for discussion of auxlangs since then. Besides giving the existing auxlangs with speaker communities a chance to interact rapidly online as well as slowly through postal mail or more rarely in personal meetings, the Internet has also made it easier to publicize new auxlang projects, and a handful of these have gained a small speaker community, including Kotava, Lingua Franca Nova, Mondlango and Toki Pona.

The history of the most notable constructed auxiliary languages are summarized in this table:

Language name	*ISO*	*Year of firstpublication*	*Creator*	*Comments*
Solresol		1827	François Sudre	The famous "musical language"
Communicationssprache		1839	Joseph Schipfer	Based on French vocabulary
Universalglot		1868	Jean Pirro	Arguably the first fully developed IAL
Volapük	vo, vol	1879–1880	Johann Martin Schleyer	First to acquire a sizable international speaker community
Esperanto	eo, epo	1887	L. L. Zamenhof	By far the most popular constructed language.
Spokil		1887 or 1890	Adolph Nicolas	An a priori language by a former Volapük advocate
Mundolinco		1888	J. Braakman	The first esperantido
Idiom Neutral		1902	Waldemar Rosenberger	A naturalistic IAL by a former advocate of Volapük
Latino sine Flexione		1903	Giuseppe Peano	"Latin without inflections," it replaced Idiom Neutral in 1908
Ido	io,	1907	Delegation for	The most successful offs-

	ido		the Adoption of an International Auxiliary Language	pring of Esperanto
Adjuvilo		1908	Claudius Colas	An esperantido created to cause dissent among Idists
Occidental (aka Interlingue)	ie, ile	1922	Edgar de Wahl	A sophisticated naturalistic IAL
Novial	nov	1928	Otto Jespersen	Another sophisticated naturalistic IAL
Sona		1935	Kenneth Searight	Best known attempt at an unbiased vocabulary
Esperanto II		1937	René de Saussure	Last of the classical esperantidos
Mondial		1940s	Helge Heimer	A naturalistic European language
Interglossa	igs	1943	Lancelot Hogben	A combination of isolating, quasi-pidgin grammar with a strong Greco-Latin vocabulary, later heavily modified to form the basis of Glosa
Interlingua	ia, ina	1951	International Auxiliary Language Association	A large project to discover common European vocabulary
Frater		1957	Pham Xuan Thai	Innovative blend of Greco-Latin roots and non-western grammar
Afrihili	afh	1970	K.A. Kumi Attobrah	a pan-African language
Kotava	avk	1978	Staren Fetcey	A sophisticated a priori IAL
Lingua Franca Nova	lfn	1998	C. George Boeree et al.	A Romance vocabulary with a creole-like grammar
Modern Indo-European		2006	Carlos Quiles, María Teresa Batalla	Based on reconstruction of the extinct Proto-Indo-European language
Sambahsa-Mundialect		2007	Olivier Simon	Mixture of simplified reconstructed Proto-Indo-European language and worldlangs
Glisa		2010	Dr. M. Ali	Isolating, Glosa-like language with a romance vocabulary and the easiest grammar

Scholarly Study

In the early 1900s auxlangs were already becoming a subject of academic study. Louis Couturat et al. described the controversy in the preface to their book *International Language and Science*:

> The question of a so-called world-language, or better expressed, an international auxiliary language, was during the now past Volapük period, and is still in the present Esperanto movement, so much in the hands of Utopians, fanatics and enthusiasts, that it is difficult to form an unbiased opinion concerning it, although a good idea lies at its basis. (1910, p. v).

For Couturat et al., both Volapukists and Esperantists confounded the linguistic aspect of the question with many side issues, and they considered this a main reason why discussion about the idea of an international auxiliary language has appeared unpractical. Leopold Pfaundler wrote that an IAL was needed for more effective communication among scientists:

> All who are occupied with the reading or writing of scientific literature have assuredly very often felt the want of a common scientific language, and regretted the great loss of time and trouble caused by the multiplicity of languages employed in scientific literature.

Classification

The following classification of auxiliary languages was developed by Pierre Janton in 1993:

- *A priori* languages are characterized by largely artificial morphemes (not borrowed from natural languages), schematic derivation, simple phonology, grammar and morphology. Some *a priori* languages are called philosophical languages, referring to their basis in philosophical ideas about thought and language. These include some of the earliest efforts at auxiliary language in the 17th century. A modern example of a fully developed *a priori* language is Kotava (1978). Some more specific subcategories:
  - Oligosynthetic or oligoisolating languages have no more than a few hundred morphemes. Most of their vocabulary is made of compound words or set phrases formed from these morphemes.

Sona and Toki Pona are well known examples, although Toki Pona is not primarily *a priori*.

- Taxonomic languages form their words using a taxonomic hierarchy, with each phoneme of a word helping specify its position in a semantic hierarchy of some kind; for example, Ro and Arahau.
- Pasigraphies are purely written languages without a spoken form, or with a spoken form left at the discretion of the reader; many of the 17th-18th century philosophical languages and auxlangs were pasigraphies. This set historically tends to overlap with taxonomic languages, though there's no inherent reason a pasigraphy needs to be taxonomic.
- Logical languages, for example, Loglan and Lojban, aim to eliminate ambiguity. Both these examples, it should be noted, derive their morphemes from a broad range of natural languages using statistical methods.

- *A posteriori* languages are based on existing natural languages. Nearly all the auxiliary languages with fluent speakers are in this category. Most of the *a posteriori* auxiliary languages borrow their vocabulary primarily or solely from European languages, and base their grammar more or less on European models. (Aficionados sometimes refer to these European-based languages as "euroclones", although this term has negative connotations and is not used in the academic literature.) Interlingua was drawn originally from international scientific vocabulary, in turn based primarily on Greek and Latin roots. Glosa did likewise, with a stronger dependence of Greek roots. [Glisa] is derived from Glosa. It is improved with high clarity and same isolating, developed en 2010. Although *a posteriori* languages have been based on most of the families

of European languages, the most successful of these (notably Esperanto and Interlingua) have been based largely on Romance and/or Latin elements.

- Schematic (or "mixed") languages have some *a priori* qualities. Some have ethnic morphemes but alter them significantly to fit a simplified phonotactic pattern(e.g., Volapük, Toki Pona) or both artificial and natural morphemes (e.g., Perio). Partly schematic languages have partly schematic and partly naturalistic derivation (e.g. Esperanto and Ido). Natural morphemes of languages in this group are rarely altered greatly from their source-language form, but compound and derived words are generally not recognizable at sight by people familiar with the source languages.
- Naturalistic languages resemble existing natural languages. For example, Occidental, Interlingua, and Lingua Franca Nova were developed so that not only the root words but their compounds and derivations will often be recognizable immediately by large numbers of people. Some naturalistic languages do have a limited number of artificial morphemes or invented grammatical devices (e.g. Novial). (Note that the term "naturalistic" as used in auxiliary language scholarship does not mean the same thing as the homophonous term used in describing artistic languages.)
- Simplified natural languages reduce the full extent of vocabulary and partially regularize the grammar of a natural language (e.g. Basic English, Special English and Globish).

Methods of Propagation

As has been pointed out, the issue of an international language is not so much which, but how. Several approaches

exist toward the eventual full expansion and consolidation of an international auxiliary language.

1. Laissez-faire. This approach is taken in the belief that one language will eventually and inevitably "win out" as a world auxiliary language (e.g., International English) without any need for specific action.
2. Institutional sponsorship and grass-roots promotion of language programs. This approach has taken various forms, depending on the language and language type, ranging from government promotion of a particular language to one-on-one encouragement to learn the language to instructional or marketing programs.
3. National legislation. This approach seeks to have individual countries (or even localities) progressively endorse a given language as an official language (or to promote the concept of international legislation).
4. International legislation. This approach involves promotion of the future holding of a binding international convention (perhaps to be under the auspices of such international organizations as the United Nations or Inter-Parliamentary Union) to formally agree upon an official international auxiliary language which would then be taught in all schools around the world, beginning at the primary level. This approach seeks to put international opinion and law behind the language and thus to expand or consolidate it as a full official world language. This approach could either give more credibility to a natural language already serving this purpose to a certain degree (e.g., if English were chosen) or to give a greatly enhanced chance for a constructed language to take root. For constructed languages particularly, this approach has been seen by various individuals in the IAL

movement as holding the most promise of ensuring that promotion of studies in the language would not be met with skepticism at its practicality by its would-be learners.

Pictorial Languages

There have been a number of proposals for using pictures, ideograms, diagrams, and other pictorial representations for international communications. Examples range from the original Characteristica Universalis proposed by the philosopher Leibniz, to suggestions for the adoption of Chinese writing, to recent inventions such as Blissymbol.

Within the scientific community, there is already considerable agreement in the form of the schematics used to represent electronic circuits, chemical symbols, mathematical symbols,and the Energy Systems Language of systems ecology. We can also see the international efforts at regularizing symbols used to regulate traffic, to indicate resources for tourists, and in maps. Some symbols have become nearly universal through their consistent use in computers and on the internet.

Sign Languages

An international auxiliary sign language has been developed by deaf people who meet regularly at international forums such as sporting events or in political organisations. Previously referred to as Gestuno but now more commonly known simply as 'international sign', the language has continued to develop since the first signs were standardised in 1973, and it is now in widespread use. International sign is distinct in many ways from spoken IALs; many signs are iconic and signers tend to insert these signs into the grammar of their own sign language, with an emphasis on visually intuitive gestures and mime. A simple sign language called Plains Indian Sign Language was used by indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Gestuno is not to be confused with the separate and

unrelated sign language Signuno, which is essentially a Signed Exact Esperanto. Signuno is not in any significant use, and is based on the Esperanto community rather than based on the international Deaf community.

Criticism

There has been considerable criticism of international auxiliary languages, both in terms of individual proposals and in more general terms.

Criticisms directed against Esperanto and other early auxlangs in the late 19th century included the idea that different races have sufficiently different speech organs that an international language might work locally in Europe, but hardly worldwide, and the prediction that if adopted, such an auxlang would rapidly break up into local dialects. Advances in linguistics have done away with the first of these, and the limited but significant use of Esperanto, Ido and Interlingua on an international scale, without breakup into dialects, has disproven the latter. Subsequently, much criticism has been focused either on the artificiality of these auxlangs, or on the argumentativeness of auxlang proponents and their failure to agree on one auxlang, or even on objective criteria by which to judge auxlangs. However, probably the most common criticism is that a constructed auxlang is unnecessary because natural languages such as English are already in wide use as auxlangs and work well enough for that purpose.

One criticism already prevalent in the late 19th century, and still sometimes heard today, is that an international language might hasten the extinction of minority languages. One response has been that, even if this happens, the benefits would outweigh the costs; another, that proponents of auxlangs, particularly in the Esperanto movement, are generally also proponents of measures to conserve and promote minority languages and cultures.

Although referred to as *international* languages, most of these languages have historically been constructed on

the basis of Western European languages. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries it was common for Volapük and Esperanto, and to some extent Ido, to be criticized for not being Western European enough; Occidental and Interlingua were (among other things) responses to this kind of criticism. More recently all these major auxlangs have been criticized for being too European and not global enough. One response to this criticism has been that doing otherwise in no way makes the language easier for anyone, while drawing away from the sources of much international vocabulary, technical and popular. Another response, primarily from Esperanto speakers, is that the internationality of a language has more to do with the culture of its speakers than with its linguistic properties. The term "Euroclone" was coined to refer to these languages in contrast to "worldlangs" with global vocabulary sources; the term is sometimes applied only to self-proclaimed "naturalistic" auxlangs such as Occidental and Interlingua, sometimes to all auxlangs with primarily European vocabulary sources, regardless of their grammar, including Esperanto and Lingua Franca Nova.

The response to this argument was made by Alexander Gode and reiterated by Mario Pei: A vocabulary selected from a broad variety of languages does not make the language any easier for speakers of any one language. Gode's example compares a paragraph in Interlingua with a paragraph with words from Chinese, Japanese, Malay, and other non-European languages. The first is readily understood by anyone familiar with the Romance languages, and not difficult for most English speakers:

> La sol dice: "io me appella sol. Io es multo brillante. Io me leva al est, e cuando io me leva, il es die. Io reguarda per tu fenestra con mi oculo brillante como le auro, e io te dice quando il es tempore a levar te. E io te dice: 'Pigro, leva te. Io non brilla a fin que tu resta al lecto a dormir, sed que tu lege e que tu te promena.'"

The second is not only difficult for Europeans, but the Malay speaker will not understand the Chinese words, the

Chinese speaker will not understand the Japanese words, and the Japanese speaker will not understand the Malay words:

> Mata-hari yu: "Wo-ti nama mata-hari. Wo taihen brillante. Wo leva wo a est, dan toki wo leva wo, ada hari. Wo miru per ni-ti fenestra sama wo-ti mata brillante como kin, dan wo yu ni toki ada tempo a levar ni. Dan wo yu ni: 'Sust, leva ni. Wo non brilla sam-rap ni tomaru a toko a nemuru, sed wo brilla sam-rap ni leva ni, dan que ni suru kam, ni yomu, dan ni aruku.'"

An *a priori* vocabulary such as that of Spokil or Kotava, or a vocabulary constructed mathematically, such as that of Loglan or Lojban, would likely be as comprehensible.

Gode argues, additionally, that the western languages are the de facto languages of international science, medicine, and technology, and therefore an IAL based on them provides the best access to that literature. Nevertheless, it must be said that a more neutral vocabulary, perhaps even an *a priori* one, would be less offensive to some non-Europeans.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, many proposals for auxlangs based on global sources of vocabulary and grammar have been made, but most (like the majority of the European-based auxlangs of earlier decades) remain sketches too incomplete to be speakable, and of the more complete ones, few have gained any speakers. More recently there has been a trend, on the AUXLANG mailing list and on the more recently founded worldlang mailing list, to greater collaboration between various proponents of a more globally-based auxlang.

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5

English as a Philosophical, Universal and Constructed Language

ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN OR SECOND LANGUAGE

ESL (English as a second language), ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), and EFL (English as a foreign language) all refer to the use or study of English by speakers with a different native language.

The precise usage, including the different use of the terms ESL and ESOL in different countries, is described below. These terms are most commonly used in relation to teaching and learning English, but they may also be used in relation to demographic information.

ELT (English language teaching) is a widely-used teacher-centred term, as in the English language teaching divisions of large publishing houses, ELT training, etc. The abbreviations TESL (teaching English as a second language), TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) and TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language) are also used.

Other terms used in this field include EAL (English as an additional language), EIL (English as an international language), ELF (English as a lingua franca), ESP (English for special purposes, or English for specific purposes), EAP (English for academic purposes). Some terms that refer to

those who are learning English are ELL (English language learner), LEP (limited English proficiency) and CLD (culturally and linguistically diverse).

Terminology and Types

The many acronyms and abbreviations used in the field of English teaching and learning may be confusing. English is a language with great reach and influence; it is taught all over the world under many different circumstances. In English-speaking countries, English language teaching has essentially evolved in two broad directions: instruction for people who intend to live in an English-speaking country and for those who don't. These divisions have grown firmer as the instructors of these two "industries" have used different terminology, followed distinct training qualifications, formed separate professional associations, and so on. Crucially, these two arms have very different funding structures, public in the former and private in the latter, and to some extent this influences the way schools are established and classes are held. Matters are further complicated by the fact that the United States and the United Kingdom, both major engines of the language, describe these categories in different terms: as many eloquent users of the language have observed, "England and America are two countries divided by a common language." (Attributed to Winston Churchill, George Bernard Shaw, and Oscar Wilde.) The following technical definitions may therefore have their currency contested.

English Outside English-Speaking Countries

EFL, English as a foreign language, indicates the use of English in a non–English-speaking region. Study can occur either in the student's home country, as part of the normal school curriculum or otherwise, or, for the more privileged minority, in an anglophone country that they visit as a sort of educational tourist, particularly immediately before or after graduating from university. *TEFL* is the teaching of English as a foreign language; note that this

sort of instruction can take place in any country, English-speaking or not. Typically, EFL is learned either to pass exams as a necessary part of one's education, or for career progression while working for an organisation or business with an international focus. EFL may be part of the state school curriculum in countries where English has no special status (what linguist Braj Kachru calls the "expanding circle countries"); it may also be supplemented by lessons paid for privately. Teachers of EFL generally assume that students are literate in their mother tongue. The Chinese EFL Journal and Iranian EFL Journal are examples of international journals dedicated to specifics of English language learning within countries where English is used as a foreign language.

English Within English-Speaking Countries

The other broad grouping is the use of English within the Anglosphere. In what theorist Braj Kachru calls "the inner circle", i.e. countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, this use of English is generally by refugees, immigrants and their children. It also includes the use of English in "outer circle" countries, often former British colonies, where English is an official language even if it is not spoken as a mother tongue by the majority of the population.

In the US, Canada and Australia, this use of English is called *ESL* (English as a second language). This term has been criticized on the grounds that many learners already speak more than one language. A counter-argument says that the word "a" in the phrase "a second language" means there is no presumption that English is *the* second acquired language. *TESL* is the teaching of English as a second language.

In the UK, Ireland and New Zealand, the term ESL has been replaced by *ESOL* (English for speakers of other languages). In these countries *TESOL* (teaching English to speakers of other languages) is normally used to refer to

teaching English only to this group. In the UK, the term *EAL* (English as an additional language), rather than ESOL, is usually used when talking about primary and secondary schools, in order to clarify English is not the students' first language, but their second or third.

Other acronyms were created to describe the person rather than the language to be learned. The term LEP (Limited English proficiency) was created in 1975 by the Lau Remedies following a decision of the US Supreme Court. ELL (English Language Learner), used by United States governments and school systems, was created by Charlene Rivera of the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education in an effort to label learners positively, rather than ascribing a deficiency to them. LOTE (Languages other than English) is a parallel term used in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Typically, this sort of English (called ESL in the United States, Canada, and Australia, ESOL in the United Kingdom, Ireland and New Zealand) is learned to function in the new host country, e.g. within the school system (if a child), to find and hold down a job (if an adult), to perform the necessities of daily life. The teaching of it does not presuppose literacy in the mother tongue. It is usually paid for by the host government to help newcomers settle into their adopted country, sometimes as part of an explicit citizenship program. It is technically possible for ESL to be taught not in the host country, but in, for example, a refugee camp, as part of a pre-departure program sponsored by the government soon to receive new potential citizens. In practice, however, this is extremely rare.

Particularly in Canada and Australia, the term *ESD* (English as a second dialect) is used alongside ESL, usually in reference to programs for Canadian First Nations people or indigenous Australians, respectively. It refers to the use of standard English, which may need to be explicitly taught, by speakers of a creole or non-standard variety. It is often grouped with ESL as *ESL/ESD*.

Umbrella Terms

All these ways of denoting the teaching of English can be bundled together into an umbrella term. Unfortunately, all the English teachers in the world cannot agree on just one. The term *TESOL* (teaching English to speakers of other languages) is used in American English to include both TEFL and TESL. This is also the case in Canada. British English uses *ELT* (English language teaching), because TESOL has a different, more specific meaning; see above.

Systems of Simplified English

For international communication several models of "simplified English" have been suggested or developed, among them:

- Basic English, developed by Charles Kay Ogden (and later also I. A. Richards) in the 1930s; a recent revival has been initiated by Bill Templer
- Threshold Level English, developed by van Ek and Alexander
- Globish, developed by Jean-Paul Nerrière
- Basic Global English, developed by Joachim Grzega
- Nuclear English, proposed by Randolph Quirk and Gabriele Stein but never fully developed
- The English collectively developed in the Simple English Wikipedia, primarily Basic English and Special English

Difficulties for Learners

Language teaching practice often assumes that most of the difficulties that learners face in the study of English are a consequence of the degree to which their native language differs from English (a contrastive analysis approach). A native speaker of Chinese, for example, may face many more difficulties than a native speaker of German, because German is closely related to English, whereas Chinese is not. This may be true for anyone of any mother

tongue (also called first language, normally abbreviated L1) setting out to learn any other language (called a target language, second language or L2). See also second language acquisition (SLA) for mixed evidence from linguistic research.

Language learners often produce errors of syntax and pronunciation thought to result from the influence of their L1, such as mapping its grammatical patterns inappropriately onto the L2, pronouncing certain sounds incorrectly or with difficulty, and confusing items of vocabulary known as false friends. This is known as L1 transfer or "language interference". However, these transfer effects are typically stronger for beginners' language production, and SLA research has highlighted many errors which cannot be attributed to the L1, as they are attested in learners of many language backgrounds (for example, failure to apply 3rd person present singular -s to verbs, as in 'he make').

Some students may have very different cultural perceptions in the classroom as far as learning a second language is concerned. Also, cultural differences in communication styles and preferences are significant. For example, a study looked at Chinese ESL students and British teachers and found that the Chinese learners did not see classroom discussion and interaction as important but placed a heavy emphasis on teacher-directed lectures.

Pronunciation

Consonant Phonemes

English does not have more individual consonant sounds than most languages. However, the interdentals, /è/ and /ð/ (the sounds written with *th*), which are common in English (*thin*, *thing*, etc.; and *the*, *this*, *that*, etc.) are relatively rare in other languages, even others in the Germanic family (*e.g.,* English *thousand* = German *tausend*), and these sounds are missing even in some English dialects. Some learners substitute a [t] or [d] sound, while others shift to [s] or [z], [f] or [v] and even [ts] or [dz].

Speakers of Japanese, Korean, Chinese and Thai may have difficulty distinguishing [y] and [l]. Speakers of Xiang Chinese may have a similar difficulty distinguishing [n] and [l]. The distinction between [b] and [v] can cause difficulty for native speakers of Spanish, Arabic, Japanese and Korean.

Vowel Phonemes

The precise number of distinct vowel sounds depends on the variety of English: for example, Received Pronunciation has twelve monophthongs (single or "pure" vowels), eight diphthongs (double vowels) and two triphthongs (triple vowels); whereas General American has thirteen monophthongs and three diphthongs. Many learners, such as speakers of Spanish, Japanese or Arabic, have fewer vowels, or only pure ones, in their mother tongue and so may have problems both with hearing and with pronouncing these distinctions.

Syllable Structure

In its syllable structure, English allows for a cluster of up to three consonants before the vowel and four after it (*e.g., straw*, *desks*, *glimpsed*). The syllable structure causes problems for speakers of many other languages. Japanese, for example, broadly alternates consonant and vowel sounds so learners from Japan often try to force vowels in between the consonants (*e.g., desks* /desks/ becomes "desukusu" or *milk shake* /mjlk ʃejk/ becomes "mirukushçku").

Learners from languages where all words end in vowels sometimes tend to make all English words end in vowels, thus *make* /mejk/ can come out as [mejkY]. The learner's task is further complicated by the fact that native speakers may drop consonants in the more complex blends (*e.g.,* [mŒns] instead of [mŒnès] for *months*).

- Unstressed vowels - Native English speakers frequently replace almost any vowel in an unstressed syllable with an unstressed vowel, often schwa.

For example, *from* has a distinctly pronounced short 'o' sound when it is stressed (*e.g., Where are you from?*), but when it is unstressed, the short 'o' reduces to a schwa (*e.g., I'm from London.*). In some cases, unstressed vowels may disappear altogether, in words such as chocolate (which has four syllables in Spanish, but only two as pronounced by Americans: "*choc-lit*".)

Stress in English more strongly determines vowel quality than it does in most other world languages (although there are notable exceptions such as Russian). For example, in some varieties the syllables *an*, *en*, *in*, *on* and *un* are pronounced as homophones, that is, exactly alike. Native speakers can usually distinguish *an able*, *enable*, and *unable* because of their position in a sentence, but this is more difficult for inexperienced English speakers. Moreover, learners tend to overpronounce these unstressed vowels, giving their speech an unnatural rhythm.

- Stress timing - English tends to be a stress-timed language - this means that stressed syllables are roughly equidistant in time, no matter how many syllables come in between. Although some other languages, e.g., German and Russian, are also stress-timed, most of the world's other major languages are syllable-timed, with each syllable coming at an equal time after the previous one. Learners from these languages often have a staccato rhythm when speaking English that is disconcerting to a native speaker.

  "Stress for emphasis" - students' own languages may not use stress for emphasis as English does.

  "Stress for contrast" - stressing the right word or expression. This may not come easily to some non-native speakers.

  "Emphatic apologies" - the normally unstressed auxiliary is stressed (I really *am* very sorry)

In English there are quite a number of words - about fifty - that have two different pronunciations, depending on whether they are stressed. They are "grammatical words": pronouns, prepositions, auxiliary verbs and conjunctions. Most students tend to overuse the strong form, which is pronounced with the written vowel.

Connected Speech

Phonological processes such as assimilation, elision and epenthesis together with indistinct word boundaries can confuse learners when listening to natural spoken English, as well as making their speech sound too formal if they do not use them.

Grammar

- Tense, aspect, and mood - English has a relatively large number of tense-aspect-mood forms with some quite subtle differences, such as the difference between the simple past "I ate" and the present perfect "I have eaten." Progressive and perfect progressive forms add complexity.
- Functions of auxiliaries - Learners of English tend to find it difficult to manipulate the various ways in which English uses auxiliary verbs. These include negation (e.g. *He hasn't been drinking.*), inversion with the subject to form a question (e.g. *Has he been drinking?*), short answers (e.g. *Yes, he has.*) and tag questions (*has he?*). A further complication is that the dummy auxiliary verb *do /does /did* is added to fulfil these functions in the simple present and simple past, but not for the verb *to be*.
- Modal verbs - English also has a significant number of modal auxiliary verbs which each have a number of uses. For example, the opposite of "You must be here at 8" (obligation) is usually "You don't have to be here at 8" (lack of obligation, choice), while "must" in "You must not drink the water" (prohibition) has a different meaning from "must"

in "You must not be a native speaker" (deduction). This complexity takes considerable work for most English language learners to master.

- Idiomatic usage - English is reputed to have a relatively high degree of idiomatic usage. For example, the use of different main verb forms in such apparently parallel constructions as "try to learn", "help learn", and "avoid learning" pose difficulty for learners. Another example is the idiomatic distinction between "make" and "do": "make a mistake", not "do a mistake"; and "do a favor", not "make a favor".
- Articles - English has an appreciable number of articles, including the "the" definite article and the "a, an" indefinite article. At times English nouns can or indeed must be used without an article; this is called the zero article. Some of the differences between definite, indefinite and zero article are fairly easy to learn, but others are not, particularly since a learner's native language may lack articles or use them in different ways than English does. Although the information conveyed by articles is rarely essential for communication, English uses them frequently (several times in the average sentence), so that they require some effort from the learner.

Vocabulary

- Phrasal verbs - Phrasal verbs in English can cause difficulties for many learners because they have several meanings and different syntactic patterns. There are also a number of phrasal verb differences between American and British English.
- Word derivation - Word derivation in English requires a lot of rote learning. For example, an adjective can be negated by using the prefix *un-* (e.g. *unable*), *in-* (e.g. *inappropriate*), *dis-* (e.g.

dishonest), or *a-* (e.g. *amoral*), or through the use of one of a myriad related but rarer prefixes, all modified versions of the first four.

- Size of lexicon - The history of English has resulted in a very large vocabulary, essentially one stream from Old English and one from the Norman infusion of Latin-derived terms. (Schmitt & Marsden claim that English has one of the largest vocabularies of any known language.) This inevitably requires more work for a learner to master the language.
- Collocations - Collocations in English refer to the tendency for words to occur regularly with others. For example, nouns and verbs that go together (ride a bike/ drive a car). Native speakers tend to use chunks of collocations and the ESL learners make mistakes with collocations in their writing/ speaking which sometimes results in awkwardness.
- Slang and Colloquialisms In most native English speaking countries, large numbers of slang and colloquial terms are used in everyday speech. Many learners may find that classroom based English is significantly different to how English is spoken in normal situations. This can often be difficult and confusing for learners with little experience of using English in Anglophone countries. Also, slang terms differ greatly between different regions and can change quickly in response to popular culture. Some phrases can become unintentionally rude if misused.

Differences between Spoken and Written English

As with most languages, written language tends to use a more formal register than spoken language. The acquisition of literacy takes significant effort in English.

- *spelling* - Because of the many changes in pronunciation which have occurred since a written standard developed, the retention of many historical idiosyncrasies in spelling, and the large influx of

foreign words (mainly from Danish, Norman French, Classical Latin and Greek) with different and overlapping spelling patterns, English spelling is difficult even for native speakers to master. This difficulty is shown in such activities as spelling bees that generally require the memorization of words. English speakers may also rely on computer tools such as spell checkers more than speakers of other languages, as the users of these utilities may have forgotten, or never learned, the correct spelling of a word. The generalizations that exist are quite complex and there are many exceptions leading to a considerable amount of rote learning. The spelling system causes problems in both directions - a learner may know a word by sound but not be able to write it correctly (or indeed find it in a dictionary), or they may see a word written but not know how to pronounce it or mislearn the pronunciation. However, despite the variety of spelling patterns in English, there are dozens of rules that are 75% or more reliable.

For further discussion of English spelling patterns and rules, see Phonics.

Varieties of English

- The British Isles, historical home of English, has significant regional language differences in pronunciation, accent, vocabulary and grammar.
- The thriving communities of English native speakers in countries all over the world also have some noticeable differences in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.
- English has no organisation that determines the most prestigious form of the language - unlike the French language which has the *Academie de la langue française*, Spanish language's *Real Academia Española*, or the Italian *Accademia della Crusca*.

Teaching English therefore involves not only helping the student to use the form of English most suitable for his purposes, but also exposure to regional forms and cultural styles so that the student will be able to discern meaning even when the words, grammar or pronunciation are different to the form of English he is being taught to speak.

Exams for Learners

Learners of English are often keen to get accreditation and a number of exams are known internationally:

- University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations offers a suite of eighteen globally available examinations including General English: Key English Test (KET), Preliminary English Test (PET), First Certificate in English (FCE), Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) and Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE).
- Trinity College London ESOL offers Integrated Skills in English (ISE), series of 5 exams, which assesses Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening accepted by academic institutions in the UK. They also offer Graded Examinations in Spoken English (GESE), series of 12 exams, which assesses Speaking and Listening and ESOL Skills for Life and ESOL for Work exams in the UK only.
- IELTS (International English Language Testing System), accepted by academic institutions in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, and by many in the USA.
- London Tests of English from Pearson Language Tests, a series of six exams each mapped to a level from the Common European Framework (CEFR- see below)
- Secondary Level English Proficiency test
- Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic), a Pearson product, measure Reading, Writing,

Speaking and Listening as well as Grammar, Oral Fluency, Pronunciation, Spelling, Vocabular and Written Discourse. The test is computer-based and is designed to reflect international English for academic admission into any university requiring English proficiency.

- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), an Educational Testing Service product, developed and used primarily for academic institutions in the USA, and now widely accepted in tertiary institutions in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the UK, and Ireland. The current test is an Internet-based test, and is thus known as the TOEFL iBT. Used as a proxy for English for Academic Purposes.
- TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), an Educational Testing Service product for Business English used by 10,000 organizations in 120 countries. Includes a Listening & Reading test as well as a Speaking & Writing test introduced in selected countries beginning in 2006.

Many countries also have their own exams. ESOL learners in England, Wales and Northern Ireland usually take the national Skills for Life qualifications, which are offered by several exam boards. EFL learners in China may take the College English Test. In Greece English students may take the PALSO (PanHellenic Association of Language School Owners) exams.

Qualifications for Teachers

Non-Native Speakers

Most people who teach English are in fact not native speakers of that language. They are state school teachers in countries around the world, and as such they hold the relevant teaching qualification of their country, usually with a specialization in teaching English. For example, teachers in Hong Kong hold the Language Proficiency

Assessment for Teachers. Those who work in private language schools may, from commercial pressures, have the same qualifications as native speakers. Widespread problems exist of minimal qualifications and poor quality providers of training, and as the industry becomes more professional, it is trying to self-regulate to eliminate these.

United States Qualifications

Most U.S. instructors at community colleges and universities qualify by taking a Master of Arts (MA) in TESOL. This degree also qualifies them to teach in most EFL contexts. In some areas of the United States, a growing number of elementary school teachers are involved in teaching ELLs (English Language Learners, that is, children who come to school speaking a home language other than English.) The qualifications for these classroom teachers vary from state to state but always include a state-issued teaching certificate for public instruction. This state licensing requires substantial practical experience as well as course work. The MA in TESOL typically includes both graduate work in English as one of the classical liberal arts (literature, linguistics, media studies) with a theoretical component in language pedagogy. Admission to the MA in TESOL typically requires at least a bachelor's degree with a minor in English or linguistics, or, sometimes, a degree in a foreign language instead.

It is important to note that the issuance of a teaching certificate or license is not automatic following completion of degree requirements. All teachers must complete a battery of exams (typically the Praxis subject and method exams or similar, state-sponsored exams) as well as supervised instruction as student teachers. Often, ESL certification can be obtained through extra college coursework. ESL certifications are usually only valid when paired with an already existing teaching certificate. Certification requirements for ESL teachers vary greatly from state to state; out-of-state teaching certificates are recognized if the two states have a reciprocity agreement.

British Qualifications

Common, respected qualifications for teachers within the United Kingdom's sphere of influence include certificates and diplomas issued by Trinity College London ESOL and University of Cambridge ESOL (henceforth Trinity and Cambridge).

A certificate course is usually undertaken before starting to teach. This is sufficient for most EFL jobs and for some ESOL ones. CertTESOL (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), issued by Trinity, and CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults), issued by Cambridge, are the most widely taken and accepted qualifications for new teacher trainees. Courses are offered in the UK and in many countries around the world. It is usually taught full-time over a one-month period or part-time over a period up to a year.

Teachers with two or more years of teaching experience who want to stay in the profession and advance their career prospects (including school management and teacher training) can take a diploma course. Trinity offers the Trinity Licentiate Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (DipTESOL) and Cambridge offers the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA). These diplomas are considered to be equivalent and are both accredited at level 7 of the revised National Qualifications Framework. Some teachers who stay in the profession go on to do an MA in a relevant discipline such as applied linguistics or ELT. Many UK master's degrees require considerable experience in the field before a candidate is accepted onto the course.

The above qualifications are well-respected within the UK EFL sector, including private language schools and higher education language provision. However, in England and Wales, in order to meet the government's criteria for being a qualified teacher of ESOL in the Learning and Skills Sector (i.e. post-compulsory or further education),

teachers need to have the Certificate in Further Education Teaching Stage 3 at level 5 (of the revised NQF) and the Certificate for ESOL Subject Specialists at level 4. Recognised qualifications which confer one or both of these include a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in ESOL, the CELTA module 2 and City & Guilds 9488. Teachers of any subject within the British state sector are normally expected to hold a PGCE, and may choose to specialise in ELT.

South Korea Qualifications

To teach English in Republic of Korea as an ESL teacher, you must be a native speaker from an English-speaking country. This includes the United States of America, some areas of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Jamaica, Ghana, South Africa, and Ireland.

You must have a Bachelor's or Master's degree in any field and must complete 10 years of education in one of the ten accepted countries (from grade 6 to university). You must have no criminal record (minor offenses such as traffic violations will be examined by the immigration office as well).

Teaching experience or language certificates (TESOL/TEFL/TESL/CELTA) are not required, but would be a major plus.

Professional Associations and Unions

- TESOL Inc. is Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, a professional organization based in the United States. In addition, there are many large state-wide and regional affiliates, see below.
- IATEFL is the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, a professional organization based in the United Kingdom.
- Professional organisations for teachers of English exist at national levels. Many contain phrases in

their title such as the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT), TESOL Greece in Greece, or the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT). Some of these organisations may be bigger in structure (supra-national, such as TESOL Arabia in the Gulf states), or smaller (limited to one city, state, or province, such as CATESOL in California). Some are affiliated to TESOL or IATEFL.

- NATECLA is the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults, which focuses on teaching ESOL in the United Kingdom.
- National Union of General Workers is a Japanese union which includes English teachers.
- University and College Union is a British trade union which includes lecturers of ELT.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Language education for information on general language teaching acronyms and abbreviations.

Types of English

- BE - Business English
- EAL - English as an additional language. The use of this term is restricted to certain countries. See the discussion in Terminology and types.
- EAP - English for academic purposes
- EFL - English as a foreign language. English for use in a non-English-speaking region, by someone whose first language is not English. See the discussion in Terminology and types.
- EIL - English as an international language
- ELF - English as a lingua franca
- ELL - English language learner. The use of this term is restricted to certain countries. See the discussion in Terminology and types.

- ELT - English language teaching. The use of this term is restricted to certain countries. See the discussion in Terminology and types.
- ESL - English as a second language. English for use in an English-speaking region, by someone whose first language is not English. The use of this term is restricted to certain countries. See the discussion in Terminology and types.
- ESOL - English for speakers of other languages. This term is used differently in different countries. See the discussion in Terminology and types.
- ESP - English for specific purposes, or English for special purposes (e.g. technical English, scientific English, English for medical professionals, English for waiters).
- EST - English for science and technology (e.g. technical English, scientific English).
- TEFL - Teaching English as a foreign language. This link is to a page about a subset of TEFL, namely travel-teaching. More generally, see the discussion in Terminology and types.
- TESL - Teaching English as a second language. The use of this term is restricted to certain countries. See the discussion in Terminology and types.
- TESOL - Teaching English to speakers of other languages, or Teaching English as a second or other language. See the discussion in Terminology and types.
- TYLE - Teaching Young Learners English. Note that "Young Learners" can mean under 18, or much younger.

Other Abbreviations

- BULATS - Business Language Testing Services, a computer-based test of business English, produced by CambridgeEsol. The test also exists for French, German, and Spanish.

- CELT - Certificate in English Language Teaching, certified by the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (ACELS).
- CELTA - Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults
- CELTYL - Certificate in English Language Teaching to Young Learners
- DELTA - Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults
- IELTS - International English Language Testing System
- LTE - London Tests of English by Pearson Language Tests
- TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language
- TOEIC - Test of English for International Communication
- UCLES - University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, an exam board
- Trinity College London ESOL

PHILOSOPHICAL LANGUAGE

A philosophical language is any constructed language that is constructed from first principles, like a logical language, but may entail a strong claim of absolute perfection or transcendent or even mystical truth rather than satisfaction of pragmatic goals. Philosophical languages were popular in Early Modern times, partly motivated by the goal of recovering the lost Adamic or Divine language. The term ideal language is sometimes used near-synonymously, though more modern philosophical languages such as Toki Pona are less likely to involve such an exalted claim of perfection.

In most older philosophical languages, and some newer ones, words are constructed from a limited set of morphemes that are treated as "elemental" or fundamental. "Philosophical language" is sometimes used synonymously

with "taxonomic language", though more recently there have been several conlangs constructed on philosophical principles which are not taxonomic.

Vocabularies of oligosynthetic languages are made of compound words, which are coined from a small (theoretically minimal) set of morphemes; oligoisolating languages, such as Toki Pona, similarly use a limited set of root words but produce phrases which remain series of distinct words.

Láadan is designed to lexicalize and grammaticalize the concepts and distinctions important to women, based on muted group theory. Toki Pona is based on minimalistic simplicity, incorporating elements of Taoism.

A priori languages are constructed languages where the vocabulary is invented directly, rather than being derived from other existing languages (as with Esperanto or Interlingua). Philosophical languages are almost all a priori languages, but most *a priori* languages are not philosophical languages. For example, Quenya, Sindarin, and Klingon are all *a priori* but not philosophical languages: they are meant to seem like natural languages, even though they have no genetic relation to any natural languages.

History

Work on philosophical languages was pioneered by Francis Lodwick (*A Common Writing*, 1647; *The Groundwork or Foundation laid (or So Intended) for the Framing of a New Perfect Language and a Universal Common Writing*, 1652), Sir Thomas Urquhart (*Logopandecteision*, 1652), George Dalgarno (*Ars signorum*, 1661), and John Wilkins (*An Essay towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language*, 1668). Those were systems of hierarchical classification that were intended to result in both spoken and written expression. In 1855, English writer George Edmonds modified Wilkins' system, leaving its taxonomy intact, but changing the grammar, orthography and

pronunciation of the language in an effort to make it easier to speak and to read.

Gottfried Leibniz created *lingua generalis* in 1678, aiming to create a lexicon of characters upon which the user might perform calculations that would yield true propositions automatically; as a side effect he developed binary calculus.

These projects aimed not only to reduce or model grammar, but also to arrange all human knowledge into "characters" or hierarchies. This idea ultimately led to the *Encyclopédie*, in the Age of Enlightenment. Leibniz and the encyclopedists realized that it is impossible to organize human knowledge unequivocally as a tree, and so impossible to construct an *a priori* language based on such a classification of concepts. Under the entry *Charactère*, D'Alembert critically reviewed the projects of philosophical languages of the preceding century.

After the *Encyclopédie*, projects for *a priori* languages moved more and more to the fringe. Individual authors, typically unaware of the history of the idea, continued to propose taxonomic philosophical languages until the early 20th century (for example, Ro). More recent philosophical languages have usually moved away from taxonomic schemata, such as 21st century Ithkuil by John Quijada.

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

Universal language may refer to a hypothetical or historical language spoken and understood by all or most of the world's population. In some circles, it is a language said to be understood by all living things, beings, and objects alike. It may be the ideal of an international auxiliary language for communication between groups speaking different primary languages. In other conceptions, it may be the primary language of all speakers, or the only existing language. Some mythological or religious traditions state

that there was once a single universal language among all people, or shared by humans and supernatural beings, however, this is not supported by historical evidence.

In other traditions, there is less interest in or a general deflection of the question. For example in Islam the Arabic language is the language of the Qur'an, and so universal for Muslims. The written classical Chinese language was and is still read widely but pronounced somewhat differently by readers in different areas of China, in Vietnam, Korea and Japan for centuries; it was a *de facto* universal *literary* language for a broad-based culture. In something of the same way Sanskrit in India was a literary language for many for whom it was not a mother tongue.

Comparably, the Latin language (*qua* Medieval Latin) was in effect a universal language of literati in the Middle Ages, and the language of the Vulgate Bible, in the area of Catholicism which covered most of Western Europe and parts of Northern and Central Europe also.

In a more practical fashion, trade languages, as ancient Koine Greek, may be seen as a kind of *real* universal language, that was used for commerce.

In historical linguistics, monogenesis refers to the idea that all spoken human languages are descended from a single ancestral language spoken many thousands of years ago.

Mythological Universal Languages

Various religious texts, myths and legends describe a state of humanity in which originally only one language was spoken, whilst others have people created with separate languages initially, and no universal language. In Judeo-Christian beliefs, the "confusion of tongues" described in the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel tells of the creation of numerous languages from an original Adamic language. Similar myths exist in other cultures describing the creation of multiple languages as an act of a god, such as the

destruction of a 'knowledge tree' by Brahma in Indic tradition, or as a gift from the God Hermes in Greek myth. Other myths describe the creation of different languages as concurrent with the creation of different tribes of people, or due to supernatural events.

Seventeenth Century

Recognizable strands in the contemporary ideas on universal languages took form only in Early Modern Europe. A *lingua franca* or trade language was nothing very new; but an international auxiliary language was a natural wish in light of the gradual decline of Latin. Literature in vernacular languages became more prominent with the Renaissance. Over the course of the 18th century, learned works largely ceased to be written in Latin. According to Colton Booth (*Origin and Authority in Seventeenth-Century England* (1994) p. 174) "The Renaissance had no single view of Adamic language and its relation to human understanding." The question was more exactly posed in the work of Francis Bacon.

In the vast writings of Gottfried Leibniz can be found many elements relating to a possible universal language, specifically a constructed language, a concept that gradually came to replace that of a rationalized Latin as the natural basis for a projected universal language. Leibniz conceived of a *characteristica universalis* (also see *mathesis universalis*), an "algebra" capable of expressing all conceptual thought. This algebra would include rules for symbolic manipulation, what he called a *calculus ratiocinator*. His goal was to put reasoning on a firmer basis by reducing much of it to a matter of calculation that many could grasp. The *characteristica* would build on an alphabet of human thought.

Leibniz's work is bracketed by some earlier mathematical ideas of René Descartes, and the satirical attack of Voltaire on Panglossianism. Descartes's ambitions were far more modest than Leibniz's, and also far more

successful, as shown by his wedding of algebra and geometry to yield what we now know as analytic geometry. Decades of research on symbolic artificial intelligence have not brought Leibniz's dream of a *characteristica* any closer to fruition.

Other 17th-century proposals for a 'philosophical' (i.e. universal) language include those by Francis Lodwick, Thomas Urquhart (possibly parodic), George Dalgarno (*Ars signorum*, 1661), and John Wilkins (*An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, 1668). The classification scheme in Roget's Thesaurus ultimately derives from Wilkins's *Essay*.

Eighteenth Century

Candide, a satire written by Voltaire, took aim at Leibniz as Dr. Pangloss, with the choice of name clearly putting universal language in his sights, but satirizing mainly the optimism of the projector as much as the project. The argument takes the universal language itself no more seriously than the ideas of the speculative scientists and *virtuosi* of Jonathan Swift's Laputa. For the like-minded of Voltaire's generation, universal language was tarred as fool's gold with the same brush as philology with little intellectual rigour, and universal mythography, as futile and arid directions.

In the 18th century, some rationalist natural philosophers sought to recover a supposed Edenic language. It was assumed that education inevitably took people away from an innate state of goodness they possessed, and therefore there was an attempt to see what language a human child brought up in utter silence would speak. This was assumed to be the Edenic tongue, or at least the lapsarian tongue.

Others attempted to find a common lingustic ancestor to all tongues; there were, therefore, multiple attempts to relate esoteric languages to Hebrew (e.g. Basque, Erse,

and Irish), as well as the beginnings of comparative linguistics.

Nineteenth Century

At the end of the 19th century there was a large profusion of constructed languages intended as genuine spoken language. Among these were Solresol, Volapük, and Esperanto, with Esperanto becoming the most popular.

Twentieth Century

Global media, the legacy of the British Empire, the status of the United Kingdom as an economic superpower in the first half, and the United States in the latter half of the 20th century led to the informal adoption of English as the primary language of international business and the dominant language in global communication.

The constructed language movement produced such languages as Latino Sine Flexione, Occidental, and finally the auxiliary language Interlingua.

Twenty-First Century

Global media and the status of the United States as an economic superpower in the early years of the 21st century has led to English remaining the sole language of international business and the dominant language in global communication.

Contemporary Ideas

The early ideas of a universal language with complete conceptual classification by categories is still debated on various levels. Michel Foucault believes such classifications to be subjective, citing Borges' fictional Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge's Taxonomy as an illustrative example.

A recent philosophical synthesis has also connected Leibniz's interest in environmental engineering with Systems Ecology. It has been proposed that a modern form

of Leibniz's *Characteristica Universalis* is the Energy Systems Language of Systems Ecology, which has been used to develop ecological-economic systems overviews of landscapes, technologies, and Nations.

One consequence of this seems to be that Leibniz's Enlightenment project is alive and being applied globally in the evaluation of ecological sustainability.

WORLD LANGUAGE

A world language is a language spoken internationally which is learned by many people as a second language. A world language is not only characterized by the number of its speakers (native or second language speakers), but also by its geographical distribution, and its use in international organizations and in diplomatic relations.

In this respect, major world languages are dominated by languages of European origin. The historical reason for this is the period of European colonialism.

The international prominence of Arabic has its historical reason in the medieval Islamic conquests and the subsequent Arabization of the Middle East, and also exists as a liturgical language amongst Muslim communities outside of the Arab World. Standard Chinese is the direct replacement of Classical Chinese which was an important historical lingua franca in Far East Asia until the early 20th century, and today serves the function of providing a common spoken language between speakers of different and mutually unintelligible Chinese spoken languages not only within China proper (between the Han Chinese and other unrelated ethnic groups), but in overseas Chinese communities as well as being widely taught as a second language internationally. Russian was used in the Russian empire and the Soviet Union, and today is in use and widely understood in areas of Central and Eastern Europe, and Northern and Central Asia which were formerly part of the Soviet Union, or of the former Soviet bloc, and it

remains the lingua franca in the Commonwealth of Independent States. German served as a lingua franca in large portions of Europe for centuries, mainly the Holy Roman Empire and later the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It remains an important second language in much of Central and Eastern Europe, and in the international scientific community.

Other major languages are not widely used across several continents, but have had an international significance as the *lingua franca* of a historical empire. These include Greek in the Hellenistic world after the conquests of Alexander the Great, and in the territories of the Byzantine Empire; Latin in the Roman Empire and previously as the standard liturgical language for the Catholic faithful worldwide; Classical Chinese in East Asia during the Imperial era of Chinese history; Persian (or *Farsi*, as it is known in the Persian language) during ancient and medieval incarnations of various succeeding Persian Empires, and once served as the second lingua franca of the Islamic World after Arabic; Sanskrit during the ancient and medieval historical periods of various states in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia, and like Latin an important liturgical language of the Vedic religions.

The major languages of the Indian subcontinent have numbers of speakers comparable to those of major world languages primarily due to the large population in the region rather than a supra-regional use of these languages, although Hindustani (including all Hindi dialects and Urdu) and to a lesser extent Tamil may fulfill the criteria in terms of supra-regional usage and international recognition.

As an example, the native speaking population of Bengali vastly outnumber those who speak French as a first language, and it is one of the most spoken languages (ranking fifth or sixth) in the world with nearly 230 million total speakers, and is known for its long and rich literary tradition. However, while French is spoken

intercontinentally, is internationally recognized to be of high linguistic prestige and used in diplomacy and international commerce, as well as having a significant portion of second language speakers throughout the world, the overwhelming majority of Bengali speakers are native Bengali people, with little to no influence outside of its regionally limited *sprachraum* or language space.

History

Historical world languages include Sumerian, Akkadian, Old Aramaic, Koine Greek, Latin, Arabic, Sanskrit, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English, French and Russian.

The Romance languages bear testimony to the role of Latin as the *lingua franca* of the Roman Empire. Koine Greek was the "world language" of the Hellenistic period, but its distribution is not reflected in the distribution of Modern Greek due to the linguistic impact of the Slavic, Arabic and Turkic expansions. The distribution of the Turkic languages, in turn, are a legacy of the Turkic Khaganate.

Just as all the living world languages owe their status to historical imperialism, the suggestion of a given language as a world language or "universal language" has strong political implications. Thus, Russian was declared the "world language of internationalism" in Soviet literature, which at the same time denounced French as the "language of fancy courtiers" and English as the "jargon of traders". A number of international auxiliary languages have been introduced as prospective world languages, the most successful of them being Esperanto, but none of them can claim the status of a living world language. Many natural languages have been proffered as candidates for a global *lingua franca*, including Italian, Dutch, Hungarian, German and Malay.

Living World Languages

Some sources define a living world language as having the following properties:

- a large number of speakers
- a substantial fraction of non-native speakers (function as *lingua franca*)
- official status in several countries
- a linguistic community not defined strictly along ethnic lines (multiethnic, pluricentric language)
- one or more standard registers which are widely taught as a foreign language
- association with linguistic prestige
- use in international trade relations
- use in international organizations
- use in the academic community
- significant body of literature

Two languages with a number of speakers in excess of 100 million, Japanese and Bengali, are not listed. Although considered to be some of the most internationally significant languages along with the listed world languages, they are not considered world languages *per se* - Japan for example is almost ethnically, culturally and linguistically homogeneous, thus Japanese does not have much history as a *lingua franca* amongst communities who do not share a mother tongue or first language; their overseas communities are strongly tied to ethnicity; Bengali is not as widely taught as a foreign language as Japanese, where international interest since the 1980s have prompted many major universities as well as a number of secondary and even primary schools worldwide to offer courses in the language; and at least in the present, these languages exert a regionally limited sphere of influence;).

FIRST LANGUAGE

A first language (also native language, mother tongue, arterial language, or L1) is the language(s) a person has learned from birth or within the critical period, or that a person speaks the best and so is often the basis for

sociolinguistic identity. In some countries, the terms *native language* or *mother tongue* refer to the language of one's ethnic group rather than one's first language.. Sometimes, there can be more than one mother tongue, when the child's parents speak different languages. Those children are usually called bilingual.

By contrast, a *second language* is any language that one speaks other than one's first language.

Terminology

Sometimes the term *native language* is used to indicate a language that a person is as proficient in as a native individual of that language's "base country", or as proficient as the average person who speaks no other language but that language.

Sometimes the term *mother tongue* or *mother language* is used for the language that a person learnt as a child at home (usually from their parents). Children growing up in bilingual homes can, according to this definition, have more than one mother tongue or native language.

In the context of population censuses conducted on the Canadian population, Statistics Canada defines *mother tongue* as "the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census." It is quite possible that the first language learned is no longer a speaker's dominant language. This includes young immigrant children, whose families have moved to a new linguistic environment, as well as people who learned their mother tongue as a young child at home (rather than the language of the majority of the community), who may have lost, in part or in totality, the language they first acquired

Mother Language

The term *mother language* should not be interpreted to mean that it is the language of one's mother. In some

paternal societies, the wife moves in with the husband and thus may have a different first language than the husband. *Mother* in this context originated from the use of "mother" to mean "origin" as in *motherland*.

In some countries such as Kenya, India, and various East Asian countries, "mother language" or "native language" is used to indicate the language of one's ethnic group, in both common and journalistic parlance (e.g. 'I have no apologies for not learning my mother tongue'), rather than one's first language. Also in Singapore, "mother tongue" refers to the language of one's ethnic group regardless of actual proficiency, while the "first language" refers to the English language that was established on the island through British colonisation, which is the lingua franca for most post-independence Singaporeans due to its use as the language of instruction in government schools and as a working language.

J. R. R. Tolkien in his 1955 lecture "English and Welsh" distinguishes the "native tongue" from the "cradle tongue," the latter being the language one happens to learn during early childhood, while one's true "native tongue" may be different, possibly determined by an inherited linguistic taste, and may later in life be discovered by a strong emotional affinity to a specific dialect (Tolkien personally confessed to such an affinity to the Middle English of the West Midlands in particular).

21 February has been proclaimed the International Mother Language Day by UNESCO on 17 November 1999.

Significance

The first language of a child is part of their personal, social and cultural identity. Another impact of the first language is that it brings about the reflection and learning of successful social patterns of acting and speaking. It is basically responsible for differentiating the linguistic competence of acting.

On Multilinguality

One can have two or more native languages, thus being a native *bilingual* or indeed *multilingual*. The order in which these languages are learned is not necessarily the order of proficiency. For instance, a French-speaking couple might have a daughter who learned French first, then English; but if she were to grow up in an English-speaking country, she would likely be proficient in English. Other examples are India and South Africa, where most people speak more than one language.

The Brazilian linguist Cleo Altenhofen considers the denomination "mother tongue" in its general usage to be imprecise and subject to various interpretations that are biased linguistically, especially with respect to bilingual children from ethnic minority groups. He cites his own experience as a bilingual speaker of Portuguese and Riograndenser Hunsrückisch, a German-rooted language brought to southern Brazil by the first German immigrants. In his case, like that of many children whose home language differs from the language of the environment (the 'official' language), it is debatable which language is one's 'mother tongue'. Many scholars have given definitions of 'mother tongue' through the years based on common usage, the emotional relation of the speaker towards the language, and even its dominance in relation to the environment. However, all of these criteria lack precision.

Defining Mother Tongue

- Based on origin: the language(s) one learned first (the language(s) in which one has established the first long-lasting verbal contacts).
- Based on internal identification: the language(s) one identifies with/as a speaker of;
- Based on external identification: the language(s) one is identified with/as a speaker of, by others.
- Based on competence: the language(s) one knows best.
- Based on function: the language(s) one uses most.

CONSTRUCTED LANGUAGE

A planned or constructed language—known colloquially as a conlang—is a language whose phonology, grammar, and/or vocabulary has been consciously devised by an individual or group, instead of having evolved naturally. There are many possible reasons to create a constructed language: to ease human communication; to give fiction or an associated constructed world an added layer of realism; for linguistic experimentation; for artistic creation; and for language games.

The expression *planned language* is sometimes used to mean international auxiliary languages and other languages designed for actual use in human communication. Some prefer it to the term "artificial", as that term may have pejorative connotations in some languages. Outside the Esperanto community, the term language planning means the prescriptions given to a natural language to standardize it; in this regard, even "natural languages" may be artificial in some respects.

Prescriptive grammars, which date to ancient times for classical languages such as Latin, Sanskrit, and Chinese are rule-based codifications of natural languages, such codifications being a middle ground between naive natural selection and development of language and its explicit construction. The term *glossopoeia*, coined by J. R. R. Tolkien, is also used to mean language construction, particularly construction of artistic languages.

Planned, Constructed, Artificial

The terms "planned", "constructed", and "artificial" are used differently in some traditions. For example, few speakers of Interlingua consider their language artificial, since they assert that it has no invented content: Interlingua's vocabulary is taken from a small set of natural languages, and its grammar is based closely on these source languages, even including some degree of irregularity; its

proponents prefer to describe its vocabulary and grammar as standardized rather than artificial or constructed. Similarly, Latino sine Flexione (LsF) is a simplification of Latin from which the inflections have been removed. As with Interlingua, some prefer to describe its development as "planning" rather than "constructing". Some speakers of Esperanto and Ido also avoid the term "artificial language" because they deny that there is anything "unnatural" about the use of their language in human communication. By contrast, some philosophers have argued that all human languages are conventional or artificial. François Rabelais, for instance, stated: "C'est abus de dire que nous avons une langue naturelle; les langues sont par institution arbitraires et conventions des peuples." (*It's misuse to say that we have a natural language; languages are by institution arbitrary and conventions of peoples.*) This article deals with "planned" or "constructed" languages designed for human/human-like communication.

Overview

Constructed languages are categorized as either *a priori* languages or *a posteriori* languages. The grammar and vocabulary of the former are created from scratch, either by the author's imagination or by computation; the latter possess a grammar and vocabulary derived from natural language.

In turn, a posteriori languages are divided into schematic languages, in which a natural or partly natural vocabulary is altered to fit pre-established rules, and naturalistic languages, in which a natural vocabulary retains its normal sound and appearance. While Esperanto is generally considered schematic, Interlingua is viewed as naturalistic. Ido is presented either as a schematic language or as a compromise between the two types.

Further, fictional and experimental languages can be naturalistic in that they are meant to sound natural, have realistic amounts of irregularity, and, if derived *a posteriori*

from a real-world natural language or real-world reconstructed proto-language (such as Vulgar Latin or Proto-Indo-European) or from a fictional proto-language, they try to imitate natural processes of phonological, lexical and grammatical change. In contrast with Interlingua, these languages are not usually intended for easy learning or communication; and most artlangers would not consider Interlingua to be naturalistic in the sense in which this term is used in artlang criticism. Thus, a naturalistic fictional language tends to be more difficult and complex. While Interlingua has simpler grammar, syntax, and orthography than its source languages (though more complex and irregular than Esperanto or Ido), naturalistic fictional languages typically mimic behaviors of natural languages like irregular verbs and nouns and complicated phonological processes.

In terms of purpose, most constructed languages can broadly be divided into:

- Engineered languages (*engelangs* /È[nda'læKz/), further subdivided into logical languages (*loglangs*), philosophical languages and experimental languages; devised for the purpose of experimentation in logic, philosophy, or linguistics;
- Auxiliary languages (*auxlangs*) devised for international communication (also IALs, for International Auxiliary Language);
- Artistic languages (*artlangs*) devised to create aesthetic pleasure or humorous effect, *just for fun*; usually secret languages and mystical languages are classified as artlangs

The boundaries between these categories are by no means clear. A constructed language could easily fall into more than one of the above categories. A logical language created for aesthetic reasons would also be classifiable as an artistic language, which might be created by someone with philosophical motives intending for said conlang to

be used as an auxiliary language. There are no rules, either inherent in the process of language construction or externally imposed, that would limit a constructed language to fitting only one of the above categories.

A constructed language can have native speakers if young children learn it from parents who speak it fluently. According to *Ethnologue*, there are "200–2000 who speak Esperanto as a first language" (most famously George Soros). A member of the Klingon Language Institute, d'Armond Speers, attempted to raise his son as a native (bilingual with English) Klingon speaker.

As soon as a constructed language has a community of fluent speakers, especially if it has numerous native speakers, it begins to evolve and hence loses its constructed status. For example, Modern Hebrew was modeled on Biblical Hebrew rather than engineered from scratch, and has undergone considerable changes since the state of Israel was founded in 1948 (Hetzron 1990:693). However, linguist Ghil'ad Zuckermann argues that Modern Hebrew, which he terms "Israeli", is a Semito-European hybrid, based not only on Hebrew but also on Yiddish and other languages spoken by revivalists. Zuckermann therefore endorses the translation of the Hebrew Bible into what he calls "Israeli". Esperanto as a living spoken language has evolved significantly from the prescriptive blueprint published in 1887, so that modern editions of the *Fundamenta Krestomatio*, a 1903 collection of early texts in the language, require many footnotes on the syntactic and lexical differences between early and modern Esperanto.

Proponents of constructed languages often have many reasons for using them. The famous but disputed Sapir–Whorf hypothesis is sometimes cited; this claims that the language one speaks influences the way one thinks. Thus, a "better" language should allow the speaker to think more clearly or intelligently or to encompass more points of view; this was the intention of Suzette Haden Elgin in

creating Láadan, the language embodied in her feminist science fiction series *Native Tongue*. A constructed language could also be used to restrict thought, as in George Orwell's Newspeak, or to simplify thought, as in Toki Pona. In contrast, linguists such as Stephen Pinker argue that ideas exist independently of language. Thus, children spontaneously re-invent slang and even grammar with each generation. If this is true, attempts to control the range of human thought through the reform of language would fail, as concepts like "freedom" will reappear in new words if the old vanish.

Proponents claim a particular language makes it easier to express and understand concepts in one area, and more difficult in others. An example can be taken from the way various computer languages make it easier to write certain kinds of programs and harder to write others.

Another reason cited for using a constructed language is the telescope rule; this claims that it takes less time to first learn a simple constructed language and then a natural language, than to learn only a natural language. Thus, if someone wants to learn English, some suggest learning Basic English first. Constructed languages like Esperanto and Ido are in fact often simpler due to the typical lack of irregular verbs and other grammatical quirks. Some studies have found that learning Esperanto helps in learning a non-constructed language later.

The ISO 639-2 standard reserves the language code "art" to denote artificial languages. However, some constructed languages have their own ISO 639 language codes (e.g. "eo" and "epo" for Esperanto, "io" and "ido" for Ido, "ia" and "ina" for Interlingua, "qny" for Quenya).

History

Ancient Linguistic Experiments

Grammatical speculation dates from Classical Antiquity, appearing for instance in Plato's *Cratylus* in Hermogenes's

contention that words are not inherently linked to what they refer to; that people apply "a piece of their own voice...to the thing." Athenaeus of Naucratis, in Book III of Deipnosophistae, tells the story of two figures: Dionysius of Sicily and Alexarchus. Dionysius of Sicily created neologisms like *menandros* "virgin" (from *menei* "waiting" and *andra* "husband"), *menekratçs* "pillar" (from *menei* "it remains in one place" and *kratei* "it is strong"), and *ballantion* "javelin" (from *balletai enantion* "thrown against someone"). Incidentally, the more common Greek words for those three are *parthenos*, *stulos*, and *akon*. Alexarchus of Macedon, the brother of King Cassander of Macedon, was the founder of the city of Ouranopolis. Athenaeus recounts a story told by Heracleides of Lembos that Alexarchus "introduced a peculiar vocabulary, referring to a rooster as a "dawn-crier," a barber as a "mortal-shaver," a drachma as "worked silver"...and a herald as an *aputçs* [from *çputa* "loud-voiced"]. "He once wrote something...to the public authorities in Casandreia...As for what this letter says, in my opinion not even the Pythian god could make sense of it." While the mechanisms of grammar suggested by classical philosophers were designed to explain existing languages (Latin, Greek, Sanskrit), they were not used to construct new grammars. Roughly contemporary to Plato, in his descriptive grammar of Sanskrit, PâGini constructed a set of rules for explaining language, so that the text of his grammar may be considered a mixture of natural and constructed language.

Early Constructed Languages

The earliest non-natural languages were considered less "constructed" than "super-natural", mystical, or divinely inspired. The Lingua Ignota, recorded in the 12th century by St. Hildegard of Bingen is an example; apparently it is a form of private mystical cant. An important example from Middle-Eastern culture is Balaibalan, invented in the 16th century. Kabbalistic grammatical speculation was directed at recovering the original language spoken by

Adam and Eve in Paradise, lost in the confusion of tongues. The first Christian project for an ideal language is outlined in Dante Alighieri's *De vulgari eloquentia*, where he searches for the ideal Italian vernacular suited for literature. Ramon Llull's *Ars magna* was a project of a perfect language with which the infidels could be convinced of the truth of the Christian faith. It was basically an application of combinatorics on a given set of concepts. During the Renaissance, Lullian and Kabbalistic ideas were drawn upon in a magical context, resulting in cryptographic applications. The Voynich manuscript may be an example of this.

Perfecting Language

Renaissance interest in Ancient Egypt, notably the discovery of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo, and first encounters with the Chinese script directed efforts towards a perfect written language. Johannes Trithemius, in *Steganographia* and *Polygraphia*, attempted to show how all languages can be reduced to one. In the 17th century, interest in magical languages was continued by the Rosicrucians and Alchemists (like John Dee). Jakob Boehme in 1623 spoke of a "natural language" (*Natursprache*) of the senses.

Musical languages from the Renaissance were tied up with mysticism, magic and alchemy, sometimes also referred to as the language of the birds. The Solresol project of 1817 re-invented the concept in a more pragmatic context.

1600's-1700's: Advent of Philosophical Languages

The 17th century saw the rise of projects for "philosophical" or "a priori" languages, such as:

- Francis Lodwick's *A Common Writing* (1647) and *The Groundwork or Foundation laid (or So Intended) for the Framing of a New Perfect Language and a Universal Common Writing* (1652)

- Sir Thomas Urquhart's *Ekskybalauron* (1651) and *Logopandecteision* (1652)
- George Dalgarno's *Ars signorum*, 1661
- John Wilkins' *Essay towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language*, 1668

These early taxonomic conlangs produced systems of hierarchical classification that were intended to result in both spoken and written expression. Leibniz had a similar purpose for his *lingua generalis* of 1678, aiming at a lexicon of characters upon which the user might perform calculations that would yield true propositions automatically, as a side-effect developing binary calculus. These projects were not only occupied with reducing or modelling grammar, but also with the arrangement of all human knowledge into "characters" or hierarchies, an idea that with the Enlightenment would ultimately lead to the *Encyclopédie*. Many of these 1600's-1700's conlangs were pasigraphies, or purely written languages with no spoken form or a spoken form that would vary greatly according to the native language of the reader.

Leibniz and the encyclopedists realized that it is impossible to organize human knowledge unequivocally in a tree diagram, and consequently to construct an *a priori* language based on such a classification of concepts. Under the entry *Charactère*, D'Alembert critically reviewed the projects of philosophical languages of the preceding century. After the *Encyclopédie*, projects for *a priori* languages moved more and more to the lunatic fringe. Individual authors, typically unaware of the history of the idea, continued to propose taxonomic philosophical languages until the early 20th century (e.g. Ro), but most recent engineered languages have had more modest goals; some are limited to a specific field, like mathematical formalism or calculus (e.g. Lincos and programming languages), others are designed for eliminating syntactical ambiguity (e.g., Loglan and Lojban) or maximizing conciseness (e.g., Ithkuil).

1800's: Auxiliary Languages

Already in the *Encyclopédie* attention began to focus on *a posteriori* auxiliary languages. Joachim Faiguet in the article on *Langue* already wrote a short proposition of a "laconic" or regularized grammar of French. During the 19th century, a bewildering variety of such International Auxiliary Languages (IALs) were proposed, so that Louis Couturat and Leopold Leau in *Histoire de la langue universelle* (1903) reviewed 38 projects.

The first of these that made any international impact was Volapük, proposed in 1879 by Johann Martin Schleyer; within a decade, 283 Volapükist clubs were counted all over the globe. However, disagreements between Schleyer and some prominent users of the language led to schism, and by the mid 1890s it fell into obscurity, making way for Esperanto, proposed in 1887 by Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof. Ido, made public in 1907, was a reform of Esperanto. Interlingua, the most recent auxlang to gain a significant number of speakers, emerged in 1951, when the International Auxiliary Language Association published its Interlingua-English Dictionary and an accompanying grammar. The success of Esperanto did not stop others from trying to construct new auxiliary languages, such as Leslie Jones' Eurolengo, which mixes elements of English and Spanish, or He Yafu's Mondlango, which introduces more English roots instead of Latin ones.

Loglan (1955) and its descendants constitute a pragmatic return to the aims of the *a priori* languages, tempered by the requirement of usability of an auxiliary language. Thus far, these modern *a priori* languages have garnered only small groups of speakers.

Artlangs

Artistic languages, constructed for literary enjoyment or aesthetic reasons without any claim of usefulness, begin to appear in Early Modern literature (in Pantagruel, and in Utopian contexts), but they only seem to gain notability

as serious projects beginning in the 20th century. *A Princess of Mars* by Edgar Rice Burroughs was possibly the first fiction of that century to feature a constructed language. Tolkien was the first to develop a family of related fictional languages and was the first academic to publicly discuss artistic languages, giving a lecture entitled "*A Secret Vice*" circa 1930 at a congress. (Orwell's Newspeak is considered a satire of an IAL rather than an artistic language proper.)

By the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century, it had become common for science-fiction and fantasy works set in other worlds to feature constructed languages, or more commonly, an extremely limited but defined vocabulary which *suggests* the existence of a complete language, and constructed languages are a regular part of the genre, appearing in *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, *Stargate SG-1*, *Atlantis: The Lost Empire*, *Avatar*, *Dune* and the *Myst* series of computer adventure games. The most famous of these is the Klingon language from *Star Trek*, which has a large and extensible vocabulary and a full set of functional grammar rules. There is also Dragon-tongue, as seen in *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, created by the team at Bethesda Softworks.

Modern Conlang Organizations

Various paper zines on constructed languages were published from the 1970s through the 1990s, such as *Glossopoeic Quarterly*, *Taboo Jadoo*, and *The Journal of Planned Languages*. The Conlang Mailing List was founded in 1991, and later split off an AUXLANG mailing list dedicated to international auxiliary languages. In the early-to-mid 1990s a few conlang-related zines were published as email or websites, such as *Vortpunoj* and *Model Languages*. The Conlang mailing list has developed a community of conlangers with its own customs, such as translation challenges and translation relays, and its own terminology. Sarah Higley reports from results of her surveys that the demographics of the Conlang list are primarily

men from North America and western Europe, with a smaller number from Oceania, Asia, the Middle East, and South America, with an age range from thirteen to over sixty; the number of women participating has increased over time. More recently founded online communities include the Zompist Bulletin Board (ZBB; since 2001) and the Conlanger Bulletin Board. Discussion on these fora includes presentation of members' conlangs and feedback from other members, discussion of natural languages, whether particular conlang features have natural language precedents, and how interesting features of natural languages can be repurposed for conlangs, posting of interesting short texts as translation challenges, and meta-discussion about the philosophy of conlanging, conlangers' purposes, and whether conlanging is an art or a hobby. Another 2001 survey by Patrick Jarrett showed an average age of 30.65, with the average time since starting to invent languages 11.83 years. A more recent thread on the ZBB showed that many conlangers spend a relatively small amount of time on any one conlang, moving from one project to another; about a third spend years on developing the same language.

Collaborative Constructed Languages

While most constructed languages have been created by a single person, a few are the results of group collaborations; examples are Interlingua, which was developed by the International Auxiliary Language Association, and Lojban, which was developed by a breakaway group of Loglanists.

Group collaboration has apparently become more common in recent years, as constructed language designers have started using Internet tools to coordinate design efforts. NGL/Tokcir was an early Internet collaborative engineered language whose designers used a mailing list to discuss and vote on grammatical and lexical design issues. More recently, The Demos IAL Project was developing an

international auxiliary language with similar collaborative methods. The Voksigid and Novial 98 languages were both worked on by mailing lists, though neither was issued in final form.

Several artistic languages have been developed on different constructed language wikis, usually involving discussion and voting on phonology, grammatical rules and so forth. An interesting variation is the corpus approach, exemplified by Madjal (late 2004) and Kalusa (mid-2006), where contributors simply read the corpus of existing sentences and add their own sentences, perhaps reinforcing existing trends or adding new words and structures. The Kalusa engine adds the ability for visitors to rate sentences as acceptable or unacceptable. There is no explicit statement of grammatical rules or explicit definition of words in this corpus approach; the meaning of words is inferred from their use in various sentences of the corpus, perhaps in different ways by different readers and contributors, and the grammatical rules can be inferred from the structures of the sentences that have been rated highest by the contributors and other visitors.

A special example for this kind of language is Simplish: the German Artist Ulli Purwin tried to set a focus on (what Germans call) 'Anglicisms'—in a humorous way. Everyone is invited to increase the vocabulary: from 'ââtist' to 'ørn'...

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6

Basic English Usage and Communicative Competence

INTRODUCTION

Communicative competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. The term was coined by Dell Hymes in 1966, reacting against the perceived inadequacy of Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between competence and performance. To address Chomsky's abstract notion of competence, Hymes undertook ethnographic exploration of communicative competence that included "communicative form and function in integral relation to each other" (Leung, 2005). The approach pioneered by Hymes is now known as the ethnography of communication. As much as there has already been much debate about linguistic competence and communicative competence in the second and foreign language teaching literature, the outcome has always been the consideration of communicative competence as a superior model of language following Hymes' opposition to Chomsky's linguistic competence. This opposition has been adopted by those who seek new directions toward a communicative era by taking for granted the basic motives and the appropriacy of this opposition behind the development of communicative competence. The focus of this chapter, and

the data base employed, are considerably different. Rather than focusing on a micro-analysis of learner input in specific interactional events, attention will be paid to the input-output relationship at the level of language proficiency *traits,* specifically the traits of grammatical, discourse annnd sociolinguistic competence. The data come from children whose first language is English, and who are learning French as a second language in the school setting of a French immersion programme. Compared with ESL learners, these children make infrequent use of the target language outside of the school setting. Thus, the second language input to these students is largely that of native-speaker teacher talk and non-native peer talk, as well as, of course, experience with literacy activities. Within a theoretical framework that incorporates traits and contexts of language use, the structure of the immersion students' output, that is, the structure of their language proficiency can be seen to relate rather directly to the nature of the input received.

However, aspects of the immersion students' second language proficiency cannot be totally accounted for on the basis of the input received. This chapter, then, will consider the second language proficiency exhibited by these French immersion students, relating their output at a macro level to their language learning environment. Of the conclusions I will draw, one that I think is fundamental to our understanding of the role of input in second language acquisition, is that although comprehensible input (Krashen 1981, 1982) may be essential to the acquisition of a second language, it is not enough to ensure that the outcome will be native-like performance. In fact, I will argue that while comprehensible input and the concomitant emphasis on interaction in which meaning is negotiated (e.g. Long 1983; Varonis and Gass 1985) is essential, its impact on grammatical development has been overstated.

The role of these interactional exchanges in second language acquisition may have as much to do with

'comprehensible output,' as it has to do with comprehensible input. The data I will be drawing on in this chapter come from one study undertaken within the context of a large-scale research project concerned with the development of bilingual proficiency. The overall aim of the research is to explore the influences of social, educational and individual variables on the processes and outcomes of second language learning. The specific goal of the study I will be discussing here was to determine the extent to which certain components of language proficiency represented in our theoretical framework as linguistic traits were empirically distinguishable, and were differentially manifested in oral and written tasks. Other studies currently underway as part of the same large-scale research program will compare the structure of language proficiency of French immersion students with that of other learners who have learned their second language under considerably different conditions. Thus, although of theoretical interest, the research program has been designed to have direct bearing on language policy issues in schools through the identification of strengths and weaknesses in certain aspects of the students' language proficiency. The standardized questions are designed to elicit a range of verb forms and prepositions in French, as well as responses that are sufficiently elaborated to score of syntactic accuracy. Grammatical scoring, then, was based on the student's ability to use certain grammatical forms accurately in the context of particular questions. The grammatical multiple choice test consists of forty-five items assessing knowledge of similar aspects of syntax and morphology as were elicited in the interview situation.

In the grammatical written production tasks the student is presented with four situations and asked to write a short text about each. The four topics were designed to bias towards the use of the past and present tenses through two narrations, and future and conditional tenses through two letters of request.

Grammatical errors were tallied for each of four categories: syntactic errors, preposition errors, homophonous verb errors and non-homophonous verb errors. The error counts were translated into accuracy scores by considering them, in the case of syntactic errors, relative to the number of finite verbs produced; in the case of prepositions, relative to the number of obligatory contexts for prepositions; and in the case of verb errors, relative to the number of verb forms produced. Before moving on to a description of the tasks and scoring procedures used in measuring the discourse and sociolinguistic traits, it is useful to examine the results obtained by the grade 6 immersion students who took the grammar tests relative to native speakers of French also in grade 6.

The results reported in this paper are based on a sub-sample of sixty-nine French immersion students who were administered the entire battery of oral production, multiple choice and written production tests. These immersion students have been in a program in which they were taught entirely in French in kindergarten and grade 1, about 80% in French in grades 2 to 4, about 60% in French in grade 5, and about 50% in French in grade 6 — the year they were tested. The comparison group of native French speakers consists of ten grade 6 students who likewise were administered the entire test battery. The native speakers of French were in a unilingual French school in Montreal. The essential point to note in these tables is that with the exception of correct use of homophonous verb forms, the native speakers score significantly higher ($p<.01$) than the immersion students, indicating clearly that, although the immersion students are doing quite well, they have not acquired native-like abilities in the grammatical domain.

The second trait measured, that of discourse competence, was defined as the ability to produce and recognize coherent and cohesive text. The discourse oral production task is designed to elicit narrative and argumentation. The students are shown a short nonverbal film, *The Mole and the*

Bulldozer, chosen for its appropriateness to the age group of the students being tested, and for its provocative content which illustrates the conflict between modern technology and the preservation of nature. The day following the film's showing, students are taken individually from class and asked to tell the story of the film. A series of pictures of key events is placed in front of the child to minimize the burden on memory. Following the narration, the student is asked to role-play the mole and try to convince the bulldozers not to change the route of a road, using all the arguments he or she can think of. Under the category of 'setting the scene,' the student's establishment of the idyllic habitat and lifestyle of the mole was assessed. This was important for the coherence of the story as it was this idyllic atmosphere that was at risk throughout. Under the category of 'identification,' the student was rated for the explicitness and clarity with which key characters, objects and locations were introduced into the narrative. Because the student had been given to understand that the interviewer had not seen the movie, it was incumbent on the student to name the characters, objects and locations. Under the category 'logical sequence of events,' a rating was given for the logical coherence with which the events of the story were narrated.

Thus it was important to explain how the mole knew the bulldozers were coming and would endanger his garden, and what the various steps were that the mole took to insure the safety of his property. And finally, under the category of 'time orientation,' a rating was given for the coherent use of verb tenses, temporal conjunctions, adverbials and other elements that clarified the temporal relationship between the events of the story. Each of these categories was rated on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). The role-playing situation was also rated on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) for the extent to which logical arguments were presented to support the mole's case that the road should not be straightened. And finally a global score of 1 (low) to

5 (high) was obtained representing the rates' subjective integration of scene setting, idenfitication, logic, time sequence and argument. The multiple choice test of discourse competence consists of twenty-nine items primarily measuring coherence. Each item is a short passage of two to five sentences. One sentence is omitted from the passage, and the task is to select the appropriate completion from a set of three alternatives.

The criterion for selection is primarily the logical coherence of the passage. Intersentential cohesive devices are explicitly incorporated in some items as a basis for choice. The written discourse production tasks were the same ones used in the grammatical production tasks, two compositions involving narrative discourse and two letters involving suasion. Scoring for discourse involved six categories:

1. basic task fulfilment;
2. identification;
3. time orientation;
4. anaphora;
5. logical connection;
6. punctuation.

The assessment of 'basic task fulfilment' involved rating how well the written work fulfilled the basic semantic requirements of the discourse task. The qualify as narratives, for example, the compositions needed to include a series of events.

To qualify as suasion, the letters had to contain a request with at least one supporting argument. The category of 'identification' was similar to that for the oral production task in which an assessment was made of whether new characters, objects and locations were sufficiently identified, or whether too much prior knowledge on the part of the reader was assumed. The category of 'time orientation' was also similar to that use in the oral production task,

assessing how adequately events or situations were located in time, and, where relevant, whether the temporal relationship between events or situations was clear. Under the category of 'anaphora,' the use of anaphoric reference to already identified characters, objects, or locations through the use of subject pronouns, possessive adjectives and articles was assessed. The category of 'logical connection' assessed the logical relationship between segments of the text: whether there were non-sequiturs, semantically obscure or fragmentary incidents, or logically missing steps in the argument or sequence of events. The final category, that of 'punctuation' was rated as an indication of the information structure of a text.

Ratings were based on the extent to which punctuation clarified the information structure of the text by indicating boundaries of information units. Each of these categories was rated on a five-point scale of 0 (low) to 2 (high). Following the detailed scoring, the raters who had scored the six discourse categories independently assigned a global discourse score by first sorting the written tasks into three categories of below average, average and above average, and then rating them as relatively high or low within each of these three categories. This resulted in a six-point scale. The criteria for assigning a global score were not closely specified: the scorers were simply asked to keep in mind the general criterion of coherent discourse. On the separate aspects of discourse which were rated, examination of the comparisons between the immersion and native-speaker students reveals only two significant differences: in the case of oral production, native speakers are rated significantly higher than immersion students on time orientation ($p<.01$); and in the case of written production, native speakers are rated significantly lower than immersion students on punctuation ($p<.01$). The non-significant trend revealed by these comparisons, but indicated in the comparison of total discourse scores is that native speakers generally perform better than the immersion students on

the oral story retelling task, but do not differ in their performance on the written production tasks. There would seem to be two possible interpretations for the different results obtained by a comparison of the *total* written discourse scores from those obtained by a comparison of the *global* written discourse scores. It may indicate that the raters were able to detect qualitative differences in the written discourse of native speakers and immersion students that were not captured in the detailed component scores, or it may be that the raters did not stay strictly within the bounds of discourse in making their global ratings. For example, if the raters inadvertently attended to grammatical aspects, which, as he been seen, are clearly better in the native-speaking sample, they may have rated the native speakers better for the wrong reason. At this point then, it can be seen that differences between the native and non-native groups depend on the trait being measured. For grammar, the difference is large regardless of method; for discourse, the difference is small regardless of method.

These results suggest that the grammatical trait is distinguishable from the discourse trait. The third trait measured, that of sociolinguistic competence, was defined as the ability to produce and recognize socially appropriate language within a given sociocultural context. The oral production sociolinguistic test consists of presenting a series of twelve situations using slides and audio accompaniment describing the situation. Each situation is a particular combination of one of three functions—request, suggestion or complaint; of one of two levels of formality — high or low; and of one of two settings — in school or out of school. The test begins with the tester explaining to the student being tested how different registers of speech may be used in different situations and illustrates this with an example. The student then watches a set of three slides and listens to the synchronized description. With the showing of the last slide, the student responds in the most appropriate way as if addressing the person shown in the slide. For

example, one set of slides shows two children in the school library who are the same age as the student being tested. The student hears a description, in French, that says 'You're in the library to study. But there are two persons at the next table who are speaking loudly, and are bothering you. You decide to ask them to make less noise. What would you say if the two persons were fiends of yours?' To change the level of formality, another set of slides shows two adults in the library, and the final question is 'What would you say if the two persons were adults that you don't know'? The objective of the scoring was to determine the extent to which students could vary their language use appropriately in response to the social demands of the different situations. In other words, the scores were t indicate the student's ability to use linguistic markers of formal register in formal situations and to refrain from using them in informal situations.

Thus, for each situation, a student's response was scored for the presence (= 1) or absence (= 0) of six markers of formal register. The six formal features were:

1. the use of an initial politeness marker such as *pardon* or *madame* in the utterance opening;
2. the use of *vous* as a form of address;
3. the use of question forms with *est-ce que* or inversion;
4. the use of the conditional verb form;
5. the inclusion of formal vocabulary and/or the use of additional explanatory information;
6. the use of concluding politeness markers such as *s'il vous plait.*

A student's score on a particular marker in a particular situation was taken as the difference between use of the marker in the formal variant of the situation and use in the informal variant. A good sociolinguistic score was thus a relatively high difference score, and a poor sociolinguistic score was a relatively low or negative difference score. The multiple choice test of sociolinguistic competence consists

of twenty-eight items designed to test the ability of a student to recognize the appropriateness of an utterance with respect to its sociocultural context.

The items describe a specific sociocultural situation and the student is asked to select the best of three possible ways to express a given idea in that situation. The items are designed to include both written and spoken language use in varying degrees o formality, and include the identification of certain written styles such as those use in proverbs, in publications such as journals, encyclopaedias and magazines, and in public notices. Before starting the text, the distinction between oral and written language is drawn to the students' attention, and the students are told that the register of the responses, not their gramaticality, is the important consideration. Each item is scored according to the degree of appropriateness based on native-speaker responses, with values ranging from nought to three points.

Two examples are given below:

1. A l'ecole, dans la cour de recreation, dite par une eleve a son ami
   (a) Pourrais-je te voir un instant?
   (b) Est-ce que je pourrais te parler quelques minutes?
   (c) Je peux te parler une minute?
2. Devant l'hotel de ville, ecrit sur un panneau public
   (a) Priere de ne pas passer sur le gazon.
   (b) Ne pas passer sur le gazon.
   (c) Vous ne devez pas passer sur le gazon.

The sociolinguistic written production tasks focus on two extremes of directive. The students wrote two letters requesting a favour of a higher status, unfamiliar adult. In addition, the students wrote two notes in which they assumed the role of a familiar adult (mother, teacher) imposing authority by means of a brief informal note to

get action from the student who is at fault in some way (has left room untidy, homework undone). As with the sociolinguistic oral production tasks, the scoring of the sociolinguistic written production tasks was designed to capture the student's ability to use formal sociolinguistic markers of politeness that were appropriate in the context of the letters, and to abstain from using such markers in the context of the notes. Thus each letter and note were scored for the presence or absence of several formal markers:

1. the use of conditional verb forms;
2. the use of modal verbs, and/or *est-ce que,* inverted and indirect question forms, and/or the use of idiomatic polite expressions (e.g. *ayez l'obligeance de*);
3. the use of *vous* as a form of address;
4. the use of formal closings (e.g. *merci a l'avance, merci de votre collaboration*).

As with the sociolinguistic oral task, a difference score was calculated between the use of each marker in the formal contexts and its use in the informal contexts. This is especially obvious in the use of the conditional where immersion students perform relatively poorly on both written and oral tasks. This result is not particularly surprising in light of the grammatical results reviewed earlier. Here, then, appears to be a good example of the dependence of some aspects of sociolinguistic performance on grammatical knowledge. The underuse of *vous* as a polite marker in formal contexts by immersion students as indicated in both Teachers address the students as *tu,* and students address each other as *tu*. The use of *vous* in the classroom setting is likely to be reserved for addressing groups of students, thus signalling its use as a plural form, or as a means of signalling annoyance on the part of the teacher. There are thus few opportunities in the classroom for the students to observe the use of *vous* as a politeness marker used in differential status situations. The picture which emerges from these results, then, is one of a group of

language learners who, although they have in some respects reached a high level of target language proficiency, are still appreciably different in their use of some aspects of the language from native speakers. This appears to be particularly evident in those aspects of communicative performance which demand the use of grammatical knowledge. These results are consistent with those we have found with grade 9 immersion students using a completely different set of tests (Lapkin, Swain and Cummins 1983).

Krashen (1981) has argued that learners 'acquire structure by understanding messages and not focusing on the form of input, by "going for meaning"' (p. 54). According to Krashen, this comprehensible input 'delivered in a low (affective) filter situation is the only "causative variable" in second language acquisition' (p. 57). Comprehensible input I take to mean language directed to the learner that contains some new element in it but that is nevertheless understood by the learner because of linguistic, paralinguistic or situational cues, or word knowledge back-up. It is different in nature, I think, from what Schachter (1984) has referred to as negative input includes, for example, explicit corrections, confirmation checks and clarification checks.

There is no reason to assume that negative input necessarily includes some new linguistic element in it for the learner. it may, for example, consist of a simple 'What?' in response to a learner utterance. As such it is basically information given to learners telling them to revise their output in some way because their current message has not been understood. The hypothesis that comprehensible input is the *only* causal variable in second language acquisition seems to me to be called into question by the immersion data just presented in that immersion students do receive considerable comprehensible input. Indeed, the immersion students in the study reported on here have been receiving comprehensible input in the target language for almost seven years.

One might question, then, whether the immersion students have in fact, been receiving comprehensible target language input. The evidence that they have, however, seems compelling. The evidence comes from their performance on tests of subject-matter achievement. For years now, in a number of French immersion programs across Canada, immersion students have been tested for achievement in such subjects as mathematics, science, history and geography, for which the language of instruction has been French, and their performance has been compared to that of students enrolled in the regular English program who are taught the same subject-matter content in their first language. In virtually all the comparisons the French immersion students have obtained achievement scores equivalent to those obtained by students in the regular English program (Swain and Lapkin 1982).

Furthermore, on tests of listening comprehension in French, the immersion students perform as well as native speakers of French by grade 6. This strongly suggests that the immersion students understood what they were being taught, that they focused on meaning. Yet, as we have seen, after seven years of this comprehensible input, the target system has not been fully acquired. This is not to say that the immersion students' input is not limited in some ways. We have already seen that there are few opportunities in the classroom for the students to observe the use of *vous* as a politeness marker in differential status situations. I suspect also that the content of every-day teaching provides little opportunity for the use of some grammatically realized functions of language.

The use of the conditional may be a case in point. But until data are collected pertaining to the language actually used by immersion teachers, nothing further can be said on this point. It is our intention to collect such immersion teacher talk data in the near future. Another way in which the immersion students' input may be limited they do. But as is pointed out below, in the later grades of school,

students are likely to hear more teacher talk than peer talk. And our own informal observations indicate that most peer-peer interaction that is not teacher directed is likely to occur in English rather than in French at this grade level. Given these possible limitations in input, the fact still remains that these immersion students have received comprehensible input in the target language for seven years.

Perhaps what this implies is that the notion of comprehensible input needs refinement. Long (1983), Varonis and Gass (1985), and others have suggested that it is not input *per se* that is important to second language acquisition, but input that occurs in interaction where meaning is negotiated. Under these conditions, linguistic input is simplified and the contributions made by the learner are paraphrased and expanded, thereby making the input more comprehensible. Given then, that comprehensible input is the causal variable in second language acquisition (Krashen 1981), the assumption is that second language acquisition results from these specific interactional, meaning-negotiated conversational turns. If this is the case, then, we may have part of the explanation for the immersion students' less than native-like linguistic performance.

In the context of an immersion class, especially in the later grade levels, and like in any first language classroom where teachers perceive their primary role as one of imparting subject-matter knowledge, the teachers talk and the students listen. As Long (1983) has indicated in the context of language classes, there are relatively few exchanges in classroom discourse motivated by a two-way exchange of information where both participants — teacher and student — enter the exchanges as conversational equals. This is equally true of content classes, and immersion classrooms are no exception. Immersion students, then, have — relative to 'street learners' of the target language — little opportunity to engage in two-way, negotiated meaning exchanges in the classroom. Under these

circumstances, the interaction input hypothesis would predict that second language acquisition would be limited. This prediction is consistent with the immersion students' performance if it is confined to grammatical acquisition. Confining this prediction to grammatical acquisition is compatible with what appears to be an assumption underlying the input interaction hypothesis — that second language acquisition is equivalent to grammatical acquisition. is equivalent to grammatical acquisition.

As has been indicated by the theoretical framework of linguistic proficiency used in this study, however, we consider second language acquisition to be more than grammatical acquisition, and to include at least the acquisition of discourse and sociolinguistic competence as well, in both oral and written modes. From this perspective, the relative paucity of two-way, meaning negotiated exchanges does not appear to have impeded the acquisition of discourse competence. Indeed, it seems likely that the diet of comprehensible, non-interactive, extended discourse received by the immersion students may account — at least in part — for their strong performance in this domain relative to native speakers. In short, what the immersion data suggest is that comprehensible input will contribute differentially to second language acquisition depending on the nature of that input, and the aspect of second language acquisition one is concerned with.

As is already suggested, the interaction input hypothesis is consistent with the prediction that immersion students will be somewhat limited in their grammatical development relative to native speakers because of their relatively limited opportunity to engage in such interaction. Although this provides a theoretically motivated and intuitively appealing explanation, I have several doubts about its adequacy. The doubts relate to two inter-related assumptions:

1. the assumption that it is the exchanges, themselves, in which meaning is negotiated that it is the

exchanges, themselves, in which meaning is negotiated that are facilitative to grammatical acquisition as a result of comprehensible input;

2. the assumption that the key facilitator is input, rather than output.

The first assumption, that the exchanges themselves are facilitative to grammatical acquisition, rests on the possibility that a learner can pay attention to meaning and form simultaneously. However, this seems unlikely. It seems much more likely that it is only when the substance of the message is understood that the learner can pay attention to the means of expression — the form of the message being conveyed.

As Cross (1978), examining the role of input in first language acquisition, stated: By matching the child's semantic intentions and ongoing cognitions, (the mother's) speech may free the child to concentrate on the formal aspects of her expressions and thus acquire syntax efficiently.

In other words, it would seem that negotiating measuring—coming to a communicative consensus — is a necessary first step to grammatical acquisition. It paves the way for future exchanges, where, because the message is understood, the learner is free to pay attention to form. Thus comprehensible input is crucial to grammatical acquisition, *not* because the focus is on meaning, *nor* because a two-way exchange is occurring, but because by being understood—by its match with the learner's ongoing intentions and cognitions — it permits the learner to focus on form. But this would appear to be the sort of comprehensible input that immersion students do, in large part, receive. What, then, is missing? I would like to suggest that what is missing is output. Krashen (1981) suggests that the only role of output is that of generating comprehensible input. But I think there are roles for output in second language acquisition that are independent of comprehensible input. A grade 9 immersion student told

me about what happens when he uses French. He said, 'I understand everything anyone says to me, and I can hear in my head how I should sound when I talk, but it never comes out that way.' (Immersion student, personal communication, Nov. 1980). In other words, one function of output is that it provides the opportunity for meaningful use of one's linguistic resources.

Smith (1978b, 1982) has argued that one learns to read by reading, and to write by writing. Similarly, it can be argued that one learns to speak by speaking. And one-to-one conversational exchanges provide an excellent opportunity for this to occur. Even better, though, are those interactions where there has been a communicative breakdown — where the learner has received some negative input — and the learner is pushed to use alternate means to get across his or her message. In order for native-speaker competence to be achieved, however, the meaning of 'negotiating meaning' needs to be extended beyond th usual sense of simply 'getting one's message across.' Simply getting one's message across can and does occur with grammatically deviant forms and socio-linguistically inappropriate language.

Negotiating meaning needs to incorporate the notion of being pushed towards the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently and appropriate language. Negotiating meaning needs to incorporate the notion of being pushed towards the delivery of a message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently and appropriately. Being 'pushed' in output, it seems to me, it is concept parallel to that of the $i + l$ of comprehensible input. Indeed, one might call this the 'comprehensible output' hypothesis.

There are at least two additional roles in second language acquisition that might be attributed to output other than that of 'contextualized' and 'pushed' language use. One, as Schachter (1984) has suggested, is the opportunity it provides

to test out hypotheses — to try out means of expression and see if they work. A second function is that using the language, as opposed to simply comprehending the language, may force the learner to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing. As Krashen (1982) has suggested: in many cases, we do not utilize syntax in understanding — we often get the message with a combination of vocabulary, or lexical information plus extra-linguistic information.

As such it is possible to comprehend input — to get the message—without a syntactic analysis of that input.[3] This could explain the phenomenon of individuals who can understand a language and yet can only produce limited utterances in it. They have just never got round to a syntactic analysis of the language because there has been no demand on them to produce the language. The claim, then, is that producing the target language may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her own intended meaning. The argument, then, is that immersion students do not demonstrate native-speaker productive competence, *not* because their comprehensible input is limited, but because their comprehensible output is limited. It is limited in two ways.

First, the students and simply not given — especially in later grades — adequate opportunities to use the target language in the classroom context.

Secondly, they are not being 'pushed' in their output. That is to say, the immersion students have developed, in the early grades, strategies for getting their meaning across which are adequate for the situation they find themselves in they are understood by their teachers and peers.

There appear to be little social or cognitive pressure to produce language that reflects more appropriately or precisely their intended meaning: there is no push to be more comprehensible than they already are. That is, there is no push for them to analyse further the grammar of the

target language because their current output appears to succeed in conveying their intended message. In other words, although the immersion students do receive comprehensible input, they no longer receive much negative input. This discussion has so far referred primarily to the acquisition of spoken language. However, much of the experience these immersion students have had with French has been literacy based. The primary task of early education is the development of reading and writing skills, and early immersion education is no different, except that it occur s in the students' second language. The results already presented relate not only to spoken language, but to language which makes use of literacy skills as well. However, performance across tasks within traits are not directly comparable in any way. Thus the results presented so far cannot address the issue of the relationship between spoken and written language. For this, we need to rely on factor analytic analyses. The factor analyses carried out to ate have involved only the total or global scores for each trait by method cell. It is a two factor solution with a general factor and a method factor. The method factor reflects the school experience of the students with the target language — one that highlights written rather than oral language — and is most strongly represented by the written discourse task. It is to be noted that the written discourse, task, as indicated in Table 6, is the one in which native speakers and immersion students performed most similarly. It also represents the sort of task which all students have had considerable experience with in school. That immersion students do as well as native speakers may reflect, then, their comprehensible output in this domain of language use. These results also indicate that there is no strong relationship between performance on the literacy-based tasks and performance on the oral tasks, except that captured by the global proficiency factor.

These results do not show the validity of the three postulated traits. However, it has already been shown

that in the wider context of immersion students *plus* native speakers, at least two of the three traits — grammar and discourse — are distinct.[4] The fact that these two traits do not emerge in the factor analysis is probably due largely to the homogeneity of the immersion sample. In the wider sample, the native speakers have had considerably different experiences from the immersion students, but among the immersion students the main experience for all the students is in the same sort of immersion classroom.

There are not major opportunities for some students to acquire certain aspects of language proficiency, and others to acquire different aspects. What is in common for these students is their literacy-based experience as revealed by the structure of their target language proficiency. The fact that no strong relationship is shown between their written and oral performance can be interpreted within the context of the previous discussion: whatever knowledge they have of the language that is literacy-based is only weakly demonstrated in their oral performance because in general, they have had limited opportunity to use and practise their speaking skills in communicative exchanges that require a precise and appropriate reflection of meaning, whereas they have had considerable practice in doing so in written tasks. To summarise and conclude the results of a series of tests administered to grade 6 French immersion students indicate that, in spite of seven years of comprehensible input in the target language, their grammatical performance is not equivalent to that of native speakers.

Immersion students, however, perform similarly to native speakers on those aspects of discourse and sociolinguistic competence which do not rely heavily on grammar for their realization. In addition, results from the immersion data reveal a structure of proficiency reflective of their school-based language learning situation: one which emphasizes written rather than spoken language. The findings are compatible with an explanation of grammatical

acquisition resulting in part through conversational exchanges in which meaning is negotiated. It was suggested, however, that these sorts of exchanges, although a prereqisite to acquisition are not themselves the source of acquisition derived from comprehensible input. Rather they are the source of acquisition derived from comprehensible output: output that extends the linguistic repertoire of the learner as he or she attempts to create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired.

Comprehensible output, it was argued, is a necessary mechanism of acquisition independent of the role of comprehensible input. its role is, at minimum, to provide opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use, to test out hypotheses about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it. Comprehensible output is, unfortunately, generally missing in typical classroom settings, language classrooms and immersion classrooms being no exceptions.

ACHIEVING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

To begin with first, the question of what constitutes 'language proficiency' and the nature of its cross-lingual dimensions is also at the core of many hotly debated issues in the areas of bilingual education and second language pedagogy and testing. Researchers have suggested ways of making second language teaching and testing more 'communicative' (e.g. Canale and Swain 1980a; Oller 1979) on the grounds that a communicative approach better reflects the nature of language proficiency than one which emphasises the aquisition of discrete language skills. Issues such as the effects of bilingual education on achievement, the appropriate age to begin teaching L2, and the consequences of different patterns of bilingual language use in the home on minority students' achievement are all intimately related to the broader issue of how L1 proficiency is related to the development of L2 proficiency. This issue,

in turn, clearly cannot be resolved without an adequate conceptualisation of the nature of 'language proficiency'.

Lack of a Theoretical Framework

An example from a Canadian study in which the teacher referral forms and psychological assessments of 428 children from English-as-a-second-language (ESL) backgrounds are analysed (Cummins 1980c) will illustrate the need for such a framework and also serve to root the theoretical discussion into a concrete context which is replicated every day in our schools. The psychological assessment is a particularly appropriate language encounter to illustrate the invidious consequences of the theoretical confusion which characterises debate about many of the issues outlined above, because in diagnosing the cause of ESL, children's academic difficulties, psychologists often reveal implicit assumptions about issues such as the relationships of oral language performance to reading and other academic skills, the role of language deficits in learning disabilities, the relationship between L2 face-to-face communicative skills and other L2 language and academic skills, the relationships of L1 to L2 development, and the influence of bilingual background experiences on ESL children's academic functioning.

PR (283)

PR was referred for psychological assessment because he was experiencing difficulty in the regular grade 1 work despite the fact that he was repeating grade 1. The principal noted that 'although PR was in Portugal for part (6 months) of the year there is a suspicion of real learning disability. WISC (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) testing would be a great help in determining this'. PR's scores on the WISC-R were verbal IQ, 64; performance IQ, 101; full scale IQ, 80. After noting that 'English is his second language but the teacher feels that the problem is more than one of language,' the psychologist continued.

Psychometric rating, as determined by the WISC-R places

> PR in the dull normal range of intellectual development. Assessment reveals performance abilities to be normal while verbal abilities fall in the mentally deficient range. It is recommended that PR be referred for resource room placement for next year and if no progress is evident by Christmas, a Learning Centre placement should be considered.

This assessment illustrates will the abuses to which psychological tests can be put. It does not seem at all unreasonable that a child from a non-English background who has spent six months of the previous year in Portugal should perform very poorly on an English verbal IQ test. Yet, rather than admitting that no conclusion regarding the child's academic potential can be drawn, the psychologist validates the teacher's suspicion' of learning disability by means of a 'scientific' assessment and the use of inappropriate terminology ('dull normal', 'mentally deficient'). An interesting aspect of this assessment is the fact that neither the teacher nor the psychologist makes any reference to difficulties in English as a second language and both considered that the child's English proficiency was adequate to perform the test.

It is clear from this, and many other assessments in the study, that psychologists often assume that because ESL children's L2 face-to-face communicative skills appear adequate, they are therefore no longer handicapped on a verbal IQ test by their ESL background. In other words, it is assumed that the 'language proficiency' required for L2 face-to-face communication is no different from that required for performance on an L2 cognitive/academic task. This assumption leads directly to the conclusion that poor performance on an L2 verbal IQ test is a function of deficient *cognitive* abilities (i.e. learning disability, retardation). The same type of inference based on implicit assumptions about the nature of 'language proficiency' and its relationship to achievement and cognitive skills is common in the context of bilingual education in the United States. Language minority students are frequently transferred from bilingual to English-only classrooms when they have developed

superficially fluent English communicative skills. Despite being classified as 'English proficient' many such students may fall progressively further behind grade norms in the development of English academic skills (e.g. see Mazzone 1980). Because these students are relatively fluent in English, it appears that their poor academic performance can no longer be explained by their English language deficiency, and thus cognitive or cultural 'deficiencies' are likely to be invoked as explanatory factors. Other assessments reveal the assumptions of some psychologists about the influence of bilingual experiences.

For example, in the assessment report of an ESL grade 1 child who obtained a verbal IQ of 94 and a performance IQ of 114, the psychologist noted:

> A discrepancy of 20 points between the verbal and performance IQs would indicate inconsistent development, resulting in his present learning difficulties.... It is quite likely that the two spoken languages have confused the development in this area.

It is clear that educators' emplicit assumptions in regard to the nature of 'language proficiency' are by no means innocuous; on the contrary, they emerge clearly in many educational encounters and militate against the academic progress of both ESL and monolingual English students. It is perhaps not surprising to find questionable assumptions about 'language proficiency' emerging in school contexts since the issues are equally unclear at a theoretical level.

Theoretical Approaches

The practical examples considered above raise the issue of how face-to-face communicative skills (in L1 and/or L2 contexts), 'oral language abilities' (often operationalised by vocabulary tests) and language skills (e.g. reading are related. All clearly involve 'language proficiency', but the precise ways in which language proficiency is involved in these types of performance is anything but clear. Even the question of individual differences in language proficiency

is probalematic since certain theorists (e.g. Chomsky 1972; Lenneberg 1967) have characterised language 'competence' as a species-specific ability which is universally acquired by all humans with the exception of severely retarded and autistic children.

Measures of those aspects of 'oral language abilities' which relate strongly to reading skills would thus be regarded as assessing, at best, cognitive skillls (and therefore not language skills) and, at worst, 'test-taking ability'. It seems clear that some basic distinctions must be made in order to accommodate these very different understandings of the nature of 'language proficiency'.

The need for such distinctions can be illustrated by contrasting the views of Oller (1979; Oller and Perkins 1980) and Labov (1970), who have emphasised very different aspects of language proficiency. After we examine the anomalies to which extreme versions of these theories lead, we will briefly outline four other theoretical positions in which an attempts is made to describe differences between the linguistic demands of the school and those of face-to-face situations outside the school.

Language Proficiency as Intelligence (Oller)

In sharp contrast to theorists such as Hernandez-Chavez, Burt and Dulay (1978), who have attempted to analyse 'language proficiency' into its constituent parts (the Hernandez-Chavez *et al.* model contains sixty-four separate proficiencies), Oller (1979; Oller and Perkins 1980) has reviewed considerable research which suggests that one global factor underlies most aspects of linguistic, academic and intellectual performance. Oller and Perkins (1980) express this view as follows:

> A single factor of global language proficiency seems to account for the lion's share of variance in a wide variety of educational tests including nonverbal *and* verbal IQ measures, achievement batteries, and even personality inventories and affective measures ... the results to date are ..

> preponderantly in favour of the assumption that language skill pervades every area of the school curriculum even more strongly than was ever thought by curriculum writers or testers.

This global dimension is not regarded by Oller (1981) as the only significant factor in language proficiency, but the amount of additional variance accounted for by other factors is relatively modest.

The strong relationships between language proficiency and academic and cognitive variables exist across all four of the general language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). From a psycholinguistic point of view these relationships are attributed to the fact that 'in the meaningful use of language, some sort of pragmatic expectancy grammar must function in all cases' (1979, p. 25). A pragmatic expectancy grammar is defined by Oller as 'a psychologically real system that sequentially orders linguistic elements in time and in relation to extralinguistic elements in meaningful ways' (1979, p. 34). Several aspects of Oller's theory of language proficiency are consonant with recent theoretical approaches to perceptual processes, reading theory, language pedagogy, and language testing. Neisser's (1967, 1976) conceptualisation of perception (including language perception), for example, emphasises the importance of anticipated information from the environment. The psycholinguistic analysis of reading developed by Goodman (1967) and Smith (1978a) assigns a central role to prediction, defined as the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives, as the basis for comprehending both written and oral language.

This predictive apparatus appears to function in a similar way to Oller's pragmatic expectancy grammar. In fact, Tannen (1979) has reviewed a large variety of theoretical approaches in cognitive psychology, anthropology and linguistics, all of which assign a central role to the power of expectation:

> What unifies all these branches of research is the realization that people approach the world not as naive, blank-slate receptacles who take in stimuli as they exist in some independent and objective way, but rather as experienced and sophisticated veterans of perception who have stored their prior experiences as 'an organized mass', and who see events and objects in the world in relation to each other and in relation to their prior experience.

The pedagogical implications of Oller's theory are very much in line with the current emphasis on 'language across the curriculum' (e.g. Bullock 1975; Fillion 1979) in which language is seen as playing a central role in all aspects of the learning process in schools. Oller (1979) makes these pedagogical implications explicit for both first and second language curricula by stressing that 'every teacher in every area of the curriculum should be teaching all of the traditionally recognised language skills' (p. 458). The central role assigned to the pragmatic expectancy grammar in using and learning language implies that a 'discrete skills' approach to language teaching (either L1 or L2) is likely to be futile, since the pragmatic expectancy grammar will be involved only in meaningful or 'communicative' uses of language. Again, the emphasis on the necessity for effective language teaching to be 'communicative' has strong empirical support (e.g. Swain 1978a) and is currently widely accepted. Finally, Oller's position that language proficiency cannot meaningfully be broken down into a variety of separate components implies that integrative tests of language proficiency (e.g. cloze, dictation) are more appropriate than discrete-point tests, a view which currently has considerable support among applied linguists.

However, many theorists are unwilling to accept that there are close relationships between 'language proficiency', intelligence, and academic achievement, despite the strong empirical support which Oller has assembled for this position, and the apparent attractiveness of its implications for both assessment and pedagogy. One reason for this opposition is that an approach which emphasises individual

differences among native speakers in language proficiency is not especially compatible with the Chomsky/Lenneberg position that all native speakers acquire linguistic 'competence'.

Also, sociolinguists have vehemently rejected any close relationship between 'language proficiency', intelligence, and academic functioning in the context of the debate on the causes of poor educational performance by low SES and minority group children. Shuy (1977, p. 5), for example, argues that 'rather compelling evidence rejects every claim made by those who attempt to show linguistic correlates of cognitive deficit'. This position is considered in the next section.

Language Proficiency and Educational Failure

Much of the impetus of compensatory education programs in the 1960s derived from the belief that language proficiency was a crucial component of educational success. The educational difficulties of many lower-class and minority group children were attributed to lack of appropriate verbal stimulation in the home, and the remedy, therefore, was to expose the child to an intensive program of verbal stimulation prior to the start of formal schooling. Apart from the fact that this approach 'diverts attention from real defects of our educational system to imaginary defects of the child' (Labov 1973, p. 22), its main problem lay in its naive assumptions about the nature of language proficiency and the relationship between language proficiency and educational success. Basically, language proficiency was identified with control over the surface structures of standard English which, in turn, was viewed as a prerequisite to both logical thinking and educational progress.

This is illustrated by Labov with reference to Bereiter's comment that 'the language of culturally deprived children ... is not merely an underdeveloped version of standard English, but is a basically nonlogical mode of expressive behaviour' (Bereiter, Engelmann, Osborn and Reidford 1966).

Thus according to Labov (1973), social class and ethnic differences in grammatical form were often equated with differences in the capacity for logical analysis, and then attempts were made to teach children to think logically by requiring them to mimic certain formal speech patterns used by middle-class teachers.

Labov shows clearly that this position confuses logic with surface detail and that the logic of nonstandard forms of English cannot be distinguished from the logic of standard English. However, he goes on to state a position regarding the relationship between language proficiency and conceptual thinking which is implicitly reflected in the approach of many linguists to the assessment of language proficiency in minority children. Labov (1973, p. 63) claims that:

> Linguists are also in an excellent position to assess Jensen's claim that the middle-class white population is superior to the working-class and Negro populations in the distribution of Level II, or conceptual intelligence. The notion that large numbers of children have no capacity for conceptual thinking would inevitably mean that they speak a primitive language, for, even the simplest linguistic rules we discussed above involve conceptual operations more complex than those used in the experiment Jensen cites.

This implies that the conceptual operations reflected in children's ability to produce and comprehend language in interpersonal communicative situations are not essentially different (apart from being more complex) from those involved in the classification and analogies tasks that typically appear in verbal IQ tests. Labov and many other linguists (e.g. Burt and Dulay 1978; Dieterich *et al.* 1979; Shuy 1977) would claim that the latter tasks are invalid as measures of language proficiency because they assess proficiency outside of a naturally occurring communicative context.

Labov attributes the fact that low SES black children often tend not to manifest their conceptual abilities in academic tasks to the influence of low teacher expectations

brought about by teachers' equation of nonstandard dialect with deficient academic ability. Thus, whereas much of the compensatory education effort derived from the assumption that the deficient language proficiency of low SES and minority children reflected, and gave rise to, deficiencies in conceptual abilities, Labov's position, as expressed in the quotation above, is that these children's language is not in any way deficient, and consequently, their conceptual abilities are not in any way deficient. This is because complex conceptual operations are involved in language comprehension and production. In both instances, therefore, a close relationship is assumed between conceptual abilities and language proficiency, although the respective interpretations of this relationship are clearly very different. Insofar as 'language proficiency' is regarded as closely allied to 'conceptual intelligence', both these positions are similar (at least superficially) to that of Oller.

However, it will be argued that none of these positions provides an adequate theoretical basis for conceptualising the relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement. The language deficit view naively equates conceptual intelligence with knowledge of the surface structure of standard English; Labov, on the other hand, places the onus for explaining educational failure on sociolinguistic and sociocultural factors in the school situation, rejecting any direct relationship between language proficiency and failure.

While this position can account for differences in educational achievement *between* SES groups, it does not appear adequate to account for the strong relationships observed between language proficiency measures and achievement *within* SES groups. Oller's (1979) position appears to be subject to the objections of sociolinguists to language deficit theories in that, for Oller, deficient academic achievement is, ipso facto, deficient language proficiency. Most researchers, however, would agree with Labov when he states that despite the low level of academic achievement

of black students, their 'language proficiency' is in no way deficient. This apparent incompatibility arises from the fact that Labov and Oller are discussing two very different dimensions under the rubric of 'language proficiency'. The necessity of distinguishing a dimension of language proficiency which is strongly related to cognitive and academic skills (Oller's global language proficiency) from manifestations of language proficiency which are embedded within face-to-face communicative contexts is the common thread uniting the theories of language proficiency discussed in the next section. The distinctions emphasised by these theorists in educational contexts and parallels in the current anthropological distinction between oral and literate traditions.

Communicative and Analytic Competence

In discussing language as an instrument of thought, Bruner (1975) distinguishes a 'species minimum' of linguistic competence from both communicative and analytic competence. Species minimum competence implies mastery of the basic syntactic structures and semantic categories emphasised in theories of language acquisition such as those deriving from the views of Chomsky (1965) and Fillmore (1968). Bruner suggests that mere *possession* of species minimum competence has relatively little effect on thought processes. It is only when language use moves toward 'context-free elaboration' that it transforms the nature of thought processes. He points out that

> in assessing the elaborated use of language as a tool of thought, it does not suffice to test for the *presence* [emphasis original] in a speech sample of logical, syntactical, or even semantic distinctions, as Labov (1970) has done in order to determine whether non-standard Negro dialect is or is not impoverished. The issue, rather, is how language is being used, what in fact the subject is doing with his language.

In this regard Bruner distinguishes between 'communicative competence' and 'analytic competence'. The former is defined as the ability to make utterances that

are appropriate to the context in which they are made and to comprehend utterances in the light of the context in which they are encountered. Analytic competence, on the other hand, involves the prolonged operation of thought processes exclusively on linguistic representations. It is made possible by the possession of communicative competence and is promoted largely through formal schooling. According to Bruner, schools decontextualise knowledge and demand the use of analytic competence as a feature of the communicative competence of their members. Although Bruner's basic distinction between communicative and analytic aspects of language proficiency is echoed in the theories considered below, there are several shortcomings in his specific formulation of this distinction. First, it identifies analytic competence as a manifestation of a higher cognitive level than communicative competence. As pointed out by Cole and Griffin (1980), this is a dangerous assumption and we should be extremely cautious

> in attributing cultural differences in the ability to think 'theoretically', 'rationally', or in a 'context-free manner'. There is reason to believe that such statements have a basis in fact, but the nature of the facts is not so clear as our metaphors may have seduced us into believing.

The latter point raises a second objection to Bruner's formulation, one that is equally applicable to the other theories considered below, namely, that dichotomies between two *types* of thinking or language proficiency are likely to greatly oversimplify the reality. However, despite these shortcomings, Bruner's notion of analytic competence does highlight some facets of language proficiency which are both promoted at school and also required for academic success.

Utterance and Text

Olson's (1977) distinction between 'utterance' and 'text' attributes the development of 'analytic' modes of thinking specifically to the acquisition of literacy skills in school.

The distinction relates to whether meaning is largely extrinsic to language (utterance) or intrinsic to language (text). In interpersonal oral situations the listener has access to a wide range of contextual and paralinguistic information with which to interpret the speaker's intentions, and in this sense the meaning is only partially dependent upon the specific linguistic forms used by the speaker. However, in contrast to utterance, written text

> is an autonomous representation of meaning. Ideally, the printed reader depends on no cues other than linguistic cues; it represents no intentions other than those represented in the text; it is addressed to no one in particular; its author is essentially anonymous; and its meaning is precisely that represented by the sentence meaning.

Olson explicitly differentiates the development of the ability to process text from the development of the mother tongue (utterance) in the pre-school years:

> But language development is not simply a matter of progressively elaborating the oral mother tongue as a means of sharing intentions. The developmental hypothesis offered here is that the ability to assign a meaning to the sentence per se independent of its nonlinguistic interpretive context, is achieved only well into the school years.

He points out that the processing of text calls for comprehension and production strategies which are somewhat different from those employed in everyday speech and which may require sustained 'education' for their acquisition. He also suggests that acquisition of text processing skills may have profound implications for cognitive functioning in general:

> The child's growing competence with this somewhat specialised and distinctive register of language may contribute to the similarly specialised and distinctive mode of thought we usually associate with formal education.

Olson's distinction between utterance and text is useful in highlighting important differences between the linguistic demands (and possible consequences) of formal education

and those of face-to-face situations outside school.

Embedded and Disembedded Thought and Language

Donaldson (1978) distinguishes between embedded and disembedded cognitive processes from a developmental perspective and is especially concerned with the implications for children's adjustment to formal schooling. She points out that young children's early thought processes and use of language develop within a 'flow of meaningful context' in which the logic of words is subjugated to perception of the speaker's intentions and salient features of the situation. Thus, children's (and adults') normal productive speech is embedded within a context of fairly immediate goals, intentions, and familiar patterns of events.

However, thinking and language which move beyond the bounds of meaningful interpersonal context make entirely different demands on the individual, in that it is necessary to focus on the linguistic forms themselves for meaning rather than on intentions. Donaldson offers a reinterpretation of Piaget's theory of cognitive development from this perspective and reviews a large body of research which supports the distinction between embedded and disembedded thought and language. Her description of pre-school children's comprehension and production of language in embedded contexts is especially relevant to current practices in assessment of language proficiency in bilingual programs. She points out that

> the ease with which pre-school children often seem to understand what is said to them is misleading if we take it as an indication of skill with language per se. Certainly they commonly understand us, but surely it is not our words alone that they are understanding — for they may be shown to be relying heavily on cues of other kinds.

She goes on to argue that children's facility in producing language that is meaningful and appropriate in interpersonal contexts can also give a misleading impression of overall language proficiency:

> When you produce language, you are in control, you need only talk about what you choose to talk about ... [The child] is never required, when he is himself producing language, to go counter to his own preferred reading of the situation — to the way in which he himself spontaneously sees it. But this is no longer necessarily true when he becomes the listener. And it is frequently not true when he is the listener in the formal situation of a psychological experiment or indeed when he becomes a learner at school.

The relevance of this observation to the tendency of psychologists and teachers to overestimate the extent to which ESL students have overcome difficulties with English is obvious.

Conversation and Composition

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982) have analysed the problems of learning to write as problems of converting a language production system geared to conversation over to a language production system capable of functioning by itself. Their studies suggest that some of the major difficulties involved in this process are the following:

1. learning to continue producing language without the prompting that comes from conversational partners;
2. learning to search one's own memory instead of having memories triggered by what other people say;
3. learning to function as both sender and receiver, the latter function being necessary for revision.
4. planning large units of discourse instead of planning only what will be said next;

Bereiter and Scardamalia argue that the absence of normal conversational supports makes writing a radically different kind of task from conversation:

> We are proposing instead that the oral language production system cannot be carried over intact into written composition, that it must, in some way, be reconstructed to function autonomously instead of interactively.

This emphasis on the increasing autonomy or disembeddedness of literacy activities in comparison with face-to-face communication is a common characteristic of the views of Bruner, Olson, Donaldson, and Bereiter and Scardamalia.

However, it is also important to ask what is the *developmental* nature of the cognitive involvement in these iliteracy tasks. In the context of writing skills acquisition, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983) suggest that, developmentally, cognitive involvement can be characterised in terms of progressive automatisation of lower-level skills (e.g. hand-writing, spelling of common words, punctuation, common syntactic forms) which releases increasingly more mental capacity for higher-level planning of large chunks of discourse. This characterisation is similar to Posner's (1973) distinction between effortless and effortful processing. The process of increasing automatisation is also evident in reading skills acquisition where, as fluency is acquired, word recognition skills are first automatised and then totally short-circuited insofar as the proficient reader does not read individual words but engages in a process of sampling from the text to confirm predictions (see, for example, Smith 1978a).

The release of mental capacity for higher-level operations is consistent with research reviewed by Singer (1977) which shows a change between grades 1 and 5 in the amount of common variance between IQ and reading achievement from 16% to 64% (correlations of .40 to .79). This he interprets in terms of the nature of the component skills stressed in reading instruction at different grade levels.

> As reading achievement shifts from predominant emphasis on word recognition to stress on word meaning and comprehension, the mental functions being assessed by intelligence and reading tests have more in common.

In nutshell, several theorists whose primary interest in the developmental relationships between thought and language have argued that it is necessary to distinguish

between the processing of language in informal everyday situations and the language processing required in most academic situations. In concrete terms, it is argued that reading a difficult text or writing an essay makes fundamentally different information processing demands on the individual compared with engaging in a casual conversation with a friend. In addition to the different information processing requirements in these two types of situation, it has been suggested (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1983) that the amount of active cognitive involvement in the language activity may vary as a function of the degree of mastery of its constituent skills.

A Theoretical Framework

On the basis of the preceding discussion several minimal requirements of a theoretical framework for conceptualising the relationships between language proficiency and academic achievement in both monolingual and bilingual contexts can be distinguished: first, such a framework should incorporate a developmental perspective such that those aspects of language proficiency which are mastered early by native speakers and L2 learners can distinguished from those that continue to vary across individuals as development progresses; second, the framework should be capable of allowing differences between the linguistic demands of the school and those of interpersonal contexts outside the school to be described; third, the framework should be capable of allowing the developmental relationships between L1 and L2 proficiency to be described. Current theoretical frameworks of 'communicative competence' (e.g. Canale 1983; Canale and Swain 1980a) do not (and were not intended to) meet these requirements. Canale (1983) for example, distinguishes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies but states that their relationships with each other and with world knowledge and academic achievement is an empirical question yet to be addressed. Although this framework is extremely useful for some purposes, its applicability is limited by its static

nondevelopmental nature and by the fact that the relationship between academic performance and the components of communicative competence in L1 and L2 are not considered. For example, both pronunciation and lexical knowledge would be classified under grammatical competence. Yet L1 pronunciation is mastered very early by native speakers, whereas lexical knowledge continues to develop throughout schooling and is strongly related to academic performance. The framework outlined below is an attempt to conceptualise 'language proficiency' in such a way that the developmental interrelationships between academic performance and language proficiency in both L1 and L2 can be considered. Essentially, the framework tries to integrate an earlier distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive/ academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 1980a) into a more general theoretical model.

The BICS-CALP distinction is similar to the distinctions proposed by Bruner, Olson, and Donaldson and was intended to make the same point that was made earlier in this chapter, namely, that academic deficits are often created by teachers and psychologists who fail to realize that it takes language minority students considerably longer to attain grade/age-appropriate levels in English academic skills than it does in English face-to-face communicative skills. However, dichotomising 'language proficiency' into two categories oversimplifies the phenomenon and makes it difficult to discuss the developmental relationships between language proficiency and academic achievement. 'Language proficiency' can be conceptualised along two continua. First is a continuum relating to the range of contextual support available for expressing or receiving meaning. The extremes of this continuum are described in terms of 'context-embedded' versus 'context-reduced' communication.[1] They are distinguished by the fact that in context-embedded communication the participants can actively negotiate meaning (e.g. by providing feedback that

the message has not been understood) and the language is supported by a wide range of meaningful paralinguistic and situational cues; context-reduced communication, on the other hand, relies primarily (or at the extreme of the continuum, exclusively) on linguistic cues to meaning and may in some cases involve suspending knowledge of the 'real' world in order to interpret (or manipulate) the logic of the communication appropriately.[2]

In general, context-embedded communication derives from interpersonal involvement in a shared reality which obviates the need for explicit linguistic elaboration of the message. Context-reduced communication, on the other hand, derives from the fact that this shared reality cannot be assumed, and thus linguistic messages much be elaborated precisely and explicitly so that the risk of misinterpretation is minimised. It is important to emphasise that this is a continuum and not a dichotomy. Thus, examples of communicative behaviours going from left to right along the continuum might be: engaging in a discussion, writing a letter to a close friend, writing (or reading) an academic article. Clearly, context-embedded communication is more typical of the everyday world outside the classroom, whereas many of the linguistic demands of the classroom reflect communication which is closer to the context-reduced end of the continuum. The vertical continuum is intended to address the developmental aspects of communicative proficiency in terms of the degree of active cognitive involvement in the task or activity. Cognitive involvement can be conceptualised in terms of the amount of information that must be processed simultaneously or in close succession by the individual in order to carry out the activity.

How does this continuum incorporate a developmental perspective? If we return to the four components of communicative competence (grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic) discussed by Canale (1983), it is clear that within each one, some subskills are mastered more rapidly than other. In other words, some subskills

(e.g. pronunciation and syntax within L1 grammatical competence) reach plateau levels at which there are no longer significant differences in mastery between individuals (at least in context-embedded situations).

Other subskills continue to develop throughout the school years and beyond, depending upon the individual's communicative needs in particular cultural and institutional milieus. Thus, the upper parts of the vertical continuum consist of communicative tasks and activities in which the linguistic tools have become largely automatised (mastered) and thus require little active cognitive involvement for appropriate performance. At the lower end of the continuum are tasks and activities in which the communicative tools have not become automatised and thus require active cognitive involvement. Persuading another individual that your point of view rather than his or hers is correct or writing an essay on a complex theme are examples of such activities. In these situations, it is necessary to stretch one's linguistic resources (e.g., in Canale and Swain's terms, grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences) to the limit in order to achieve one's communicative goals.

Obviously, cognitive involvement, in the sense of amount of information processing, can be just as intense in context-embedded as in context-reduced activities. As mastery is developed, specific linguistic tasks and skills travel from the bottom toward the top of the vertical continuum. In other words, there tends to be a high level of cognitive involvement in task or activity performance until mastery has been achieved or, alternately, until a plateau level at less than mastery levels has been reached (e.g. L2 pronunciation in many adult immigrants, 'fossilisation' of certain grammatical features among French immersion students). Thus, learning the phonology and syntax of L1, for example, requires considerable cognitive involvement for the two and three-year-old child, and therefore these

tasks would be placed in quadrant B (context-embedded, cognitively demanding).

However, as mastery of these skills develops, tasks involving them would move from quadrant B to quadrant A since performance becomes increasingly automatised and cognitively undemanding. In a second language context the same types of developmental progression occurs.[3] Another requirement for a theoretical framework applicable to both monolingual and bilingual contexts is that it permit the developmental interrelationships between L1 and L2 proficiency to be conceptualised. There is considerable evidence that some aspects of L1 and L2 proficiency are interdependent, i.e. manifestations of a common underlying proficiency (see Cummins 1981b). The evidence reviewed in support of the interdependence hypothesis primarily involved academic or 'context-reduced' language proficiency because the hypothesis was formulated explicitly in relation to the development of bilingual academic skills. However, any language task which is cognitively demanding for a group of individuals is likely to show a moderate degree of interdependence across languages.

In general, significant relationships would be predicted between communicative activities in different languages which make similar contextual and cognitive demands on the individual. In addition to the interdependence which has been shown to exist between L1 and L2 context-reduced, cognitively demanding proficiency, there is evidence that some context-embedded, cognitively undemanding aspects of proficiency are also interdependent across languages.

For example, Cummins, Swain, Nakajima, Handscombe, Green and Tram (1984) reported that among Japanese immigrant students in Toronto, strong relationships were found between Japanese and English proficiency factors representing aspects of 'interactional style', e.g. amount of detail communicated, richness of vocabulary, and use of cohesive devices. The relationship between these linguistic

manifestations of interactional style and academic achievement is likely to be complex (Wells 1981; Wong Fillmore 1980b) and also less direct than the cognitively demanding dimension of language proficiency highlighted in the present framework. The implications for bilingual education of the interdependence between L1 and L2 in context-reduced cognitively demanding aspects of proficiency have been explored by Cummins (1979b, 1981b) while current research on interactional styles in bilingual programs (Wong Fillmore 1980b) should greatly increase our understanding of their significance. In conclusion, the theoretical framework differs from the conceptualisations of 'language proficiency' proposed by Oller (1979) and Labov (1973) in that it allows the linguistic demands of academic situations to be distinguished from those of face-to-face situations outside of school contexts. In so doing, the framework incorporates elements of the distinctions discussed by Bruner, Olson, Donaldson, and Bereiter and Scardamalia.

However, the present framework conceptualises the degree of cognitive involvement and the range of contextual support for communicative activities as independent continua, whereas these two continua tend to merge to some extent in the distinctions proposed by other theorists. The dangers of regarding context-reduced communicative activities as more 'cognitively loaded' than context-embedded activities have been pointed out by Cole and Griffin (1980). Cultures (or subcultures) that tend to engage in relatively few context-reduced communicative activities are not necessarily any less cognitively adept, in general terms, than cultures which place a strong emphasis on such activities.

Applications of the Theoretical Framework

In this section potential applications of the framework to several of the issues raised earlier in the chapter will be briefly sketched. These issues concern:

1. language proficiency and intellectual assessment of ESL students';
2. validation of theories of 'communicative competence';
3. language pedagogy;
4. the relationships between language proficiency, socio-economic status (SES), and achievement.

Assessment of ESL Students

The location of any particular language task or activity on the vertical and horizontal continua is a function not only of inherent task characteristics but also of the level of proficiency of the language user. Thus, tasks that are cognitively undemanding for a native speaker (e.g. using appropriate syntax) may be highly cognitively demanding for an L2 learner. The more context-reduced a particular task (i.e. the fewer nonlinguistic cues to meaning) the longer it will take L2 learners to achieve age-appropriate performance. For example, it has been shown (Cummins 1981c) that although face-to-face L2 communicative skills are largely mastered by immigrant students within about two years of arrival in the host country, it takes between five and seven years, on the average, for students to approach grade norms in L2 academic skills. It should be clear that psychological assessment procedures as well as the regular English curriculum are likely to be considerably more context-reduced and cognitively demanding for most ESL students than they are for native English speakers. Failure to take account of the difference between 'quadrant A' and 'quadrant D'. language skills often leads to invalid interpretations of ESL students' classroom or test performances and to the labelling of students as mentally retarded or learning disabled (Cummins 1980c).

Validation of Constructs of 'Communicative Competence'

The present framework is directed specifically at the relationships between academic achievement and language proficiency and thus its applicability to manifestations of

'communicative competence' in academically unrelated contexts is limited. For example, there may be many language activities which would be grouped into quadrant A in the present framework, insofar as they tend to be context-embedded and cognitively undemanding, which nevertheless show consistent individual differences in performance. For example, ability to 'get the message across', or in Canale and Swain's terms 'strategic competence', may be a reliable dimension of this type. Such linguistic traits may be strongly related to dimensions of personality or interactional style and show only week relationships to cognitive variables (see Cummins *et al.* 1984; Wong Fillmore 1980b). In other words, there may be several language factors 'deeper than speech' (Oller 1981) but only one which is directly related to academic achievement. It is this dimension which is of major concern to the present chapter, and the proposed framework is not necessarily applicable to other manifestations of 'communicative competence'. However, despite this limitation, there are implications of the present framework for current attempts to validate theories of communicative competence (e.g. Bachman and Palmer 1982). In the first place, the framework could be used as a basis for carrying out a task analysis of language measures with a view to predicting the degree to which different measures relate to cognitive and academic variables for specific groups of individuals.

In this regard, different relationships among tasks would be likely to be predicted in an L1 as compared with an L2 context because tasks located close to the top of the vertical continuum for native speakers may be close to the bottom for L2 learners. Also, skills which are acquired in a context-embedded situation by native speakers may be acquired in a context-reduced situation (e.g. a formal classroom) by L2 learners.

A second implication related to this is that there is likely to be considerable 'method' variance as well as 'trait' variance in language assessment procedures, depending

upon their relative location along the horizontal and vertical continua. This is in fact what Bachman and Palmer (1982) found, and it is not surprising given, for example, the obvious differences between a formal test of L1 syntactic knowledge and assessment of L1 syntactic knowledge based on context-embedded communication. A third implication is that validation studies (and theories of communicative competence) should be conceptualised developmentally, since very different relationships might be found between, for example, grammatical and sociolinguistic competence (in Canale and Swain's 1980a, terms) among beginning L2 learners as compared with advanced L2 learners. Viewed from this perspective, current efforts to validate theories of communicative competence are relatively limited in scope insofar as most studies have been conducted only with adult L2 learners and the relationships among hypothesised components of proficiency have not been conceptualised developmentally.

These concerns are all related to the perspective of the present chapter that the development of 'language proficiency' in an L2 can be understood only in the context of a theory of L1 'language proficiency'. This in turn necessitates consideration of the developmental relationships between language proficiency, cognitive functioning, and academic achievement.

Language Pedagogy

Clearly, a major aim of schooling is to develop students' abilities to manipulate and interpret cognitively demanding context-reduced text. However, there is considerable agreement among theorists (e.g. Smith 1978a) that the more initial reading and writing instruction can be embedded in a meaningful communicative context (i.e. related to the child's previous experience), the more successful it is likely to be. The same principle holds for L2 instruction. The more context-embedded the initial L2 input, the more comprehensible it is likely to be, and paradoxically, the more successful in ultimately developing L2 skills in context-

reduced situations. A major reason why language minority students have often failed to develop high levels of L2 academic skills is that their initial instruction has emphasised context-reduced communication insofar as instruction has been through English and unrelated to their prior out-of-school experiences.

SES, Language and Achievement

Wells (1981), in a ten-year longitudinal study, has identified two broad types of communicative activities in the home which strongly predict the acquisition of reading skills in school. One is the extent to which there is 'negotiation of meaning' (i.e. quality and quantity of communication) between adults and children; the other is the extent to which literacy-related activities are promoted in the home (e.g. reading to children). There is no clear-cut relationship between SES and the former, but a strong relationship between SES and the latter. These results have two clear implications in terms of the present framework. First, the strong relationship observed between both literacy activities and negotiation of meaning in the home and the later acquisition of reading in school supports the principle proposed above that context-reduced communicative proficiency can be most successfully developed on the basis of prior context-embedded communication; or, to put it another way, the more opportunity the child has to process comprehensible linguistic input (Krashen 1980) and negotiate meaning, the greater the range of input which will become comprehensible.

The second implication of Wells' findings is that many low SES students experience initial difficulties in school in comparison with middle-class students because they come to school less prepared to handle context-reduced academic tasks as a result of less exposure to literacy-related activities prior to school. Clearly, schools have often contributed to students' academic difficulties by failing to ensure that initial literacy instruction is sufficiently context-embedded and culturally appropriate to students'

backgrounds. If we return to the controversial question of the extent to which 'language proficiency' is implicated in the relatively poor academic performance of low SES children, the answer will clearly depend upon how the construct of 'language proficiency' is conceptualised. As mentioned earlier, Labov and most sociolinguists would probably deny any involvement of 'language proficiency', whereas Oller's (1979) conceptualisation of 'language proficiency' would seem to imply an affirmative answer. Within the context of the present framework, Wells' results suggest that there are SES differences in students' knowledge about and interest in literacy on entry to school, such that differential performance is found on context-reduced language tasks. These differences are, of course, not surprising given the differential exposure to literacy activities in the home. However, these initial performance differences become *deficits* in academic achievement (and in context-reduced language proficiency) only when they are reinforced by inappropriate forms of educational treatment (see Cummins 1979b).

Given appropriate instruction, there is no long-term linguistic or cognitive impediment to the academic achievement of low SES students. In conclusion, the present framework is intended to facilitate discussion of a variety of issues related to the development of language proficiency in educational contexts. The context-embedded/context-reduced and cognitively undemanding/cognitively demanding continua highlighted in the present framework are clearly not the only dimensions that would require consideration in a theoretical framework designed to incorporate all aspects of language proficiency or communicative competence. However, it is suggested that these dimensions are directly relevant to the relationships between language proficiency and educational achievement. The extent to which other dimensions, not emphasised in the present framework, are also relevant is an empirical and theoretical issue which we hope will be addressed in future research.

7

Focus on Relevant Aspects of English Grammar and English Readability

ENGLISH GRAMMAR

English grammar is the body of rules describing the properties of the English language. A language is such that its elements must be combined according to certain patterns. This article is concerned with (and restricted to) morphology, the building blocks of language; and syntax, the construction of meaningful phrases, clauses and sentences with the use of morphemes and words.

The grammar of any language is commonly approached in two different ways: *descriptive*, usually based on a systematic analysis of a large text corpus and describing grammatical structures thereupon; and *prescriptive*, which attempts to use the identified rules of a given language as a tool to govern the linguistic behaviour of speakers.

Prescriptive grammar further concerns itself with several open disputes in English grammar, often representing changes in usage over time. This article predominantly concerns itself with descriptive grammar.

There are historical, social and regional variations of English. For example, British English and American English have several lexical differences; however, the grammatical differences are not equally conspicuous, and will be

mentioned only when appropriate. Further, the many dialects of English have divergences from the grammar described here; they are only cursorily mentioned. This article describes a generalized present-day Standard English, the form of speech found in types of public discourse including broadcasting, education, entertainment, government, and news reporting. Standard English includes both formal and informal speech.

Word Classes and Phrase Classes

Seven major word classes are described here. These are: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and determiner. The first six are traditionally referred to as "parts of speech." There are minor word classes, such as interjections, but these do not fit into the clause and sentence structure of English.

Open and Closed Classes

Open word classes allow new members; closed word classes seldom do. Nouns such as "celebutante", (a celebrity who frequents the fashion circles)" and "mentee," (a person advised by a mentor) and adverbs such as "24/7" ("I am working on it 24/7") are relatively new words; nouns and adverbs are therefore open classes. However, the pronoun, "their," as a gender-neutral singular replacement for the "his or her" (as in: "Each new arrival should check in their luggage.") has not gained complete acceptance in the more than forty years of its use; pronouns, in consequence, form a closed class.

Word Classes and Grammatical Forms

A word can sometimes belong to several word classes. The class version of a word is called a "lexeme". For example, the word "run" is usually a verb, but it can also be a noun ("It is a ten mile run to Tipperary."); these are two different lexemes. Further, the same lexeme may be inflected to express different grammatical categories: for example, as a verb lexeme, "run" has several forms such as "runs,"

"ran," and "running." Words in one class can sometimes be derived from those in another and new words be created. The noun "aerobics," for example, has recently given rise to the adjective "aerobicized" ("the aerobicized bodies of Beverly Hills celebutantes.")

Phrase Classes

Words combine to form phrases which themselves can take on the attributes of a word class. These classes are called phrase classes. The phrase: "The ancient pulse of germ and birth" functions as a noun in the sentence: "The ancient pulse of germ and birth was shrunken hard and dry." (Thomas Hardy, *The Darkling Thrush*) It is therefore a *noun phrase*. Other phrase classes are: verb phrases, adjective phrases, adverb phrases, prepositional phrases, and determiner phrases.

Nouns and Determiners

Nouns form the largest word class. According to Carter and McCarthy, they denote "classes and categories of things in the world, including people, animals, inanimate things, places, events, qualities and states." Consequently, the words "Mandela," "jaguar," "mansion," "volcano," "Timbuktoo," "blockade," "mercy," and "liquid" are all nouns. Nouns are not commonly identified by their form; however, some common suffixes such as "-age" ("shrinkage"), "-hood" ("sisterhood"), "-ism" ("journalism"), "-ist" ("lyricist"), "-ment" ("adornment"), "-ship" ("companionship"), "-tude" ("latitude"), and so forth, are usually identifiers of nouns. There are exceptions, of course: "assuage" and "disparage" are verbs; "augment" is a verb, "lament" and "worship" can be verbs. Nouns can also be created by conversion of verbs or adjectives. Examples include the nouns in: "a boring talk," "a five-week run," "the long caress," "the utter disdain," and so forth.

Number, Gender, Type, and Syntactic Features

Nouns have singular and plural forms. Many plural

forms have -s or -es endings (dog/dogs, referee/referees, bush/bushes), but by no means all (woman/women, axis/axes, medium/media). Unlike some other languages, in English, nouns do not have grammatical gender. However, many nouns can refer to masculine or feminine animate objects (mother/father, tiger/tigress, alumnus/alumna, male/female). Nouns can be classified semantically, i.e. by their meanings: common nouns ("sugar," "maple," "syrup," "wood"), proper nouns ("Cyrus," "China"), concrete nouns ("book," "laptop"), and abstract nouns ("heat," "prejudice"). Alternatively, they can be distinguished grammatically: count nouns ("clock," "city," "colour") and non-count nouns ("milk," "decor," "foliage"). Nouns have several syntactic features that can aid in their identification. Nouns (example: common noun "cat") may be

1. modified by adjectives ("the *beautiful* Angora cat"),
2. preceded by determiners ("*the* beautiful Angora cat"), or
3. pre-modified by other nouns ("the beautiful *Angora* cat").

Noun Phrases

Noun phrases are phrases that function grammatically as nouns within sentences. In addition, nouns serve as "heads," or main words of noun phrases. Examples (the heads are in boldface):

1. "The burnt-out ends of smoky days."
2. "The real raw-knuckle boys who know what fighting means,..."
3. "The idle spear and shield ..."

The head can have *modifiers*, a *complement*, or both. Modifiers can occur before the head ("The real raw-knuckle boys ...," or "The burnt-out ends ..." and they are then called *pre-modifiers*; or, they can occur after the head ("who know what fighting means ...") and are called *post-modifiers*. Example: "The rough, seamy-faced, raw-boned

College Servitor ..." The pre-modifying phrase, for example, is composed of determiners ("The"), adjectives ("rough," "seamy-faced," ...) and other nouns ("College").

Complements occur after the head as well; however, they are essential for completing the meaning of the noun phrase in a way that post-modifiers are not. Examples (complements are italicized; heads are in boldface):

1. "The burnt-out ends *of smoky days*."
2. "The suggestion *that Mr. Touchett should invite me* appeared to have come from Miss Stackpole."
3. "The ancient pulse *of germ and birth* was shrunken hard and dry."

Within a sentence, a noun phrase can be a part of the grammatical subject, the object, or the complement. Examples (the noun phrase is italicized, and the head boldfaced):

1. grammatical subject: "*Some mute inglorious Milton* here may rest."
2. object: "Dr. Pavlov ... delivered *many long propaganda harangues* ...")
3. complement: "'All they see is *some frumpy, wrinkled-up person passing by in a carriage waving at a crowd.*"

Verbs

Verbs form the second largest word class after nouns. According to Carter and McCarthy, verbs denote "actions, events, processes, and states." Consequently, "smile," "stab," "climb," "confront," "liquefy," "wake," "reflect" are all verbs. Some examples of verb endings, which while not dead giveaways, are often associated, include: "-ate" ("formulate"), "-iate" ("inebriate"), "-ify" ("electrify"), and "-ise" ("realise"). There are exceptions, of course: "chocolate" is a noun, "immediate" is an adjective, "prize" can be a noun, and "maize" is a noun. Prefixes can also be used to create new verbs. Examples are: "un-" ("unmask"), "out-" ("outlast"),

"over-" ("overtake"), and "under-" ("undervalue"). Just as nouns can be formed from verbs by conversion, the reverse is also possible:

- "so are the sons of men snared in an evil time"
- "[a national convention] nosed parliament in the very seat of its authority"

Verbs can also be formed from adjectives:

- "To dry the old oak's sap, and cherish springs."
- "Time's glory is to calm contending kings"

Regular and Irregular Verbs

A verb is said to be *regular* if its base form does not change when inflections are added to create new forms. An example is: base form: climb; present form: climb; -s form: climbs; -ing form: climbing; past form: climbed; -ed participle: climbed. Irregular verbs are ones in which the base form changes; the endings corresponding to each form are not always unique. Examples:

- base form: catch; present form: catch; -s form: catches; -ing form: catching; past form: caught; -ed participle: caught.
- base form: choose; present form: choose; -s form: chooses; -ing form: choosing; past form: chose; -ed participle: chosen.

The verb "be" is the only verb in English which has distinct inflectional forms for each of the categories of grammatical forms: base form: be; present form: am, are; -s form: is; -ing form: being; past form: was, were; -ed participle: been.

Type and Characteristics

Verbs come in three grammatical types: lexical, auxiliary, and modal. Lexical verbs form an open class which includes most verbs (state, action, processes, and events). For example, "dive," "soar," "swoon," "revive,"

"breathe," "choke," "lament," "celebrate," "consider," "ignore" are all lexical verbs. Auxiliary verbs form a closed class consisting of only three members: be, do, and have. Although auxiliary verbs are lexical verbs as well, their main function is to add information to other lexical verbs. This information indicates (a) aspect (progressive, perfect), (b) passive voice, and (c) clause type (interrogative, negative). In the following examples, the auxiliary is in boldface and the lexical verb is italicized.

1. aspect (progressive): "'She is *breathing* Granny; we've got to make her keep it up, that's all—just keep her breathing."
2. aspect (perfect): "'Yes, I want a coach,' said Maurice, and bade the coachman draw up to the stone where the poor man who had *swooned* was sitting."
3. passive voice: "When she was admitted into the house Beautiful, care was *taken* to inquire into the religious knowledge of her children."
4. clause type (interrogative): (Old joke) Boy: "Excuse me sir, How do I *get* to Carnegie Hall?" Man on street: "Practice, Practice, Practice."
5. clause type (negative): Wasn't she monstrously *surprised*?"

Modal verbs also form a closed class which consists of the core modals ("can," "could," "shall," "should," "will," "would," "may," "might," "must"), semi-modals ("dare," "need," "ought to," "used to"), and modal expressions ("be able to," "have to"). Modals add information to lexical verbs about degrees of certainty and necessity. Examples:

- less certain: "Before the snow could *melt* for good, an ice storm covered the lowcountry and we learned the deeper treachery of ice."
- more certain: "Eat your eggs in Lent and the snow will *melt*. That's what I say to our people when they get noisy over their cups at San Gallo ..."

- expressing necessity: "But I should think there must be some stream somewhere about. The snow must *melt*; besides, these great herds of deer must drink somewhere."

Modal verbs do not inflect for person, number or tense. Examples:

- person: "I/you/she might consider it."
- number: "I/We/She/They might consider it"
- tense: "They might have considered/be considering/ have been considering it."

Verbs too have features that aid in their recognition:

1. they follow the (grammatical) subject noun phrase (in italics): "*The real raw-knuckle boys who know what fighting means* enter the arena without fanfare."
2. they agree with the subject noun phrase in number: "The real raw-knuckle *boy*/*boys* who knows/know what fighting means enters/enter the arena without fanfare."
3. they agree with the subject noun phrase in person: "I/He, the real raw-knuckle boy who knows what fighting means, enter/enters the arena without fanfare", and
4. with the exception of modal verbs, they can express tense:"The boys ... had been entering the arena without fanfare."

Verb Phrases

Forms

Verb phrases are formed entirely of verbs. The verbs can be lexical, auxiliary, and modal. The head is the first verb in the verb phrase. Example:

- "I didn't notice Rowen around tonight," remarked Don, as they began to prepare for bed. "Might have

been sulking in his tent," grinned Terry." Here, the verb phrase "might have been sulking" has the form "modal-auxiliary-auxiliary-lexical."

In a verb phrase, the modal comes first, then the auxiliary or several auxiliaries, and finally the lexical (main) verb. When a verb phrase has a combination of modal and auxiliaries, it is constituted usually in the following order: modal verb >> perfect *have* >> progressive *be* >> passive *be* >> Lexical verb. Examples:

- "He might have been being used by the CIA as part of their debriefing procedure, but he might just as easily have been part of the Russians' plans to use Oswald in America." Here, the verb phrase is: might (modal) have (perfect) been (progressive) being (passive) used (lexical).
- The modal expression "be able to" is an exception: "It is best to know that she has (perfect) been (progressive) able to (modal expression) balance (lexical verb) these qualities and quantities with a grace which has not fallen short of greatness ...."

Tense

Verb phrases can vary with tense, in which case they are called "tensed verb phrases." Example:

- "They have accomplished a lot this year, but they accomplished even more last year."

There are many non-tensed forms as well:

1. base form of a lexical verb used as an imperative. Example: "Halt!"
2. base form of the lexical verb occurring as a subjunctive. Example: "'If he is a spy,' said Gorgik, 'I would rather he not know who I am."
3. the infinitive with "to." Examples:
    1. "Did you see her, chief—did you get a glimpse of her pleasant countenance, or come close

enough to her ear, to sing in it the song she *loves* to hear?'"

2. "She got so she could tell big stories herself from listening to the rest. Because she loved to hear it, and the men *loved* to hear themselves, they would 'woof' and 'boogerboo' around the games to the limit."
4. the "-ing" form, shared between the gerund and present participle. Examples:
   a. "Biological diversity *is* plummeting, mainly due to habitat degradation and loss, pollution, overexploitation, competition from alien species, disease, and changing climates."
   b. "Then it was swooping downward, and in the next second, a huge metal magpie, with wings outstretched in full flight, *was* plummeting toward them."
5. the "-ed" participle. Examples:
   a. "I also know that the painter *has* dined twice with the Prince Regent."
   b. "Which in all probability means that you *had* dined together," replied Monte Cristo, laughing, "I am glad to see you are more sober than he was."

The time frame of a non-tensed verb phrase is determined by examining that of the main clause verb. Examples:

- "From the very beginning, Coltrane was an indefatigable worker at his saxophone spending hours upon hours practicing every day."
- "By assuming a good position and by practicing every day he will in time acquire a feeling and an appearance of ease before people."

In the first case, the time frame (past) of "practicing" is determined by "was" in the main clause; in the second, the time frame (present and future) of "practicing" is determined by "will in time," also in the main clause.

Aspect

Verb phrases can also express two aspects: *progressive* and *perfect*. Aspect provides additional information on the speaker's perception of time.

Progressive Aspect : The progressive aspect consists of the auxiliary *be* form and the *-ing* form of the lexical verb. Examples:

- "Landlord, chambermaid, waiter rush to the door; but just as some distinguished guests are arriving, the curtains close, and the invisible theatrical manager cries out, 'Second syllable!' "
- "She made her curtsy, and was departing when the wretched young captain sprang up, looked at her, and sank back on the sofa with another wild laugh."

Properties:

- Progressive aspect may be found in verb phrases containing modals.
  - o "Restless, exciting and witty, he cannot resist a fantastic theory ..., so that one might be meeting Synge, Fielding, and Aldous Huxley, and on the same page."
- Non-tensed *-ing* forms, however, do not have the progressive aspect.
  - o "By working every day, he had learned the peculiarities, the weaknesses and strengths, of opposing batters ..." It cannot be changed to "By *being* working every day, ..."
- Progressive aspect can be combined with "to"-infinitive forms in a verb phrase.
  - o "He loved to sit by the open window when the

wind was east, and seemed to be dreaming of faraway scenes."

Perfect: The *perfect* aspect is created by the auxiliary "have" and the "-ed" participle form of the lexical verb. It refers to a time period that includes the present moment. Contrast "The flowers didn't bloom this summer" with "The flowers haven't bloomed this summer." The latter sentence suggests that the summer is not over yet.

Properties:

- The perfect can pair with modal verbs.
  - "You might (modal) have invited (perfect) the Hatter to the tea-party."
- The perfect can be combined with the -ing and the to-infinitive forms.
  - "Having turned the TV on, he now mindlessly flicked through the channels."
  - "To have run the marathon, she would have needed to be in good shape."

Finally, the two aspects, progressive and perfect, can be combined in a verb phrase: "They've been laughing so hard that their sides hurt."

Voice

The *passive voice*, which provides information about the roles of different participants in an event, is formed with the auxiliary "be" and the "-ed" participle form of the lexical verb. Examples:

- (Sentence) "The older critics slammed the play with vituperation inexplicable unless one attributes it to homophobia."
- (passive voice) "Ever notice how she was (past of "be") slammed (-ed participle) by the critics until the actors started doing it themselves?"

Properties:

- Modal verbs can occur in passive voice.
  - o "And if they couldn't get a handle on it soon, cities and towns all up and down the Eastern Seaboard could (modal) be slammed (passive) by the biggest storm of the year ...."
- Passive voice can be combined with non-tensed verbs such as "-ing" form and the "to-" infinitive.
  - o "There he was—getting slammed by the critics—and still taking the high road."
  - o "We were about to be slammed by an 80-foot breaking wave."
- Passive voice can combine with both the progressive and the perfect aspects.
  - o (passive, progressive): "The wind had picked up. The boat was being slammed by the swells, and floundering."
  - o (passive, perfect): "Although, alas, it's not such an exclusive club. I've sent them to everyone who has been slammed by that dreadful woman."

Mood

A verb phrase can also express mood, which refers to the "factual or non-factual status of events." There are three moods in English: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive.

Indicative mood: The indicative is the most common mood in English. It is a factual mood, and most constructions involving the various choices of person, tense, number, aspect, modality are in the indicative mood. Examples:

- "She will have a hangover tomorrow morning."
- "The Prime Minister and his cabinet were discussing the matter on that fateful day in 1939."

Imperative mood: The imperative mood is a non-factual mood and is employed for issuing directives:

- "Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on"
- "'Your father's urn is on the backseat. Just leave the keys in the cup holder."

Subjunctive mood: The subjunctive mood is also a non-factual mood which refers to demands, desires, etc. It uses the base form of the verb *without inflections*. It is rare in English and is used after only a handful of words such as "demand," "request," "suggest," "ask," "plead," "pray," "insist," and so forth. Examples:

- "I demanded that Sheriff Jeanfreau stay. I even wanted worthless and annoying Ugly Henderson to stay."
- "'I suggest that you not exercise your temper overmuch,' Mayne said, and the French tinge in his voice sounded truly dangerous now."

Properties:

- Subjunctives can be used after conditional subordinators.
  - o "I accepted on the condition that I not be given a starring role."
- Subjunctives can also be used after expressions of necessity.
  - o "Two nuns are asked to paint a room in the convent, and the last instruction of Mother Superior is that they not get even a drop of paint on their habits."
- The subjunctive form of the verb "be" can occur as the base form "be".
  - o "Whenever a prisoner alleges physical abuse, it is imperative that the prisoner be seen by an officer at the earliest possible opportunity."
- In its "were" form the subjunctive is used to express a hypothetical situation.

- "'Lin said, turning toward Pei, "I'm afraid she's excited at seeing me home again." Pei smiled. "I would be too, if I were she."

Adjectives

According to Carter and McCarthy, "Adjectives describe properties, qualities, and states attributed to a noun or a pronoun." As was the case with nouns and verbs, the class of adjectives cannot be identified by the forms of its constituents. However, adjectives are commonly formed by adding the some suffixes to nouns. Examples: "-al" ("habitual," "multidimensional," "visceral"), "-ful" ("blissful," "pitiful," "woeful"), "-ic" ("atomic," "gigantic," "pedantic"), "-ish" ("impish," "peckish," "youngish"), "-ous" ("fabulous," "hazardous"). As with nouns and verbs, there are exceptions: "homosexual" can be a noun, "earful" is a noun, "anesthetic" can be a noun, "brandish" is a verb. Adjectives can also be formed from other adjectives through the addition of a suffix or more commonly a prefix: weakish, implacable, disloyal, irredeemable, unforeseen. A number of adjectives are formed by adding "a" as a prefix to a verb: "adrift," "astride," "awry."

Gradability

Adjectives come in two varieties: gradable and non-gradable. In a gradable adjective, the properties or qualities associated with it, exist along a scale. In the case of the adjective "hot," for example, we can speak of: not at all hot, ever so slightly hot, only just hot, quite hot, very hot, extremely hot, dangerously hot, and so forth. Consequently, "hot" is a gradable adjective. Gradable adjectives usually have antonyms: hot/cold, hard/soft, smart/dumb, light/heavy. Some adjectives do not have room for qualification or modification. These are the non-gradable adjectives, such as: pregnant, married, incarcerated, condemned, adolescent (as adjective), dead, and so forth.

In figurative or literary language, a non-gradable

adjective can sometimes be treated as gradable, especially in order to emphasize some aspect:

- "When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with a forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room."

  A non-gradable adjective might have another connotation in which it is gradable. For example, "dead" when applied to sounds can mean dull, or not vibrant. In this meaning, it has been used as a gradable adjective:
- "... the bell seemed to sound more dead than it did when just before it sounded in open air."

Gradable adjectives can occur in comparative and superlative forms. For many common adjectives, these are formed by adding "-er" and "-est" to the base form: cold, colder, coldest; hot, hotter, hottest; dry, drier, driest, and so forth; however, for other adjectives, "more" and "most" are needed to provide the necessary qualification: more apparent, most apparent; more iconic, most iconic; more hazardous, most hazardous. Some gradable adjectives change forms atypically: good, better, best; bad, worse, worst; little, less, least; some/many, more, most.

Adjective Phrases

Forms

An *adjective phrase* may consist of just one adjective, or a single adjective which has been modified or complemented.

Adjectives are usually modified by adverb phrases (adverb in boldface; adjective in italics):

- "... placing himself in a dignified and truly *imposing* attitude, began to draw from his mouth yard after yard of red tape ..."
- "Families did certainly come, beguiled by representations of impossibly *cheap* provisions,

though the place was in reality very *expensive*, for every tradesman was a monopolist at heart."

- "... of anger frequent but generally *silent*, ..."

An adjective phrase can also consist of an adjective followed by a complement, usually a prepositional phrase, or by a "that" clause. Different adjectives require different patterns of complementation (adjective in italics; complement in bold face):

- "... during that brief time I was *proud* of myself, and I grew to love the heave and roll of the Ghost ..."
- "... her bosom *angry* at his intrusion, ..."
- "Dr. Drew is especially *keen* on good congregational singing."

Examples of "that" clause in the adjective phrase (adjective in italics; clause in boldface):

- "Was *sure* that the shrill voice was that of a man—a Frenchman."
- "The *longest* day that ever was; so she raves, restless and impatient."

An adjective phrase can combine pre-modification by an adverb phrase and post-modification by a complement, as in (adjective in italics; adverb phrase and complement in boldface):

- "Few people were ever more *proud* of civic honours than the Thane of Fife."

Attributive and Predicative

An adjective phrase is attributive when it modifies a noun or a pronoun (adjective phrase in boldface; noun in italics):

- "Truly selfish *genes* do arise, in the sense that they reproduce themselves at a cost to the other genes in the genome."

- "Luisa Rosado: a *woman* proud of being a midwife"

An adjective phrase is predicative when it occurs in the predicate of a sentence (adjective phrase in boldface):

- "No, no, I didn't really think so," returned Dora; "but I am a little tired, and it made me silly for a moment ..."
- "She was ill at ease, and looked more than usually stern and forbidding as she entered the Hales' little drawing room."

Adverbs

Adverbs typically modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They perform a wide range of functions and are especially important for indicating "time, manner, place, degree, and frequency of an event, action, or process." Adjectives and adverbs are often derived from the same word, the majority being formed by adding the "-ly" ending to the corresponding adjective form. Recall the adjectives, "habitual", "pitiful", "impish", We can use them to form the adverbs:

- "habitually": "... shining out of the New England reserve with which Holgrave habitually masked whatever lay near his heart."
- "pitifully": "The lamb tottered along far behind, near exhaustion, bleating pitifully."
- "impishly": "Well," and he grinned impishly, "it was one doggone good party while it lasted!"

Some suffixes that are commonly found in adverbs are "-ward(s)" and "-wise":

- "homeward": "The plougman homeward plods his weary way."
- "downward": "In tumbling turning, clustering loops, straight downward falling, ..."
- "lengthwise": "2 to 3 medium carrots, peeled, halved lengthwise, and cut into 1-inch pieces."

Some adverbs have the same form as the adjectives:

- "outside":
  - Adverb: "'You'd best begin, or you'll be sorry—it's raining outside."
  - Adjective: "It would be possible to winter the colonies in the barn if each colony is provided with a separate outside entrance; ..."
- "straight"
  - Adverb: "Five cigars, very dry, smoked straight except where wrapper loosened, as it did in two cases."
  - Adjective: "Numbering among the ranks of the "young and evil" in this text are ... straight women who fall in love with gay men, ..."

Some adverbs are not related to adjectives:

- "quite": "Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day, and ... Mrs. Bennet was quite disconcerted."
- "too": "... like a child that, having devoured its plumcake too hastily, sits sucking its fingers, ..."
- "so": "... oh! ... would she heave one little sigh to see a bright young life so rudely blighted, ...?"

Some adverbs inflect for comparative and superlative forms:

- "soon"
  - "O error, soon conceived, Thou never comest unto a happy birth, ..."
  - "Nerissa: 'superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer."
  - "'Least said, soonest mended!' "
- "well"
  - "Valrosa well deserved its name, for in that

climate of perpetual summer roses blossomed everywhere."

- "'I'm afraid your appearance in the Phycological Quarterly was better deserved,' said Mrs. Arkwright, without removing her eyes from the microscope ..."
- "Who among the typical Victorians best deserved his hate?"

Adverb Placement

Adverbs are most usually placed at the end of a phrase. Time adverbs (*yesterday, soon, habitually*) are the most flexible exception. "Connecting Adverbs", such as *next, then, however*, may also be placed at the beginning of a clause. Other exceptions include "focusing adverbs", which can occupy a middle position for emphasis. "

Adverb Phrases

Forms

An adverb phrase is a phrase that collectively acts as an adverb within a sentence; in other words, it modifies a verb (or verb phrase), an adjective (or adjective phrase), or another adverb. The head of an adverb phrase (roman boldface), which is an adverb, may be modified by another adverb (italics boldface) or followed by a complement (italics boldface):

- "Yet *all too* suddenly Rosy popped back into the conversation, ..."
- "Oddly *enough*, that very shudder did the business."
- "The Stoics said, *perhaps* shockingly *for us*, that a father ceases to be a father when his child dies."

An adverb phrase can be part of the complement of the verb "be." It then usually indicates location (adverb phrase in boldface; form of "be" in italics):

- "'... it *is* underneath the pink slip that I wore on Wednesday with my Mechlin.'"

- "... north-by-northeast *was* Rich Mountain, ..."

Adverb phrases are frequently modifiers of verbs:

- "They plow through a heavy fog, and Enrique *sleeps* soundly—too soundly."
- "Sleepily, very sleepily, you *stagger* to your feet and collapse into the nearest chair."

Adverb phrases are also frequently modifiers of adjectives and other adverbs (modifier in boldface; modified in italics):

- (adjectives) "Then to the swish of waters as the sailors sluice the decks all around and under you, you fall into a really *deep* sleep."
- (adverbs) "'My grandma's kinda deaf and she sleeps like really *heavily*."

Adverb phrases can also be modifiers of noun phrases (or pronoun phrases) and prepositional phrases (adverb phrases in boldface; modified phrases in italics):

- (noun phrase): "She stayed out in the middle of the wild sea, and told them that was quite *the loveliest place*, you could see for many miles all round you, ..."
- (pronoun phrase): "... the typical structure of glioma is that of spherical and cylindrical lobules, almost *each and everyone of which* has a centrally located blood vessel."
- (prepositional phrase): "About halfway *through the movie*, I decided to ..."

Adverb phrases also modify determiners (modifier in boldface; modified in italics):

- "The devil knows best what he said, but at least she became his tool and was in the habit of seeing him nearly *every* evening."
- "Nearly if not quite *all* civilized peoples and ourselves

above almost *all* others, are heavily burdened with the interest upon their public debt."

Functions

According to Carter and McCarthy, "As well as giving information on the time, place, manner and degree of an action, event, or process, adverb phrases can also have a commenting function, indicating the attitude and point of view of the speaker or writer towards a whole sentence or utterance." Examples:

- "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn."
- "Astonishingly, she'd shelled every nut, leaving me only the inner skin to remove."

Adverb phrases also indicate the relation between two clauses in a sentence. Such adverbs are usually called "linking adverbs." Example:

- "... they concluded from the similarities of their bodies, that mine must contain at least 1724 of theirs, and consequently would require as much food as was necessary to support that number of Lilliputians."

Prepositions

Prepositions relate two events in time or two people or things in space. They form a closed class. They also represent abstract relations between two entities: Examples:

1. ("after":) "We came home from Mr. Boythorn's after six pleasant weeks."
2. ("after":) "'That was done with a bamboo,' said the boy, after one glance."
3. ("to":) "I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life, ..."
4. ("between" and "through":) "Between two golden tufts of summer grass, I see the world through hot air as through glass, ..."

5. ("during":) "During these years at Florence, Leonardo's history is the history of his art; he himself is lost in the bright cloud of it."
6. ("of":) "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrances of things past."

Prepositions are accompanied by prepositional complements; these are usually noun phrases. In the above examples, the prepositional complements are:

1. preposition: "after"; prepositional complement: "six pleasant weeks"
2. preposition: "after"; prepositional complement: "one glance"
3. preposition: "to"; prepositional complement: "the seas"; preposition: "to"; prepositional complement: "the vagrant gypsy life";
4. preposition: "Between"; prepositional complement: "two golden tufts of summer grass,"; preposition: "through"; prepositional complement: "hot air"; preposition: "as through"; prepositional complement: "glass."
5. preposition: "during"; prepositional complement: "these years at Florence."
6. preposition: "of"; prepositional complement: "sweet silent thought"; preposition: "of"; prepositional complement: "things past."

Prepositional Phrases

A prepositional phrase is formed when a preposition combines with its complement. In the above examples, the prepositional phrases are:

1. prepositional phrase: "after six pleasant weeks"
2. prepositional phrase: "after one glance"
3. prepositional phrases: "to the seas" and "to the vagrant gypsy life"
4. prepositional phrases: "Between two golden tufts

of summer grass," "through hot air" and "as through glass."

5. prepositional phrase: "During these years at Florence."
6. prepositional phrases "of sweet silent thought" and "of things past."

Conjunctions

According to Carter and McCarthy, "Conjunctions express a variety of logical relations between phrases, clauses and sentences." There are two kinds of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions.

Coordinating

Coordinating conjunctions link "elements of equal grammatical status." The elements in questions may vary from a prefix to an entire sentence. Examples:

- (prefixes): "The doctor must provide facilities for *pre-* and *post* test counselling and have his own strict procedures for the storing of that confidential information."
- (words): "'No, I'll never love *anybody* but *you*, Tom, and I'll never marry anybody but you—and you ain't to ever marry *anybody* but *me*, either."
- (phrases): "Can *storied urn* or *animated* bust back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?"
- (subordinate clauses): "*Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life*, or *whether that station will be held by anybody else*, these pages must show.
- (independent clauses): "Well, *I think you're here, plain enough*, but *I think you're a tangle-headed old fool*, Jim."
- (sentences): "He said we were neither of us much to look at and we were as sour as we looked. But I don't feel as sour as I used to before I knew robin and Dickon."

A *correlative conjunction* is a pair of constituent elements, each of which is associated with the grammatical unit to be coordinated. The common correlatives in English are:

- "either ... or":
  - "The clergyman stayed to exchange a few sentences, either *of admonition* or *reproof*, with his haughty parishioner ...."
  - "...; for I could not divest myself of a misgiving that something might happen to London in the meanwhile, and that, when I got there, it would be either *greatly deteriorated* or *clean gone*."
- "neither ... nor":
  - "Buck made no effort. He lay quietly where he had fallen. The lash bit into him again and again, but he neither *whined* nor *struggled*."
  - "For I have neither *wit*, nor *words*, nor *worth, action*, nor *utterance*, nor *the power of speech, to stir men's blood*: I only speak right on; ..."
- "both ... and"
  - "There was no mistaking her sincerity—it breathed in every tone of her voice. Both *Marilla* and *Mrs. Lynde* recognized its unmistakable ring."
  - "There messages have both *ethical* and *pragmatic* overtones, urging women to recognize that even if they do suffer from physical and social disadvantages, their lives are far from being determined by their biology."
- "Not only ... but also"
  - "The director of *A Doll's House*, the brilliant Zhang Min, ..., was impressed with Lin not only *professionally* but also *personally*."
  - "... she attempted to persuade her husband to give up his affair. Not only *did he refuse*, but *he* also *told her he loved them both* ...."

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunction relate only clauses to one another. They make the clause associated with them into a subordinate clause. Some common subordinating conjunctions in English are: (of time) after, before, since, until, when, while; (cause and effect): because, since, now that, as, in order that, so; (opposition): although, though, even though, whereas, while; (condition): if, unless, only if, whether or not, whether or no, even if, in case (that), and so forth. Examples:

- (time: "before"): "Perhaps Homo erectus had already died out before *Homo sapiens arrived*.
- (cause and effect: "in order that"): "In order that *feelings, representations, ideas and the like should attain a certain degree of memorability*, it is important that they should not remain isolated ..."
- (opposition: "although"): "Ultimately there were seven more sessions, in which, although *she remained talkative*, she increasingly clearly conveyed a sense that she did not wish to come any more."
- (condition: "even if"): "Even if *Sethe could deal with the return of the spirit*, Stamp didn't believe her daughter could."

Sentence and Clause Patterns

Identified in English by a capitalized initial letter in its first word and by a period (or full stop) at the end of its last word, the sentence is the largest constituent of grammar. A text that contains more than one sentence is no longer in the realm of grammar, but rather of discourse, as are all conversations, howsoever brief. Sentences themselves consist of clauses which are the principal constituents of grammar. A clause consists of a subject, which is usually a noun phrase, and a predicate which is usually a verb phrase with an accompanying grammatical unit in the form of an object or complement.

Clause Types

Independent

An independent clause is characterized by having a subject and predicate without any words or phrases that link the function of that clause to another clause, causing the first clause to become dependent upon the other clause for its greater meaning. The independent clause includes relatively simplistic sentences:

- "My mother baked a cake."
- "The dog was brown."

However, it also includes seemingly ornate sentences that contain many prepositional phrases:

- "Considering the alternative, the certain demise of our dear friend is quite comforting."
- "Altruism in its purest sense can claim no interest in or motive for or boon from the benefit of another."

Dependent

A dependent clause is characterized by having a subject and predicate *with* a word or phrase that links the function of that clause to another clause, causing the first clause to become dependent upon the other clause for its greater meaning. The key here is the addition of some word or phrase that causes the entire clause to function in a broader sense, such as cause or background.

- "Because it was my birthday, my mother baked a cake."
- "Although its bloodline consisted of two Dalmatians, the dog was brown."

Clause Combination

Simple

Possibly seen as not quite a clause combination, the simple sentence type is simply a single independent clause.

- "The world swarmed tonight by the sound of stars."
- "The cost of the battle was too great to not number."

History of English Grammar Writing

The first English grammar, Pamphlet for Grammar by William Bullokar, written with the ostensible goal of demonstrating that English was just as rule-bound as Latin, was published in 1586. Bullokar's grammar was faithfully modeled on William Lily's Latin grammar, Rudimenta Grammatices (1534), which was being used in schools in England at that time, having been "prescribed" for them in 1542 by Henry VIII. Although Bullokar wrote his grammar in English and used a "reformed spelling system" of his own invention, many English grammars, for much of the century after Bullokar's effort, were written in Latin, especially by authors who were aiming to be scholarly. John Wallis's Grammatica Linguæ Anglicanæ (1685) was the last English grammar written in Latin.

Even as late as the early 19th century, Lindley Murray, the author of one of the most widely used grammars of the day, was having to cite "grammatical authorities" to bolster the claim that grammatical cases in English are different from those in Ancient Greek or Latin.

READABILITY

Readability is the ease in which text can be read and understood. Various factors to measure readability have been used, such as "speed of perception," "perceptibility at a distance," "perceptibility in peripheral vision," "visibility," "the reflex blink technique," "rate of work" (e.g., speed of reading), "eye movements," and "fatigue in reading."

Readability is distinguished from legibility which is a measure of how easily individual letters or characters can be distinguished from each other. Readability can determine the ease in which computer program code can be read by humans, such as through embedded documentation.

Definition

Readability has been defined in various ways, e.g. by: The Literacy Dictionary, Jeanne Chall and Edgar Dale, G. Harry McLaughlin, William DuBay.

Easy reading helps learning and enjoyment. So what we write should be easy to understand.

While many writers and speakers since ancient times have used plain language, in the 20th century there was much more focus on reading ease. Much of the research has focused on matching texts to people's reading skills. This has used many successful formulas: in research, government, teaching, publishing, the army, doctors, and business. Many people, and in many languages, have been helped by this. By the year 2000, there were over 1,000 studies on readability formulas in professional journals about their validity and merit.The study of reading is not just in teaching. Research has shown that much money is wasted by companies in making texts hard for the average reader to read.

There are summaries of this research, see the links in this section. Many text books on reading include pointers to readability.

Early Research

In the 1880s, English professor L. A. Sherman found that the English sentence is getting shorter. In Elizabethan times, the average sentence was 50 words long. In his own time, it was 23 words long.

Sherman's work established that:

- Literature is a subject for statistical analysis.
- Shorter sentences and concrete terms help people to make sense of what is written.
- Speech is easier to understand than text.
- Over time, text becomes easier if it is more like speech.

Sherman wrote: "Literary English, in short, will follow the forms of standard spoken English from which it comes. No man should talk worse than he writes, no man should write better than he should talk.... The oral sentence is clearest because it is the product of millions of daily efforts to be clear and strong. It represents the work of the race for thousands of years in perfecting an effective instrument of communication.'

In 1889 in Russia, the writer Nikolai A. Rubakin published his study of over 10,000 texts written by everyday people. From these texts, he took out 1,500 words which he thought were understood by most people. He found that the main blocks were 1. strange words and 2. the use of too many long sentences. Starting with his own journal at the age of 13, Rubakin published many articles and books on science and many subjects for the great numbers of new readers throughout Russia. In Rubakin's view, the people were not fools. They were simply poor and in need of cheap books, written at a level they could grasp.

In 1921, Harry D. Kitson published *The Mind of the Buyer*, one of the first uses of psychology in marketing. Kitson's work showed that each type of reader bought and read their own type of text. On reading two newspapers (the *Chicago Evening Post* and the *Chicago American*) and two magazines (the *Century* and the *American*), he found that sentence length and word length were the best signs of being easy to read.

Text Levelling

The earliest method of assessing the reading ease of texts is subjective judgment, called text levelling and the quality assessment of reading ease. It is used in judging the reading ease of books for young children and for reading problems. Experts point out that formulas don't address variables such as content, purpose, design, visual input, and organisation.

Despite this, at higher levels even teachers find it hard to rank the reading ease of texts. For this reason, better ways to assess reading ease were looked for.

Vocabulary Frequency Lists

In the 1920s, the Scientific Movement in education looked for tests to measure students' achievement to aid in curriculum development. Teachers and educators had long known that readers, especially beginning readers, should have reading material that closely matched their ability to help improve their reading skill. University-based psychologists did much of the early research, which was taken up later by publishers of textbooks.

Educational psychologist Edward Thorndike of Columbia University noted that in Russia and Germany teachers were using word frequency counts to match books with students. Word skill was the best sign of intellectual development and the strongest predictor of reading ease. In 1921, Thorndike published his Teachers Word Book, which contained the frequencies of 10,000 words. It made it easier for teachers to choose books matching the reading skills of their class. It also laid down the basis for all research to come on reading ease.

Until computers came along, word frequency lists were the best aids for grading the reading ease of texts. In 1981 the World Book Encyclopedia listed the grade levels of 44,000 words.

Early Children's Readability Formulas

In 1923, school teachers Bertha A. Lively and Sidney L. Pressey published the first reading ease formula. They had been concerned that science textbooks in junior high school had so many technical words. They felt that teachers spent all class time explaining their meaning. They argued that their formula would help to measure and reduce the "vocabulary burden" of textbooks. Their formula used 5 variable inputs and 6 constants. For each thousand words,

it counted the number of unique words, the number of words not on the Thorndike list, and the median index number of the words found on the list. Manually applied, it took three hours to apply the formula to a book.

After the Lively-Pressey study people tried to find formulas that were 1. more accurate and 2. easier to apply. By 1980, over 200 formulas were published in different languages.

In 1928, Carleton Washburne and Mabel Vogel created the first of the modern readability formula. It was validated by using an outside criterion, and correlated .845 with test scores of students who read and liked the criterion books. It was also the first to introduce the variable of interest to the concept of readability.

Between 1929 and 1939, Alfred Lewerenz of the Los Angeles School District published several new formulas.

In 1934, Edward Thorndike published a formula of his own. He wrote that word skills can be increased if the teacher brings in new words, and repeats them, often. In 1939, W.W. Patty and W. I Painter published a formula for measuring the vocabulary burden of textbooks. This was the last of the early formulas that used the Thorndike vocabulary-frequency list.

Early Adult Readability Formulas

During the recession of the 1930s, the U.S. government invested in adult education. In 1931, Douglas Waples and Ralph Tyler published *What Adults Want to Read About*. It was a two-year study of adult reading interests. Their book showed not only what people read but what they would like to read. They found that many readers lacked suitable reading materials: they would have liked to learn but the reading materials were too hard for them.

Lyman Bryson of Teachers College, Columbia University found that many adults had poor reading ability due to poor education. Even though colleges had long taught writing

in a clear and readable style, Bryson found that it was very rare. He wrote that such language is the result of a "discipline and artistry that few people who have ideas will take the trouble to achieve... If simple language were easy, many of our problems would have been solved long ago." Bryson helped set up the Readability Laboratory at the College. Two of his students were Irving Lorge and Rudolf Flesch.

In 1934, Ralph Ojemann investigated the reading skills of adults, the factors which most directly affect reading ease, and the causes of each level of difficulty. He did not invent a formula but a method for assessing the difficulty of materials for parent education. He was the first to assess the validity of this method by using 16 magazine passages that had been tested on actual readers. He evaluated 14 measurable and three reported factors affecting reading ease.

Ojemann put great emphasis on the reported features, such as whether the text was coherent or unduly abstract. He used his 16 passages to compare and judge the reading ease of other texts, a method known today as scaling. He showed that even though these factors cannot be measured, they cannot be ignored.

That same year, Ralph Tyler and Edgar Dale published the first adult reading ease formula which was based on passages from adult magazines. Of the 29 factors that had been significant for young readers, they found ten that were significant for adults. Three of them they used in their formula.

In 1935, William S. Gray of the University of Chicago and Bernice Leary of Xavier College in Chicago published *What Makes a Book Readable,* one of the most important books in readability research. Like Dale and Tyler, they focused on what makes books readable for adults of limited reading ability.

The book included the first scientific study of the reading skills of adults in the U.S. The sample included 1,690 adults from a variety of settings and areas of the U.S. The test used a number of passages from newspapers, magazines, and books as well as a standard reading test. They found a mean grade score of 7.81 (eighth month of the seventh grade). About one third read at the 2nd to 6th-grade level, one third at the 7th to 12th-grade level, and one third at the 13th to 17th grade level.

The authors emphasized that one-half of the adult population are lacking suitable reading materials. They wrote, "For them, the enriching values of reading are denied unless materials reflecting adult interests are adapted to their needs." The poorest readers, one-sixth of the adult population, need "simpler materials for use in promoting functioning literacy and in establishing fundamental reading habits."

Gray and Leary then analyzed 228 variables that affect reading ease and divided them into four types: 1. content, 2. style, 3. format, and organization. They found that content was most important, followed closely by style. Third was format, followed closely by organization. They found no way to measure content, format, or organization, but they could measure variables of style. Among the 17 significant measurable variables of style, they selected five to create a formula: 1. average sentence length, 2 number of different hard words, 3. number of personal pronouns, percentage of unique words, and number of prepositional phrases. Their formula had a correlation of .645 with comprehension as measured by reading tests given to about 800 adults.

In 1939, Irving Lorge published an article showing that there were other combinations of variables which were more accurate signs of difficulty than the ones used by Gray and Leary. His research also showed that "the vocabulary load is the most important concomitant of difficulty. In 1944, Lorge published his Lorge Index, a

readability formula using three variables, setting the stage for the simpler and more reliable formulas that would follow.

By 1940, investigators had:

- Successfully used statistical methods to analyze the reading ease of texts.
- Found that unusual words and sentence length were among the first causes of reading difficulty.
- Used vocabulary and sentence length in formulas to predict the reading ease of a text.

The Popular Readability Formulas

The Flesch Formulas

In 1943, Rudolf Flesch published his Ph. D. dissertation entitled Marks of a Readable Style, which included a readability formula for predicting the difficulty of adult reading material. Investigators began using it to improve communications in many fields. One of the variables it used was "personal references" such as names and personal pronouns. Another variable was affixes.

In 1948, Flesch published his Reading Ease formula in two parts. Rather than using grade levels, it used a scale from 0 to 100, with 0 equivalent to the 12th grade and 100 equivalent to the 4th grade,. It dropped the use of affixes. The second part of the formula predicts human interest by using personal references and the number of personal sentences. The new formula correlated .70 with the McCall-Crabbs reading tests. The original formula is:

Reading Ease score = 206.835 - (1.015 x ASL) - (84.6 x ASW)

Where: ASL = average sentence length (number of words divided by number of sentences)

ASW = average word length in syllables (number of syllables divided by number of words)

Publishers discovered that the Flesch formulas could

increase readership up to 60 percent. Flesch's work also made an enormous impact on journalism. The Flesch Reading Ease formula became one of the most widely used, and the one most tested and reliable. In 1951, Farr, Jenkins, and Patterson simplified the formula further by changing the syllable count. The modified formula is:

New Reading Ease score = 1.599nosw -1.015sl - 31.517

Where: nosw = number of one-syllable words per 100 words
and
sl = average sentence length in words.

In 1975, in a project sponsored by the U.S. Navy, the Reading Ease formula was recalculated to give a grade-level score. The new formula is now called the Flesch-Kincaid Grade-Level formula. The Flesch-Kincaid formula is one of the most popular and heavily tested formulas. It correlates 0.91 with comprehension as measured by reading tests.

The Dale-Chall formula

Edgar Dale, a professor of education at Ohio State University, was one of the first critics of Thorndike's vocabulary-frequency lists. He claimed that they did not distinguish between the different meanings that many words have. He created two new lists of his own. One, his "short list" of 769 easy words, was used by Irving Lorge in his formula. The other was his "long list" of 3,000 easy words, which were understood by 80% of fourth-grade students. In 1948, he incorporated this list in a formula which he developed with Jeanne S. Chall, who was to become the founder of the Harvard Reading Laboratory.

To apply the formula:

1. Select several 100-word samples throughout the text.
2. Compute the average sentence length in words (divide the number of words by the number of sentences).

3. Compute the percentage of words NOT on the Dale-Chall word list of 3,000 easy words.
4. Compute this equation
   Raw Score = .1579PDW + .0496ASL + 3.6365

Where: Raw Score = uncorrected reading grade of a student who can answer one-half of the test questions on a passage.
PDW = Percentage of Difficult Words not on the Dale-Chall word list.
ASL = Average Sentence Length

Finally, to compensate for the "grade-equivalent curve," apply the following chart for the Final Score:

Raw Score — Final Score
4.9 and below — Grade 4 and below
5.0 to 5.9 — Grades 5-6
6.0 to 6.9 — Grades 7-8
7.0 to 7.9 — Grades 9-10
8.0 to 8.9 — Grades 11-12
9.0 to 9.9 — Grades 13-15 (college)
10 and above — Grades 16 and above.

Correlating 0.93 with comprehension as measured by reading tests, the Dale-Chall formula is the most reliable formula and is widely used in scientific research. Go to the Okapi Web site for a computerized version of this formula: Okapi. In 1995, Dale and Chall published a new version of their formula with an upgraded word list, the New Dale-Chall Readability Formula.

The Gunning Fog Formula

In the 1940s, Robert Gunning helped bring readability research into the workplace. In 1944, he founded the first readability consulting firm dedicated to reducing the "fog" in newspapers and business writing. In 1952, he published *The Technique of Clear Writing* with his own Fog Index, a formula that correlates 0.91 with comprehension as

measured by reading tests. The formula is one of the most reliable and simplest to apply:

Grade level= .4 (average sentence length + percentage of Hard Words)

Where: Hard Words = words with more than two syllables.

Fry Readability Graph

In 1963, while teaching English teachers in Uganda, Edward Fry developed his Readability Graph. It became one of the most popular formulas and easiest to apply. The Fry Graph correlates 0.86 with comprehension as measured by reading tests.

McLaughlin's SMOG Formula

Harry McLaughlin determined that word length and sentence length should be multiplied rather than added as in other formulas. In 1969, he published his SMOG (Simple Measure of Gobbledygook) formula:

SMOG grading = 3 + square root of polysyllable count.

Where: polysyllable count = number of words of more than two syllables in a sample of 30 sentences.

The SMOG formula correlates 0.88 with comprehension as measured by reading tests. It is often recommended for use in healthcare.

The FORCAST Formula

In 1973, a study commissioned by the U.S. military of the reading skills required for different military jobs produced the FORCAST formula. Unlike most other formulas, it uses only a vocabulary element, making it useful for texts without complete sentences. The formula satisfied requirements that it would be:

- Based on Army-job reading materials.
- Suitable for the young adult-male recruits.
- Easy enough for Army clerical personnel to use without special training or equipment.

The formula is:

Grade level = 20 - (N / 10)

Where N = number of single-syllable words in a 150-word sample.

The FORCAST formula correlates 0.66 with comprehension as measured by reading tests.

Consolidation and Validation

Beginning in the 1940s, continuing studies in readability confirmed and expanded on earlier research. From these studies, it became obvious that readability is not something embedded in the text but is the result of an interaction between the text and the reader. On the reader's side, readability is dependent on 1. prior knowledge, 2. reading skill, 3. interest, and 4. motivation. On the side of the text, readability is affected by 1. content, 2. style, 3. design, and 4. organization.

Readability and Newspaper Readership

Several studies in the 1940s showed that even small increases in readability greatly increases readership in large-circulation newspapers.

In 1947, Donald Murphy of*Wallace's Farmer* used a split-run edition to study the effects of making text easier to read. They found that reducing from the 9th to the 6th-grade level increased readership 43% for an article on 'nylon'. There was a gain of 42,000 readers in a circulation of 275,000. He found a 60% increase in readership for an article on 'corn'. He also found a better response from people under 35.

Wilber Schramm interviewed 1,050 newspaper readers. He found that an easier reading style helps to decide how much of an article is read. This was called reading persistence, depth, or perseverance. He also found that people will read less of long articles than of short ones. A story 9 paragraphs long will lose three out of 10 readers by

the 5th paragraph. A shorter story will lose only two. Schramm also found that the use of subheads, bold-face paragraphs, and stars to break up a story actually lose readers.

A study in 1947 by Melvin Lostutter showed that newspapers generally were written at a level five years above the ability of average American adult readers. He also found that the reading ease of newspaper articles had little to do with the education, experience, or personal interest of the journalists writing the stories. It had more to do with the convention and culture of the industry. Lostutter argued for more readability testing in newspaper writing. He wrote that improved readability has to be a "conscious process somewhat independent of the education and experience of the staff*s writers."*

A study by Charles Swanson in 1948 showed that better readability increases the total number of paragraphs read by 93% and the number of readers reading every paragraph by 82%.

In 1948, Bernard Feld did a study of every item and ad in the *Birmingham News* of 20 November 1947. He divided the items into those above the 8th-grade level and those at the 8th grade or below. He chose the 8th-grade breakpoint because that was the average reading level of adult readers. An 8th-grade text "will reach about 50 percent of all American grown-ups," he wrote. Among the wire-service stories, the lower group got two-thirds more readers, and among local stories, 75 percent more readers. Feld also believed in drilling writers in Flesch's clear-writing principles.

Both Rudolf Flesch and Robert Gunning worked extensively with newspapers and the wire services in improving readability. Mainly through their efforts in a few short years, the readability of U.S. newspapers went from the 16th to the 11th-grade level, where it remains today.

The two publications with the largest circulations, *TV Guide* (13 million) and *Readers Digest* (12 million), are written at the 9th-grade level. The most popular novels are written at the 7th-grade level. This supports the fact that the average adult reads at the 9th-grade level. It also shows that, for recreation, people read texts that are two grades below their actual reading level.

The George Klare Studies

George Klare and his colleagues looked at the effects of greater reading ease on Air Force recruits. They found that more readable texts resulted in greater and more complete learning. They also increased the amount read in a given time, and made for easier acceptance.

Other studies by Klare showed how the reader's skills, prior knowledge, interest, and motivation affect reading ease.

Measuring Coherence and Organization

For centuries, teachers and educators have seen the importance of organization, coherence, and emphasis in good writing. Beginning in the 1970s, cognitive theorists began teaching that reading is really an act of thinking and organization. The reader constructs meaning by mixing new knowledge into existing knowledge. Because of the limits of the reading ease formulas, some research looked at ways to measure the content, organization, and coherence of text. Although this did not improve the reliability of the formulas, their efforts showed the importance of these variables in reading ease.

Studies by Walter Kintch and others showed the central role of coherence in reading ease, mainly for people learning to read. In 1983, 'Susan Kemper devised a formula based on physical states and mental states. However,she found this was no better than word familiarity and sentence length in showing reading ease.

Bonnie Meyer and others tried to use organization as

a measure of reading ease. While this did not result in a formula, they showed that people read faster and retain more when the text is organized in topics. She found that a visible plan for presenting content greatly helps readers in to assess a text. A hierarchical plan shows how the parts of the text are related. It also aids the reader in blending new information into existing knowledge structures.

Bonnie Armbruster found that the most important feature for learning and comprehension is textual coherence, which comes in two types:

- Global coherence, which integrates high-level ideas as themes in an entire section, chapter, or book.
- Local coherence, which joins ideas within and between sentences.

Armbruster confirmed Kintsch's finding that coherence and structure are more help for younger readers. R. C. Calfee and R. Curley built on Bonnie Meyer's work and found that an underlying structure can make even simple text hard to read. They brought in a graded system to help students progress from simpler story lines to more advanced and abstract ones.

Many other studies looked at the effects on reading ease of other text variables, including:

- Image words, abstraction, direct and indirect statements, types of narration and sentences, phrases, and clauses.
- Difficult concepts.
- Idea density.
- Human interest.
- Nominalization.
- Active and passive voice.
- Embeddedness.
- Structural cues.
- The use of images.

- Diagrams and line graphs.
- Highlighting.
- Fonts and layout.

Advanced Readability Formulas

The John Bormuth Formulas

John Bormuth of the University of Chicago looked at reading ease using the new Cloze deletion test developed by Wilson Taylor. His work supported earlier research including the degree of reading of reading ease for each kind of reading. The best level for classroom "assisted reading" is a slightly difficult text that causes a "set to learn," and for which readers can correctly answer 50 percent of the questions of a multiple-choice test. The best level for unassisted reading is one for which readers can correctly answer 80 percent of the questions. These cutoff scores were later confirmed by Vygotsky and Chall and Conard. Among other things, Bormuth confirmed that vocabulary and sentence length are the best indicators of reading ease. He showed that the measures of reading ease worked as well for adults as for children. The same things that children find hard are the same for adults of the same reading levels. He also developed several new measures of cutoff scores. One of the most well known was the "Mean Cloze Formula." which was used in 1981 to produce the Degree of Reading Power system used by the College Entrance Examination Board.

The Lexile Framework

In 1988, "Jack Stenner and his associates at MetaMetrics, Inc. published a new system, the Lexile Framework, for assessing readability and matching students with appropriate texts.

The Lexile Framework uses average sentence length and average word frequency as found in the American Heritage Intermediate Corpus to predict a score on a 0-2000 scale. The AHI Corpus includes five million words

from 1,045 published to which students in grades three to nine often read. Once you know a student's Lexile score, you can search a large database for books that match the score.

The Lexile Framework is one of the largest and most successful systems for the development of reading skills. The Lexile Book Database has more than 100,000 titles from more than 450 publishers. You can search the database for Lexile ratings on their Web site at: http://www.lexile.com.

ATOS Readability Formula for Books

In 2000, researchers of the School Renaissance Institute and Touchstone Applied Science Associates published their Advantage-TASA Open Standard (ATOS) Reading ease Formula for Books. They worked on a formula that was easy to use and that could be used with any texts.

The project was one of the widest reading ease projects ever. The developers of the formula used 650 normed reading texts, 474 million words from all the text in 28,000 books read by students. The project also used the reading records of more than 30,000 who read and were tested on 950,000 books.

They found that three variables give the most reliable measure of text reading ease:

- words per sentence
- average grade level of words
- characters per word

They also found that:

- To help learning, the teacher should match book reading ease with reading skill.
- Reading often helps with reading gains.
- For reading alone below the 4th grade, the best learning gain requires at least 85% comprehension.
- Advanced readers need 92% comprehension for independent reading.

- Book length can be a good measure of reading ease.
- Feedback and interaction with the teacher are the most important factors in reading.

Research on readability continues in many countries, with the development of new formulas. Among the most recent formulas is the Strain Index, created by Nirmaldasen in India. It uses only a count of syllables in a sentence: http://strainindex.wordpress.com/2007/09/25/hello-world/

Using the Readability Formulas

While experts agree that the formulas are highly accurate for grading the readability of existing texts, they are not so useful for creating or modifying them. The two variables, a sentence and a vocabulary, used in most formulas, are the ones most directly related to reading difficulty, but they are not the only ones.

Writing experts have warned that if you "write to the formula," that is, attempt to simplify the text only by changing the length of the words and sentences, you may end up with text that is more difficult to read. All the variables are tightly related. If you change one, you must also adjust the others, including approach, voice, person, tone, typography, design, and organization.

Writing for a class of readers other than one's own is very difficult. It takes training, method, and practice. Among those who are good at this are writers of novels and children's books. The writing experts all advise that, besides using a formula, observe all the norms of good writing, which are essential for writing readable texts. Study the texts used by your audience and their reading habits. This means, if you are writing for a 5th-grade audience, study and learn 5th-grade materials.

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Glossary

Abbreviations: Letter(s) or shortened word used instead of a full word or phrase

Accent: The features of pronunciation which indicate the regional or the social identity of a speaker

Acquisition: The process by which language skills are developed – particularly in infancy

Adjectives: A word which modifies a noun or a pronoun

Adverbs: A word which modifies a verb, an adverb, or an adjective

Agreement: The grammatical logic and coherence between parts of a sentence

Alliteration: The repetition of consonant sounds – usually at the beginning of words

Apostrophes: aA raised comma used to denote either possession or contraction

Articles: A word that specifies whether a noun is definite or indefinite

Assonance: The repetition of vowel sounds

Audience: The person or persons receiving a speech or piece of writing

Brackets: Curved or square punctuation marks enclosing words inserted into a text

Capitals: Upper-case letters used to indicate names, titles, and important words

Clauses: A structural unit of language which is smaller than the sentence but larger than phrases or words, and which contains a finite verb

Cliché: An over-used phrase or expression

Colons: A punctuation mark indicating a pause ranking between a semicolon and a full stop

Commas: A punctuation mark indicating a short pause in a sentence

Conjunction: A word which connects words or other constructions

Consonant: An alphabetic element other than a vowel

Context: The setting in which speech or writing takes place

Dialect: A form of speech peculiar to a district, class, or person

Diglossia: The existence of two official languages in a society

Diphthong: Two vowel characters representing the sound of a single vowel

Ellipsis: The omission of words from a sentence

Figure of speech: Expressive use language in non-literal form to produce striking effect

Form: The outward appearance or structure of language, as opposed to its function, meaning, or social use

Full stop: A punctuation mark indicating the end of a sentence

Function: The role language plays to express ideas or attitudes

Grammar: The study of sentence structure, especially with reference to syntax and semantics

Grapheme: The smallest unit in the writing system of a language

Graphology: The study of writing systems

Homonyms: Words with the same spelling but with different meanings

Hyphen: A short horizontal mark used to connect words or syllables, or to divide words into parts

Idiom: A sequence of words which forms a whole unit of meaning

Irony: Saying [or writing] one thing, whilst meaning the opposite

Intonation: The use of pitch in speech to create contrast and variation

Jargon: The technical language of an occupation or group

Language change: The development and changes in a language

Lexis: The vocabulary of a language, especially in dictionary form

Metaphor: A figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another

Metonymy: A figure of speech in which an attribute is substituted for the whole

Morpheme: The smallest unit of meaning in grammar

Morphology: A branch of grammar which studies the structure of words

Narrator: The person (named or unknown) who is telling a story

Noun: A word which names an object

Onomatopoeia: A word that sounds like the thing it describes

Oxymoron: A figure of speech which yokes two contradictory terms

Paradox: A figure of speech in which an apparent contradiction contains a truth

Paragraph: A distinct passage of writing which is unified by an idea or a topic

Parenthesis: A word, clause or even sentence which is inserted into a sentence to which it does not grammatically belong

Participle: A word derived from a verb and used as an adjective or a noun

Phonetics: The study of the production, transmission, and reception of speech sounds

Phonology: A study of the sounds in any language

Phrase: A group of words, smaller than a clause, which forms a grammatical unit

Point of view: A term from literary studies which describes the perspective or source of a piece of writing

Preposition: A word which governs and typically precedes a noun or a pronoun

Pronoun: A word that can substitute for a noun or a noun phrase

Punctuation: A system of marks used to introduce pauses and interruption into writing

Received pronunciation: The regionally neutral, prestige accent of British English

Semantics: The study of linguistic meaning

Semicolon: A punctuation mark which indicates a pause longer than a comma, but shorter than a colon

Sentence: A set of words which form a grammatically complete statement, usually containing a subject, verb, and object

Simile: A figure of speech in which one thing is directly likened to another

Slang: Informal, non-standard vocabulary

Speech: The oral medium of transmission for language

Spelling: The convention governing the representation of words by letters in writing systems

Standard English: aA dialect representing English speech and writing comprehensible to most users

Structure: The arrangement of parts or ideas in a piece of writing

Style: Aspects of writing (or speech) which have an identifiable character generally used in a positive sense to indicate 'pleasing effects'

Stylistic analysis: The study of stylistic effects in writing

Symbol: An object which represents something other than its self

Synonym: A word which means (almost) the same as another

Syntax: The arrangement of words to show relationships of meaning within a sentence

Tense: The form taken by a verb to indicate time (as in past-present-future)

Text: Any piece of writing or object being studied

Tone: An author's or speaker's attitude, as revealed in 'quality of voice' or 'selection of language'

Verb: A term expressing an action or a state of being

Vocabulary: The particular selection or types of words chosen in speech or writing

Vowel: The open sounds made in speech – as (mainly) distinct from consonants

Writing: The use of visual symbols to represent words which act as a code for communication

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Contents

Preface

English usage today is an area of discourse—sometimes it seems more like dispute—about the way words are used and ought to be used. This discourse makes up the subject matter of a large number of books that put the word *usage* in their titles. Behind usage as a subject lies a collection of opinions about what English grammar is or should be, about the propriety of using certain words and phrases, and about the social status of those who use certain words and constructions. A fairly large number of these opinions have been with us long enough to be regarded as rules or at least to be referred to as rules. In fact they are often regarded as rules of grammar, even if they concern only matters of social status or vocabulary selection. And many of these rules are widely believed to have universal application even though they are far from universally observed.

The general approach to basic English usage is to encourage a direct, vigorous writing style, and to oppose all artificiality — firmly advising against unnecessarily convoluted sentence construction and the use of foreign words and phrases and archaisms. It opposes all pedantry, and notably ridiculed artificial grammar rules not warranted by natural English usage — such as bans on split infinitives and on ending a sentence with a preposition, rules on the placement of the word only, and distinctions between which and that. It also condemns every cliché and, in classifying them, coined and popularized the terms battered ornament, Wardour Street, vogue words,

and worn-out humour, whilst simultaneously defending useful distinctions between words whose meanings were coalescing in practice, and guiding the user away from errors of word misuse, and illogical sentence construction. It mocks the use of unnecessarily long or arcane words.

On the other hand practical English usage aims at foreign learners of English and their teachers. It features basic descriptions of English grammar and usage as well as highlighting various words which for some reasons are difficult to use by non-native speakers. Although, generally, the model is basically British English, it explains some of the stylistic differences between British and American usage.

This publication titled, "Basic English Usage" provides readers with an introductory overview of history of English usage. The focus here lies on survey and practical aspects. Major types of English and their usage trends are explained. The focus lies on lists related to English usage and disputed usage. Besides, reflections are made on controlled vocabulary and language. The subject area of English as a philosophical, universal, and constructed language has been covered. Here, focus lies on relevant aspects of English grammar and English readability. This publication titled, "English Sentence Structure" is completely user-friendly as it also gives readers a glossary, bibliography and index.

—Editor

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